

高等学校英语专业规划教材



(下册 美国文学)

英美

文学简明教程

● 张伯香 刘世理 主编

*An Introductory Course Book
of English and American Literatures
(Volume Two American Literature)*

华中科技大学出版社

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内 容 提 要

本书广泛比较了国内外现有同类教材,吸收了近几年国内外美国文学研究的最新成果,按照选取适合学生阅读又具代表性的常见作品为原则,并结合编者自己多年的教学和研究体会,以美国文学发展的历史为顺序,编选了各个历史时期主要作家的代表作品。在体裁上,注意了诗歌、小说、戏剧与散文的适当比例。每章的内容包括历史文化背景、作者简介、作品选读、注释和思考题等;与其他同类书相比,本书扩大了入选作者,调整了选读作品,增加了学习思考题,从而使教材内容更加充实,语言叙述更加简明,选读作品的难度也相对降低,这将有利于学生的理解与掌握。本书为普通高等院校英语专业教材,也可供独立学院、教育学院、广播电视大学、成人高等教育及社会上英语自学者学习使用。

前 言

文学教学是语言教学中十分重要的一部分,它不仅可以帮助学生拓宽视野,提高分析鉴赏能力,而且可以熏陶学生的思想情操,加强他们对人类社会的认识与了解。教育部新近修订的《高等学校英语专业教学大纲》指出:文学课程的目的在于培养学生阅读、理解、欣赏英语文学原著的能力,掌握文学批评的基本知识和方法;通过阅读和分析英美文学作品,促进学生语言基本功和人文素质的提高,增强学生对西方文学及文化的了解。

《英美文学简明教程》的出版正是为了这一目的。在教材编写过程中,我们广泛比较了国内外现有的同类教材,按照选取适合学生阅读又具代表性的常见作品为原则,并结合编者自己多年的教学和研究体会,以英美文学发展的历史为顺序,编选了各个历史时期主要作家的代表作品。在体裁上,我们注意了诗歌、小说、戏剧与散文的适当比例。每章的内容包括历史文化背景、作者简介、作品选读、注释和思考题等。

《英美文学简明教程》是普通高等院校英语专业教材,也可供独立学院、教育学院、广播电视大学、成人高等教育及社会上英语自学者学习使用。与《英美文学选读》(张伯香主编,1998年外语教学与研究出版社出版)相比,本教程吸收了近几年国内外英美文学研究的最新成果,扩大了入选作者,大幅调整了选读作品,增加了学习思考题,从而使教材内容更加充实,语言叙述更加简明,选读作品的难度也相对降低;我们相信这将更加有利于学生的理解与掌握。为方便英语专业教学计划的执行,我们将本教程分为上、下两册:上册为英国文学,下册为美国文学,意在用一年的课时,通过阅读原汁原味的英美诗歌、小说、戏剧和散文作品,让学生对英美文学发展的历史脉络、各个时期的主要文学流派及其创作特点有一个基本的了解,从而提高学生对文学作品的感受能力、分析能力和鉴赏能力。

《英美文学简明教程》的问世与华中科技大学出版社领导的关心与支持密不可分,更是杨鸥等编辑们辛勤劳动的结晶。在此,我谨代表所有编者向他们表示诚挚的谢意。

参加《英美文学简明教程》上册编写工作的有江宝珠、余永锋、何洁、路璐、姚岚、邹凌等老师,参加下册编写工作的有左广明、刘堃、郗畅、雪莲、杨开杰、黄守刚等老师,他们在选材、撰稿、注释、录入、校对等方面做了大量的工作。全书的内容设计、章节安排、文字修改和最后的通读定稿都由主编负责。由于多人执笔,风格难以统一,各种错漏也在所难免,敬请广大读者批评指正。

张伯香

2009年4月于珞珈山

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Chapter 1 The Literature of the Colonial Period

1.1 An Introduction

Long before European settlers arrived in North America, Asians, known as the ancestors of American Indians or Native Americans, had been living there for thousands of years. They arrived across Bering Strait and immigrated into America. These Native Americans had composed rich literary works. Myths, legends, stories, lyrics, and other forms of literature were preserved in oral form and passed down from one generation to another through ceremonies and other community gatherings. Native American stories, for example, glow with reverence for nature as a spiritual as well as a physical mother. Nature is alive and endowed with spiritual forces; main characters may be animals or plants, often totems associated with a tribe, group, or individual. Among the richest set of Native American stories that survive are creation myths, descriptions of the beginnings of the universe and of the origin of humankind. The creation myths of Native American cultures share with the Genesis accounts of the Bible a concern with relationships among the divine, the human, and the world of animals and plants. But unfortunately much of this literature had disappeared with the destruction of Native American cultures that followed white settlement of the continent.

America was rediscovered by Christopher Columbus in 1492. With this discovery, America, the mysterious world, has become for many people a genuine hope of a new life, an escape from poverty and persecution, or a chance to start again. Over the time, large numbers of the Spanish, the Dutch, the Swedes, the French, the Irish, and the English rushed into this fascinating and strange continent in rapid succession and established their own colonies respectively. Although English quickly became the language of America, regional and ethnic dialects had enlivened and enriched the country's literature.

In 1620, a group of English men and women, led by William Bradford, arrived at Plymouth, Massachusetts on a ship called the *Mayflower*. They were very devout Christians who wanted to purify their lives and their church of what they saw as the corruptions of English society and its state religion, the Church of England. They called themselves Saints or Separatists, but they are now generally called Puritans.

The Puritans believed in an all-powerful God who freely granted to his "Saints" the gift of grace, which can be described as the spirit that would guarantee salvation — central happiness with God. In their daily lives the Puritans wanted to demonstrate at every moment that they were worthy of it. For the Puritans everything was, ideally, aimed at personal salvation and the building of a new, God-centered society. They were willing to risk their lives for such a world, which would be a place where they could practice their religion freely and raise their children free from the frivolities and temptations of the Old World. Life for the average Puritan in the New World was essentially a life of work and prayer. The Puritans worked long and hard under extremely difficult conditions so that their farms and trading enterprises would prosper. In fact they believed prosperity was a sign of election, or God's special favor. In the pursuit of virtue, the Puritans passed laws against many activities that

could distract good souls from their real task. These Puritan codes of values, philosophy of life, and point of view have later become American Puritanism and, as an embedded strand in the American psyche, have been both positive and negative in shaping the American character.

Writing was an important part of Puritan life; it was often an extension of religion. The Puritan definition of good writing was one that brought home a full awareness of the importance of worshipping God and of the spiritual dangers that the soul faced on Earth. Life was seen as a test; failure led to eternal damnation and hellfire, and success to heavenly bliss. This world was an arena of constant battle between forces of God and those of Satan, a formidable enemy with many disguises. The Puritans interpreted all things and events as symbols with deeper spiritual meanings, and felt that in advancing their own profit and their community's well-being, they were also furthering God's plans. They did not draw lines of distinction between the secular and religious spheres: All of life was an expression of the divine will.

The Puritans sought to purify their language just as they sought to purify their lives. Everything they wrote avoided the complicated and decorative style of their European contemporaries. They preferred to write in what they called plain style, even as they strove for plainness in their architecture, clothing, food, and household furnishings. Plain style was meant simply to communicate ideas as clearly as possible. Writing was not a way of showing off cleverness or learning but a way of serving God and the community. The first work published in the Puritan colonies was the *Bay Psalm Book* (1640) and the first American writer was Captain John Smith whose reports of exploration and settlement have been described as the first American literature written in English.

Early English immigrants were drawn to the southern colonies because of economic opportunity rather than religious freedom. Life in the southern colonies, begun in 1607 with Jamestown, Virginia, developed quite differently from life in New England. Unlike the Puritans, who lived quite closely together, much of the southern population lived on farms or plantations that were distant from one another. Often like little colonies of their own, these plantations were largely self-sufficient. Those large plantations were owned and operated by wealthy and well-educated colonists who developed a more social and outgoing way of life than the Puritans. They carried on correspondence with friends who often lived at great distances from them, as well as with family and friends back in England. Many of the southern colonists belonged to the Church of England, and their ties with the Old World were stronger. As a result, they did not have the reasons to create a literature of their own. Still, in their letters, journals, and public reports, southern writers recorded the details of their way of life. The realities of science and politics blend, in their writings, with a New World sense of excitement and discovery. Thus, the southern literature was aristocratic and secular, reflecting the dominant social and economic systems of the southern plantations. And the colonial South may fairly be linked with a light, worldly, informative, and realistic literary tradition. Imitative of English literary fashions, the southerners attained imaginative heights in witty, precise observations of distinctive New World conditions.

Generally, we can say that the American literature has its beginnings in Europe, for the roots of the American culture are grounded in the life of the Old World. In race and in civilization the Americans were merely transplanted Europeans, who brought to the colonies

unchanged Old World speech, manners, politics, and religion. Yet from the very beginning, their Old World manner of life was modified by their new environment. Colonial literature was, therefore, the product of two basic forces: the European cultural heritage and the American environment. However, the American writings of the seventeenth century possess as a whole no great artistic merit. They are valuable today chiefly as a study in origins and as a complex mirror of early American experience.

For its early colonial years American literature reflected the settlement and growth of the American colonies, largely through diaries, travel books, letters, journals, sermons, and histories. Some of these early works reached the level of literature, as in the robust and perhaps truthful account of the adventures by Captain John Smith and the sober, tendentious journalistic histories of John Winthrop and William Bradford in New England. In our review of the colonial period we noted four classes of writers: (1) the annalists and historians, of whom Bradford and Byrd were selected as typical of writers who often appear in American literary histories or anthologies; (2) the poets, of whom Wigglesworth, Anne Bradstreet and Godfrey are the most notable; (3) a few characteristic books dealing with nature and the Indians, which served readers of those days in the place of fiction; and (4) theological writers, among whom Cotton Mather and Jonathan Edwards are the most conspicuous.

1.2 Anne Bradstreet (1612 — 1672)

1.2.1 About the Author

Anne Bradstreet, who has been praised as the first noteworthy American poet, was born in Northampton, England, into the family of a sturdy Puritan. She came to Massachusetts in the Winthrop Puritan group in 1630 with her father, Thomas Dudley, and her husband, Simon Bradstreet, both later governors of the state. A dutiful Puritan wife who raised a large family, she nevertheless found time to write poetry. In 1650 her first volume of verse, *The Tenth Muse Lately Sprung Up in America*, appeared in London. It was followed by *Several Poems* (Boston, 1678), which contains "Contemplations," probably her best work.

Her finest poems are those closest to her personal experience as a Puritan wife and mother living on the edge of the wilderness. Like other Puritans, she found similarities between the domestic details of daily life and the spiritual details of her religious life. For Bradstreet the everyday and the everlasting were simply two sides of the same experience.

Although Bradstreet wrote many poems on familiar British themes and produced skilled imitations of British forms, her most remarkable works responded directly to her experiences in colonial New England. They reveal her attraction to her new world, even as the discomforts of life in the wilderness sickened her. Her poetry contains a muted declaration of independence from the past and a challenge to authority. Her poetry also records early stirrings of female resistance to a social and religious system in which women are subservient to men. In "The Prologue" (1650), Bradstreet writes, "I am obnoxious to each carping tongue /Who says my hand a needle better fits, /[than] A poet's pen. . ." Bradstreet's instincts were to love this world more than the promised next world of Puritan theology, and her struggle to overcome her love for the world of nature energizes her poetry.

Today most of her poems have fallen into the obscurity of history, but her poem,

“Contemplations,” is still read. It compares the life of mankind with that of nonhuman nature and offers the reader an insight into the mentality of the early Puritan pioneering in a new world. In the ninth stanza, she wrote:

I heard the merry grasshopper then sing,
The black-clad cricket bear a second part;
They kept one tune and played on the same string,
Seeming to glory in their little art.
Shall creatures abject thus their voices raise.
And in their kind resound their Maker's praise.
Whilst, I as mute, can warble forth no higher lays?

1.2.2 “To My Dear and Loving Husband”

If ever two were one, then surely we.¹
If ever man were loved by wife, then thee;
If ever wife was happy in a man,
Compare with me, ye women, if you can.
I prize thy love more than whole mines of gold
Or all the riches that the East² doth hold.
My love is such that rivers cannot quench,
Nor ought³ but love from thee give recompense.
Thy love is such I can no way repay.
The heavens reward thee manifold,⁴ I pray.
Then while we live, in love let's so persevere⁵
That when we live no more, we may live ever.

Notes

1. **we**: Anne's husband was Simon Bradstreet (1603 — 1697). They were married in England in 1628.
2. **the East**: East Indies.
3. **ought**: anything.
4. **manifold**: abundantly.
5. **persevere**: likely accented on the second syllable.

Study Questions

1. How would you characterize Bradstreet's feelings about her marriage?
2. How important is the simplicity of diction that distinguishes this love poem?
3. What does Bradstreet actually mean by the seeming paradox in the last line about living “no more” yet living “ever”?

1.3 Edward Taylor (1642 — 1729)

1.3.1 About the Author

Taylor, the best Puritan poet of colonial America, was born into the family of a dissenter

in Coventry, England and began to suffer from religious persecution when he grew up. The persecution of 1662 led to his immigration to America. For fifty-eight years Taylor was both minister and physician to the people of Westfield, Massachusetts, bordering what he called the “howling wilderness.” Because Taylor considered his poems a private record of his religious experience, he asked his heir never to publish them. As a result, the work of this major New England poet was unknown for 210 years after his death.

Taylor wrote metaphysical poems in the tradition of Donne and Herbert, treating religious themes and burning with an intense love for God. He was, first, and last, a Puritan poet, concerned about how his images speak for God. His poems use an extravagant imagery, which is not in the tradition of the Puritan plain style. Their emotion, however, is still the typically Puritan one of submissiveness and wonder in the face of God’s grace and power. A good example is his poem, “Huswifery”, a prayer in which the poet compares God’s granting of grace to the work of a housewife who spins, weaves, and dyes a piece of cloth. By “huswifery,” Taylor meant not only “housekeeping,” but “managing well”.

1.3.2 “Huswifery¹”

Make me, O Lord, Thy spinning² wheel complete.
Thy holy word my distaff³ make for me.
Make mine affections⁴ Thy swift flyers⁵ neat
And make my soul Thy holy spool to be.
My conversation make to be Thy reel
And reel the yarn thereon spun of Thy wheel.

Make me Thy loom then, knit therein this twine;
And make Thy holy spirit, Lord, wind quills⁶;
Then weave the web Thyself. The yarn is fine.
Thine ordinances⁷ make my fulling mills⁸.
Then dye the same in heavenly colors choice,
All pinked⁹ with varnished flowers of paradise.

Then clothe therewith mine understanding, will,
Affections, judgment, conscience, memory,
My words and actions, that their shine may fill
My ways with glory and Thee glorify.
Then mine apparel shall display before Ye
That I am clothed in holy robes for glory.

Notes

1. **Huswifery**: It denoted the full range of domestic tasks performed by Puritan housewives. In this poem, those tasks are narrowed to spinning and weaving.
2. **spinning**: making yarn by twisting woolen fibers.
3. **distaff**: A cleft staff about 3 feet long, on which . . . wool or flax was wound. It was held under the left arm, and the fibers of the material were drawn from it through the fingers of

the left hand, and twisted spirally by the forefinger and thumb of the right, with the aid of the suspended spindle, round which the thread, as it was twisted or spun, was wound.

4. **affections**: emotions.
5. **flyers**: later in machine spinning, the flyer twisted the thread as it led it to the bobbin and wound it therein.
6. **quills**: weaver's spindles.
7. **ordinances**: religious rites.
8. **fulling mills**: mills in which cloth is cleaned and thickened.
9. **pinked**: decorated.

Study Questions

1. What process is described in the poem?
2. What role does the poet play in the process? What role does God play?
3. Does Taylor believe one can achieve grace through one's own efforts, or must grace come as a gift from God? Supply evidence from the poem for your answer.

Chapter 2 The Literature of the Revolutionary Period

2.1 An Introduction

2.1.1 Historical Background

The eighteenth century was an important period in which the American national ideals were taking form. In the first half of the century, there were no radical political developments, no exciting struggles with the mother country. But in population, wealth, and racial stock, the period brought great changes. The middle colonies in particular, though founded later than Virginia and New England, grew rapidly. Into these colonies poured a large number of European immigrants, mixed in races and religions, who were attracted by the policy of religious toleration. Granted only that the immigrant should be industrious, American society could regenerate him by offering him a decent living, land, citizenship, and self-respect. In this unspoiled environment lived the typical American farmer, fortunate in his economic independence, in his warm, comfortable house, in his wild sports of country life, and in the affections of his family hearth. Here individuals of all nations were melted into a new race of men, whose labors and posterity would one day cause great changes in the world.

In this half century, a ragged line of colonies along the seaboard developed with rapid speed into a united and independent nation of five million people; a complex agrarian and mercantile society had grown up, supporting a wealthy class whose members moved with refined ease in the drawing rooms of Europe. And during this half-century, the people of the thirteen colonies had begun to prosper and started to communicate more with one another and to grow aware of their mutual problems and feelings.

In the second half of the eighteenth century, with the startling economic development in the thirteen colonies, the people wanted more rights to determine their own business. However, the British government wanted to bring the development under control and to collect more taxes from the colonies because defending the colonies against attacks by the French and others had cost the British a great deal of money. They thus decided to shift some of their financial burdens to the colonists. Thus came a series of infuriating laws and taxes. The Stamp Act in 1765 required that the colonists buy special stamps for newspapers, licenses, pamphlets, and many other documents. The Quartering Act in 1765 forced colonists to feed and house British soldiers in their own homes. The Townshend Acts in 1767 taxed tea, glass, lead, and paper. When some of the colonial assemblies refused to abide by the new laws, the British government declared those assemblies "dissolved." Violence was not far away. The Boston Massacre erupted in 1770 when British troops fired on a taunting mob. In 1773 the British Parliament insisted again on its right and power to tax Americans. The tax on tea became a symbol, and the famous Boston Tea Party became a symbol too — a symbol of American resistance — as colonists dressed as Indians dumped a shipment of British tea into Boston Harbor.

Americans protested and petitioned King George II for "no taxation without represen-

tation." They wanted only what was reasonable, they said. They wanted to share in their own government. Britain replied with the intolerable Acts of 1774, designed to punish Massachusetts for the Boston Tea Party. Many more rights that had been granted to the colonists in their charters were revoked. Then, when the British soldiers were spotted on their way to seize American arms at Concord, Americans responded with force. Thus, the War of Independence, also known as the American Revolution, began.

The second half of the eighteenth century was a time of swift and radical change, of action rather than reflection, and of the turning of many separate currents into one headlong stream. In January 1776, a public voice was widely heard in America demanding complete separation from Britain. The voice was that of Thomas Paine, whose pamphlet *Common Sense*, with its heated language, increased the growing demand for separation. It pointed the way toward the *Declaration of Independence* in July.

The hard-fought American Revolution against Britain (1775 — 1783) was the first modern war of liberation against a colonial power. The triumph of American independence seemed to many at the time a divine sign that America and her people were destined for greatness. Military victory fanned nationalistic hopes for a great new literature. Yet with the exception of outstanding political writing, few works of note appeared during or soon after the Revolution.

2.1.2 Cultural Background

During the eighteenth century, American literature underwent great changes in form, theme, and purpose as the colonies moved toward declaring their independence from Great Britain. As the century began, literature remained primarily religious in its endeavors to make sense of what still seemed a decidedly new world. As the century wore on, political thought — especially regarding the relationship between the colonies and the mother country — increasingly occupied American writers.

We will not be surprised to find that most American literature in the 18th century was political. Through newspapers, magazines, pamphlets, broadsides, and letters, colonial leaders discussed their ideas of human nature and of government. They began forging a new sense of national identity. Battles had to be fought before the thirteen colonies achieved independence. Nevertheless, for years before the first shot was fired, language was the source of growing American power. For those Americans, language became a weapon that could be used to fight for their independence.

The writings of this stormy period reflect the temper of two very different classes who were engaged in constant literary Party warfare. In the tense years the American people separated into two hostile parties: the Loyalists, who supported the mother country; and the Patriots, who insisted on the right of the colonies to manage their own affairs, and who furnished the armies that followed Washington in the War of Independence.

The Americans produced a great variety of unusual forms of literature: ballads, skits, broadsides, poems, editorials, essays, private and public letters, satires, pamphlets — written by people of every social class and almost every degree of skill. The energy of the age did not express itself in the usual forms with great original poetry, fiction, drama, music, or art. Yet a great number of Americans expressed themselves on the subjects of liberty,

government, law, reason, and individual and national freedom. Throughout the land, weekly "Poet's Corners" in American newspapers never lacked locally written poems, songs, and satires. This writing was not sophisticated, but it was the writing of people whose lives were touched by the events of a turbulent time.

It is in the orations and pamphlets and state papers inspired by the Revolutionary agitation that we find the most satisfactory expression of the thought and feeling of that generation. Its typical literature is civic rather than aesthetic, a sort of writing which has been incidental to the accomplishing of some political, social, or moral purpose, and which scarcely regards itself as literature at all.

Many writers thought that the new nation possessed at least two unique subjects, two things no Europeans had experienced: the natural wilderness and the Revolution. They believed the majestic, awe-inspiring landscape provided a setting and even an antagonist that would be the basis of a great literature. They also believed that the Revolution provided stories of great human experiences and the beginning of an American mythology. They began to see the possibility of typical American characters in literature: The first American play, William Godfrey's *The Prince of Parthia* (1765), appeared during this period despite the moral censure accorded to theater in the colonies. It was followed by the first stage comedy, Royal Tyler's *The Contrast* (1787), which introduced Jonathan, the first stage Yankee.

Revolutions are expressions of the heart of the people; they grow gradually out of new sensibilities and wealth of experience. It would take 50 years of accumulated history for America to earn its cultural independence and to produce the first great generation of American writers; Washington Irving, James Fenimore Cooper, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry David Thoreau, Herman Melville, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Edgar Allan Poe, Walt Whitman, and Emily Dickinson.

2.1.3 The Enlightenment

The Enlightenment, conventionally seen as a European intellectual movement, was stimulated by the scientific revolution. It involved a new world view which explained the world and looked for answers in terms of reason rather than faith, and in terms of an optimistic, natural, humanistic approach rather than a fatalistic, supernatural one. During the Enlightenment, thinkers such as Voltaire, Montesquieu, Locke, Hobbes, and Rousseau made the radical proposition that reason and science could reveal the truth of life. Whatever the national or individual differences, the Enlightenment waged war on common enemies. In religion, it was against superstition, intolerance, and dogmatism; in politics, it was against tyranny; and in society, it was against prejudice, ignorance, inequality, and any obstacles to the realization of an individual's full intellectual and physical well-being.

This spirit of Enlightenment came rather late to the American colonies partly because of the cultural lag between dependencies and a mother country, partly because of the predominantly religious nature of the colonies, and partly because of the almost completely agrarian economy in America, which was not much concerned with scientific and technological development. Nevertheless, by the second half of the eighteenth century, the eastern seaboard cities had become centers of rationalistic thought. With its emphasis upon reason, its encouragement of scientific inquiry, and its almost childlike belief in the

perfectibility of man and his world, the American Enlightenment marked a happy moving away from Puritan authoritarianism and produced a spirit of optimism especially fitting to the growing colonial culture. Many of the most distinguished leaders of the American Revolution — Jefferson, Washington, Franklin, Paine — were powerfully influenced by the European Enlightenment thought.

The American Enlightenment was categorized not only by knowledge of classical writings but also by an atmosphere where people craved new knowledge and wisdom. It was this craving that inspired people to make new developments in science, religion, and politics. Thomas Jefferson once said that a rational society is one that “informs the mind, sweetens the temper, cheers our spirits, and promotes health.” Jefferson’s attempt — a firm belief in progress, common sense, and the pursuit of happiness — is typical of the period we now call the Age of Reason.

2.2 Benjamin Franklin (1706 — 1790)

2.2.1 About the Author

Franklin was born in Boston, the youngest son of a poor craftsman. As a child, Franklin had little formal education, but he taught himself by reading widely. When he was twelve, he was apprenticed to his half brother James, a printer and publisher. At the age of 17, he left his brother’s employment and went to Philadelphia to work as a printer by himself. His qualities, industry and thrift, helped him to become a thriving printer.

As the owner and editor of *Pennsylvania Gazette* after 1730, Franklin made the periodical popular. Then he established a circulating library, organized a debating club that developed into the American Philosophical Society, and in 1751 helped to establish an academy that eventually became the University of Pennsylvania. In 1748 Franklin turned his printing business over to his foreman and devoted himself to his deepest interest — science. He did make substantial contributions to the scientific knowledge of his time. In fact, his work on lightning rods, earthquakes, bifocal eyeglasses, and electricity made him world famous.

Franklin was also one of the greatest statesmen of the American Revolution and of the newborn nation. He was a delegate to the Continental Congress. He was appointed to the committee that drafted the *Declaration of Independence*. He was chosen as one of the American diplomats to negotiate peace with Great Britain and laid the groundwork for the treaty. He also helped to direct the compromise that brought the Constitution of the United States into being. From 1757 until his final return to the United States in 1785, Franklin spent the vast majority of these years abroad, as a diplomat to Britain and France.

In 1771 when he was sixty-five, Franklin began to write an account of his life, which he intended for his son and was named as *Autobiography*. The Puritan’s emphasis on self-improvement, self-analysis, and moral and ethical values, along with the Enlightener’s emphasis on rationalism, order, and education, could find fine expression in it. As the greatest literary artist in America in the Age of Enlightenment, Franklin helped establish a tradition in American writing of the simple, utilitarian style. It is the pattern of Puritan simplicity, directness, and concision. The lucidity of the narrative, the absence of ornaments