

THE
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INTRODUCTION
TO
LITERATURE



Carl E. Bain
Jerome Beaty
J. Paul Hunter

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The Norton Introduction to
LITERATURE



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SHORTER SIXTH EDITION

Carl E. Bain
Jerome Beaty
J. Paul Hunter



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The Norton Introduction to

LITERATURE

SHORTER SIXTH EDITION

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USED BOOK

Steve V. Leming

FOREWORD TO THE SHORTER SIXTH EDITION

Reading is action. Even though it is often done quietly and alone, reading is a profoundly social activity, and a vigorous and demanding one. There is nothing passive about reading; it requires attention, energy, an act of will. Texts have the potential for meaning, implication, response, and result; but the reader must activate them, give them life, and turn them from quiet print into a lively interplay of ideas and feelings. Reading makes things happen, usually in the mind and imagination, but sometimes in the larger world as well, for the process of reading involves not just the consciousness of the self but an awareness of the other—what is beyond the self. Reading doesn't just happen to you; you have to do it, and doing it involves decision, reaching out, discovery, awareness. Reading is an act of power, and learning how to get the most out of its possibilities can be an invigorating activity. For all its association with quietness, solitude, and the sedentary life, reading involves—at its deepest level—action and interaction.

Through six editions, *The Norton Introduction to Literature* has been committed to helping students learn to read and enjoy literature. This edition, like those before it, offers many different ways of building and reinforcing the skills of reading; in addition to studying literature in terms of its elements, our book now emphasizes reading works in different contexts—authorial, literary historical, and cultural—with the inclusion of seven *Exploring Contexts Chapters*, a popular feature from the Regular Edition. Also, we have strengthened the connection between reading and writing at several points throughout the book. The introductory chapters to each genre—fiction, poetry, drama—first treat the reading experience generally, then work to involve students in examining their own responses as a first step toward writing about literature. New student papers, roughly three for each genre, offer a variety of responses to selected writing suggestions. And as in previous editions, we have provided many new selections.

But the Sixth Edition remains more than a grab-bag of good things to read. The book offers in a single volume a complete course in reading and writing about literature. It is both an anthology and a textbook—a teaching anthology—for the indispensable course in which college student and college teacher begin to read literature, and to write about it, seriously together.

The works are arranged in order to introduce a reader to the study of literature. Each genre is approached in three logical steps. Fiction, for example, is introduced by *Fiction: Reading, Responding, Writing* which treats the purpose and nature of fiction, the reading experience, and the first steps one takes to begin writing about fiction. This is followed by the seven-chapter section called *Understanding the Text*, in which stories are analyzed by questions of craft, the

so-called elements of fiction; this section ends with a chapter entitled “The Whole Text,” which makes use of all or most of the analytical aids offered in the previous chapters, putting them together to see the work as a whole. The third section, *Exploring Contexts*, suggests some ways of seeing a work of literature interacting with its temporal and cultural contexts and reaching out beyond the page.

The sections on reading, analyzing, and placing the work in context are followed, in each genre, by guidance in taking that final and extremely difficult step—evaluation. *Evaluating Poetry*, for example, discusses how one would go about assessing the merits of two poems, not to offer definitive judgments, a litmus test, or even a checklist or formula, but to show how one goes about bringing to consciousness, defining, modifying, articulating, and negotiating one’s judgments about a work of literature.

Ending each genre, *Reading More* — — is a reservoir of additional examples, for independent study or a different approach. The book’s arrangement seeks to facilitate the reader’s movement from narrower to broader questions, mirroring the way people read—wanting to learn more as they experience more.

We offer a full section on *Writing about Literature*. In it we deal both with the writing process as applied to literary works—choosing a topic, gathering evidence, developing an argument, and so forth—and with the varieties of a reader’s written responses, from copying and paraphrasing to analysis and interpretation: we explore not merely the hows, but the whats and whys as well.

In this section we also offer a discussion of critical approaches, designed to provide the student with a basic overview of contemporary critical theory, as well as an introduction to its terminology.

The Shorter Sixth Edition includes 39 stories, 8 of which are new; 263 poems, 51 of which are new; and 13 plays, 4 of which are new.

In fiction, we have added new stories by Margaret Atwood, Toni Cade Bambara, Charles Baxter, Denise Chávez, Kate Chopin, Ernest Hemingway, Yasunari Kawabata, and Margaret Laurence.

The poetry section has been similarly infused with selections familiar and fresh, with newly included works by Ai, Elizabeth Alexander, Agha Shahid Ali, Anna Laetitia Barbauld, Elizabeth Bishop, Louise Bogan, Roo Borson, Emily Brontë, Gwendolyn Brooks, Mary, Lady Chudleigh, Judith Ortiz Cofer, Wendy Cope, H. D., Rita Dove, T. S. Eliot, Louise Erdrich, Carolyn Forché, Thomas Gray, Barbara Howes, Erica Jong, Irving Layton, Edna St. Vincent Millay, Erin Mouré, Susan Musgrave, Katherine Philips, Alberto Alvaro Ríos, Muriel Rukeyser, Duncan Campbell Scott, Edmund Waller, and Walt Whitman, among others.

New selections to the drama section include Anton Chekhov’s *The Cherry Orchard*, Marsha Norman’s *Getting Out*, Bernard Shaw’s *Pygmalion*, and Sophocles’ *Antigone*.

Certain editorial procedures that proved their usefulness in earlier editions have been retained. First of all, the works are annotated, as is customary in Norton anthologies; the notes are informational and not interpretative, for the aim is to help readers understand and appreciate the work, not to dictate a

meaning or a response. In order to avoid giving the impression that all literature was written at the same time, we have noted at the right margin after each selection the date of first book publication (or, when preceded by a *p*, first periodical publication or, when the date appears at the left margin, the year of composition).

In all our work on this edition we have been guided by teachers in other English departments and in our own, by students who wrote us as the authors of the textbook they were using, and by those who were able to approach us after class as their teachers: we hope that with such help we have been able to offer you a solid and stimulating introduction to the experience of literature.

Acknowledgments We would like to thank our teachers, for their example in the love of literature and in the art of sharing that love; our students, for their patience as we are learning from them to be better teachers of literature; our wives and children, for their understanding when the work of preparing this text made us seem less than perfectly loving husbands and fathers.

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