

高等教育自学考试  
英语专业辅导丛书

# 《美国文学》 学习指南

王勇 主编



山东大学出版社

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## 前 言

《〈美国文学〉学习指南》(以下简称《指南》)是一本专门为美国文学自学者编写的一部学习手册,同时对准备英语专业美国文学课程的研究生入学考试也不失为一本有价值的参考书。它以山东省高教自学考试英语专业本科阶段美国文学指定教材《美国文学史及选读》(吴伟仁编写,外语教学与研究出版社出版,1990)为蓝本,对各个文学时期的文学思潮、流派及该书涉及的重要作家作出了较为全面的总结与详尽的分析,对相关内容进行了补充,并根据常考题型设计了八套模拟考题。《指南》分析总结部分严格按照指定教材的章节顺序进行编排,重点突出,详略得当。对于与文学本身联系不是很密切的内容,如历史及作家生平方面的内容从略,而文学思潮、流派以及作家作品的主题、风格、手法等的分析则较为详尽。特别是指定教材中提及但又未解释清楚的文学学术语,《指南》作了补充解释。对于指定教材只提供情节的名家大作,《指南》都从主题、人物及风格手法等方面进行了全面深入的分析。选读部分从指定教材中精选出一些文学名句式的重点段落作为重中之重。模拟考题基本按章节顺序编排,几乎覆盖了指定教材所有的重要考核点。虽然单独的一份模拟考题与真正考题的内容设计并不相符,而且不同题型下的问题可能稍微有些内容重复,但是八套题

如作为一个整体从覆盖面到考查深度与实际考试是相符的。这种编排顺序的初衷是让读者在做题的同时又能够根据章节按部就班地进行系统复习,以达到一箭双雕的功效。

山东大学出版社的张晓博同志对本书的编写给予了大力的支持与协作,付出了大量的劳动,在此对他表示真诚的感谢与敬意。编者有长期从事美国文学教学的经验,本书编写的态度是认真的,对读者的态度是负责的。因时间和能力所限,讹误之处在所难免,望读者在使用过程中指正。

编 者

1999年6月于山东大学外语学院

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# **Chapter One**

## **Introduction: Strategy in Learning American Literature**

This chapter is mainly concerned with methodology in the study of American literature and tips on the preparation for the examination in the course of American Literature. The bulk of the chapter is written in Chinese so that the readers, especially those who will take the examination in American Literature as required in the curricula by the Self-Studying Examination Program of Shandong Province may have a clearer understanding.

### **1.1 课程的性质与特征**

美国文学现已纳入山东省自学考试英语本科段的考试课程。从课程的性质上讲,美国文学与专科阶段的英国文学一样,是英语语言文学专业文学方向的两大组成部分之一,是典型的知识型课程。而作为本科阶段的考试课程,美国文学的考核难度自然要比英国文学高一些。它突出了文学史与选读的结合,更加强调考查考生的总结与分析能力以及英语的书面表达能力。

从殖民地时代算起,美国文学的历史也不足四个世纪。美国文

学真正走向繁荣是在 19 世纪。本世纪上半叶是它的黄金时期。一战以后,美国文坛上涌现出了一批才华出众、个性鲜明的作家,新的文学思潮与流派更使人目不暇接。对于初学者来讲,首先要对美国文学的发展史有一个框架性了解,要知道各发展阶段都发生了什么主要变化,这些变化又是在什么社会背景下发生的。如果缺乏这么一个总体性的了解,在深入学习单个作家时就会只见树木,不见森林。

## 1.2 课程的主线与重点

考生在学习时要善于捕捉重点。文学课的重点当然是名家大作和主要文学思潮、流派。就美国文学而言,殖民地时期的文学还非常不成熟,出现的文学作品大都是历史记录、宗教随想及模仿当时英国诗体的诗作,比较缺乏文学性和民族性,其文学价值远远不及历史价值。独立革命时期的文学则与政治密不可分。这个时期的散文作家绝大部分都是著名政治活动家。他们的代表人物是富兰克林(B. Franklin),杰斐逊(T. Jefferson)和潘恩(T. Paine)。他们思想上受欧洲启蒙思想家影响,政治上是激进的民主派。他们的作品笔锋犀利,文风朴实。这个时期的其他文体(主要是诗歌)也带有浓厚的政治气息。

19 世纪的美国文学大体可以美国内战为界线分为前后两个阶段。19 世纪前期浪漫主义是美国文学的主流,而后期占支配地位的是现实主义。重要的浪漫主义作家包括欧文(W. Irving)、库柏(J. F. Cooper)、埃伦·坡(E. Poe)、霍桑(Hawthorne)、梅尔维尔(Melville),以及超验主义作家爱默生(R. Emerson)和梭罗(H. D. Thoreau)。19 世纪的两位美国大诗人惠特曼(W. Whitman)和狄金森(E. Dickinson)可视为浪漫主义向现实主义过渡时期的代表作家。



美国内战以后在美国文坛中占据主导地位的则是现实主义。豪威尔斯(W. D. Howells)被公认为美国文学中的现实主义之父。他为现实主义文学创作提出了一些纲领性的原则。真正使现实主义文学走上巅峰的是马克·吐温(Mark Twain)和詹姆斯(H. James)。在世纪之交自然主义在美国文坛大为盛行。克莱恩(S. Crane)、德莱塞(T. Dreiser)、杰克·伦敦(Jack London)等人不同程度地受到它的影响。

美国现代文学始于一战以后。此时的美国文坛异常活跃,涌现出一大批年青作家,使美国文学发展史走上了一个新的高峰。海明威(E. Hemingway)、福克纳(W. Faulkner)、菲茨杰拉德(F. S. Fitzgerald)的小说已成为美国文学乃至世界文学的经典。诗歌和戏剧的创作在这一时期也达到了高潮。美国诗坛各种流派争奇斗艳,艾略特(T. S. Eliot)、罗宾逊(E. A. Robinson)、弗罗斯特(R. Frost)等都是美国这一时期的重要诗人。而奥尼尔(E. O'Neill)的戏剧作品标志着美国新戏剧的诞生。二战以后的当代美国文学更是五彩纷呈,各种新思潮、新流派使人目不暇接、眼花缭乱。只因这一时期的文学在考试大纲中暂未列为考试内容,在此不加赘述。

### 1.3 指定教材的学习方法及参考书的使用

作为指定教材的《美国文学史及选读》史、文结合,较好地反应了美国文学发展史的主干。在学习时应注意以下几点:

(1) 仔细研读每一部分(Part)的文学史分段介绍,一方面了解美国文学发展史的全貌,另一方面着重掌握每一阶段的主要文学思潮与流派以及重要作家在文学史中的地位和独特的贡献。

(2) 熟记单列作家的主要作品及代表作品(主要指小说)的主题、人物及性格特征以及作家的创作风格。作家简介部分如介绍不够充分,则需从作品简介中进行分析、总结。另外也可参考其他的

教材,如董衡巽等编写的《美国文学简史》等。

(3) 读懂并能简要分析评述教材中的选文作品。

(4) 弄清书中中文学术语的含义,必要时应借助于其他文学工具书,如 *The Oxford Companion to American Literature* 等。

(5) 美国文学是一门开放性极强的课程。各种教材、参考书比较多。在入门阶段应有选择地使用。要始终将指定教材放在第一位。参考书过多过滥容易导致头绪混乱、轻重难辨。

## 1.4 自学考试试题的特点

从目前考试已考过的试题结构上看,我们可以大体总结出以下几个特点:

(1) 考查的覆盖面广。指定教材的每个章节基本上都有题目。这也体现了自学考试的性质。

(2) 客观题的比例较大,占到六成以上。客观题一般都紧扣教材,选择题和填空题大都是课本原句,有些稍加改动。作品辨认部分也属于客观题。

(3) 主观题虽然占比重不大,但有一定深度。比如问答题在教材中很难找到现成的答案,需要考生从文学史、作家及作品简介中进行归纳分析,再用规范的英语表述出来,是对考生文学知识、分析能力及英语书面表达能力的综合考查。

## 1.5 自学考试的常考题型及其对考生的要求

(1) 选择填空。选择填空是比重很大的客观性试题,它的特点是要求较低但考核面广,以作家、作品的名称、人物、主要情节及其他史实性的内容为主要考核点,考核考生对作家、作品的名称、人物、主要情节及其他文学史实性的内容的记忆性了解。

(2) 填空。填空也属客观性试题,要求则比选择填空题要高一些。它的主要考核面不是作家、作品的名称、人物、主要情节及其他史实性的内容,而是文学流派、文学时期、作家及其主要作品的一些基本但又非常突出的特点。它以指定教材为蓝本,要求记忆精准。

(3) 名词解释。名词解释属于主观性试题。它主要考核考生对文学史、文学思潮流派及文学手法等方面专业性较强的术语的理解。因为是对初学者的要求,标准不会太高。如“The Lost Generation”: Writers of the first postwar era self-consciously acknowledged that they were a “Lost Generation,” disillusioned by the War, devoid of faith and alienated from a civilization. Hemingway was regarded as the spokesman for the Lost Generation. 只要说清楚它是什么(一战后的一批青年作家),有什么主要特点(迷茫与幻灭),代表或例子(海明威)即可。

(4) 作品辨认及解释。这是一种主客观相结合的题型。它主要考核考生对名家大作之名段名句的熟悉程度与理解。出于对初学者的要求,解释部分肯定要以选文字面解释为主,意义阐释为辅。如:

I shall be telling this with a sigh  
Somewhere ages and ages hence;  
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I ——  
I took the one less traveled by,  
And it made all the difference.

首先是辨认, This stanza is taken from “The Road Not Taken” by Robert Frost. 然后作简单的字面解释, Here the poet made up his mind to take the road less traveled by, 最后稍加评论 suggesting that he abandoned conventionality and accepted possible challenge.

(5)简答题。简答题是要求相对较高的主观题型。主要考核考生对主要作家作品的较深层次理解,主要考核点为文学流派的特点,作家作品的主题、人物及艺术手法的分析。它要求考生对美国文学中主要的思潮流派、作家、作品有较为深入的理解,同时有较高的分析总结能力及英语语言表达能力。简答题的答案长度要求因分值的差异也有所不同。如:

1. Discuss the symbolic meaning of *Moby Dick*, the white whale.

(5%)

这是一道分值较低、要求单一的简答题。因此回答 *Moby Dick* had a different meaning to different persons on the ship. To Captain Ahab it was Evil himself; to Starbuck it was a big threat to the lives of the crew; to Stubb, it was just an ordinary whale that would bring profit; and to Ishmael, it represented Nature endowed with a divine spirit. 就已经非常到位了。

又如:

2. Discuss the theme of sin and guilt in relation to the three main characters in *The Scarlet Letter*. (10%)

这道简答题分值较高,要求也较为复杂,单纯的人物分析达不到题目要求,必须围绕题目提供的主题分析人物间的关系:

Hester Prynne was found guilty of adultery at the beginning of the story and was completely cut off from the community. She did not, however, accept her fate and gradually won back acceptance and respect from the villagers of various backgrounds through honesty and hard working. An industrious, brave, and unbending woman, she was once a sinner and later turned to a figure of high virtue. Dimmesdale was a hidden sinner constantly tortured by his sense of guilt. His weak-mindedness not only denied him the possibility of a new life but became a fatal vulnerability to be made use of

by Chillingworth in his merciless revenge. Only at the end of his life was he delivered from his sin and sense of guilt. Chillingworth was the victim of the adultery at the beginning of the story and liable to pity and sympathy. As a cold-natured physician, however, he designed an inhumane scheme of cold revenge by constantly tormenting the sinning soul of the minister and at last became the most hardened sinner, an embodiment of merciless revenge, vicious schemes and cold-blooded hatred.

总之,文学课是一门较为复杂的知识性课程。它需要考生既有简单记忆的知识,又要有较高的分析、总结能力和扎实的英语功底和文学功底。希望广大考生知难而进,在学习时既要勤奋刻苦,又要多动脑筋,只有这样才能学好、考好这门课。

## Chapter Two

### Literature of the Colonial and Revolutionary Period

This chapter covers the contents of Parts I and II of Wu Weiren's *History and Anthology of American Literature* (abbreviated as *History and Anthology* hereinafter).

#### 2.1 General Summary of the Literary History of the Period

The first writings in American literature were the narratives and journals of the early colonial settlements. The first permanent English settlement in North America was established at Jamestown, Virginia in 1617. John Smith wrote about the exploration in *A True Relation of Such Occurrences and Accidents of Note as Hath Happened in Virginia Since the First Planting of That Colony* and became the first American writer. His other important writings include *A Map of Virginia; with a Description of the Country* and *General History of Virginia*, which include his famous tale of how

the Indian princess Pocahontas saved him from the anger of her father Powhatan. His writings were filled with themes, myths, images, scenes, characters and events that were a foundation of American literature and helped lure the Pilgrims and Puritans to flee from the Old World (Europe) to a New Israel, a New Promised Land (the American Continent).

✓(History was an important form of literature in the colonial times.) Besides John Smith, William Bradford produced his lasting work *The History of the Plymouth Plantation* and John Winthrop, *The History of New England*.

New England had produced a literature of ideas: theological, moral, historical, political. (The Puritans came to New England for the sake of religious freedom.) Puritanism is the religious beliefs of the Puritans, who had intended to "purify" or simplify the religious rituals of the Church of England. They believed in the original sin and the harsh Day of Doom, although some good people — the chosen people or "the Elect" — may be saved. The Puritans in New England practiced theocracy, a form of government in which religion and government are combined into one. Their way of life were based on their somber religion and stressed hard work, thrift, piety and sobriety. These Puritan values greatly influenced the writings of such noted Puritan clergymen as John Cotton and Cotton Mather and the first American Poetess Anne Bradstreet. Her first published work is a collection of poems entitled *The Tenth Muse Recently Sprung Up in America*. Another famous Puritan poet was Edward Taylor.

While theology dominated the writings of the colonial times, ✓politics permeated the writings of the Revolution period. Thomas

Paine's *Common Sense*, *The American Crisis*, *The Federalist Papers* and *The Declaration of Independence* drafted by Thomas Jefferson are good examples of the fierce rhetoric and eloquence of the political writings at that period.

The Enlightenment, a literary movement originated from Europe had influenced the best writers of the period. In Europe, thinkers of the Enlightenment emancipated or "enlightened" people's mind from the bondage of feudalistic chains of the Middle Ages, while in America the humanistic ideas of the movement dealt a heavy blow to Puritanism in advocating science, knowledge and the power and ability of man. The Enlightenment had also influenced the literature of that period in forming a style of clarity and precision.

After the United States achieved its independence, American intellectuals set out on the journey to a literary independence. In 1783, Noah Webster declared, "America must be as independent in literature as she is in politics, as famous for the arts as for arms." Jefferson's *Notes on the State of Virginia* and Bartram's *Travels* carried the same notion. Yet American literature throughout the century was largely patterned on the writings of eighteenth-century English writers, notably Franklin by Addison and Steele and Joel Barlow by Alexander Pope.

## 2.2 Benjamin Franklin (1706-1790)

### 2.2.1 General account

Life achievement: a great statesman, diplomat, a scientist and



the first major American writer.

Important works:

*Autobiography*: His masterpiece, but left unfinished. It not only narrates Franklin's early life, but his life principles and philosophy. It is a how-to-do-good book and sets autobiography as a literary genre in American literature.

*Poor Richard's Almanac*: An annual collection of proverbs. Franklin's pragmatism and sense of humor are fully demonstrated in this work.

Philosophical ideas: As the chief representative of the American Enlightenment, he advocated a humanistic ideal. Pragmatic and optimistic; he highly regarded science, knowledge and education and believed in the possibilities of human progress and the comforts of material success. He was symbolic of the age he belonged to in his paradoxical faith in both social order and in natural rights, in love of stability and devotion to revolutionary change. He was the first and perhaps the last positive representation of the values of the American Dream.

Writing style: His prose style follows the neoclassic ideals of clarity, restraint, simplicity and balance. A subtle humor and sarcastic notion are also found in his writings.

## 2.2.2 Important selected readings

(1) From a Child I was fond of Reading, and all the little Money that came into my Hands was ever laid out in Books.

(2) But my Father discourag'd me, by ridiculing my Performances, and telling me Verse-makers were generally Beggars; so I escap'd being a Poet, most probably a very bad one. But as Prose