

美国经典 文学作品选读

(注释加译文版)

主编：姜晓瑜 陈红锐 邓纯旭
副主编：董妍妍 赵子然 宋茜 于菲



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内容提要

本教材是专门为在校大学生学习美国文学而编写的。教材内容贯穿整个美国文学史, 结集了美国文学史上重要作家的作品, 再现了美国文学的多元性, 读者可以了解这些作家的社会背景、文学流派以及作品特点, 在领略作家文学魅力的同时, 也能够关注作家的人格特征。本教材不仅可以作为美国文学普通学习者的培训教材, 也可以供英美文学专业的学生学习使用。

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Prelude >>

American literature mainly refers to the literature produced by people living in the United States. During its early history, America was a series of British colonies on the eastern coast of the present-day United States. Therefore, its literary tradition begins as linked to the broader tradition of English literature. However, unique American characteristics and the breadth of its production usually now cause it to be considered a separate path and tradition.

The New England colonies were the center of early American literature. The revolutionary period contained political writings by Samuel Adams, Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Paine. In the post-war period, Thomas Jefferson's *United States Declaration of Independence* solidified his status as a key American writer. It was in the late 18th and early 19th centuries that the nation's first novels were published. With the War of 1812 and an increasing desire to produce uniquely American literature and culture, a number of key new literary figures emerged, perhaps most prominently Washington Irving and Edgar Allan Poe. In 1836, Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803 – 1882) started a movement known as Transcendentalism. Henry David Thoreau (1817 – 1862) wrote *Walden*, which urges resistance to the dictates of organized society. The political conflict surrounding abolitionism inspired the writings of William Lloyd Garrison and Harriet Beecher Stowe in her world-famous *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. These efforts were supported by the continuation of the slave narrative autobiography, of which the best known example from this period was

Frederick Douglass's *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*, an American Slave.

Nathaniel Hawthorne (1804 – 1864) is notable for his masterpiece *The Scarlet Letter*—a novel about adultery. Hawthorne influenced Herman Melville (1819 – 1891) who is notable for the books *Moby-Dick* and *Billy Budd*. America's two greatest 19th century poets were Walt Whitman (1819 – 1892) and Emily Dickinson (1830 – 1886). American poetry reached its peak in the early-to-mid-20th century, with such noted writers as Wallace Stevens, T. S. Eliot, Robert Frost, Ezra Pound, and E. E. Cummings. Mark Twain (the pen name used by Samuel Langhorne Clemens, 1835 – 1910) was the first major American writer to be born away from the East Coast. Henry James (1843 – 1916) was notable for novels like *The Turn of the Screw*. At the beginning of the 20th century, American novelists included Edith Wharton (1862 – 1937), Stephen Crane (1871 – 1900), and Theodore Dreiser (1871 – 1945). Experimentation in style and form is seen in the works of Gertrude Stein (1874 – 1946).

American writers expressed disillusionment following WWI. The stories and novels of F. Scott Fitzgerald (1896 – 1940) capture the mood of the 1920s, and John Dos Passos wrote about the war. Ernest Hemingway (1899 – 1961) became notable for *The Sun Also Rises* and *A Farewell to Arms*; in 1954, he won the Nobel Prize in Literature. William Faulkner (1897 – 1962) is notable for novels like *The Sound and the Fury*. American drama attained international status only in the 1920s and 1930s, with the works of *Eugene O'Neill*, who won four Pulitzer Prizes and the Nobel Prize. In the middle of the 20th century, American drama was dominated by the work of playwrights Tennessee Williams and Arthur Miller, as well as by the maturation of the American musical.

Depression era writers included John Steinbeck (1902 – 1968), notable for his novel *The Grapes of Wrath*. Henry Miller assumed a unique place in American Literature in the 1930s when his semi-autobi-

ographical novels were banned from the US. From the end of World War II up until, roughly, the late 1960s and early 1970s saw the publication of some of the most popular works in American history such as *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee. America's involvement in World War II influenced the creation of works such as Norman Mailer's *The Naked and the Dead* (1948), Joseph Heller's *Catch-22* (1961) and Kurt Vonnegut Jr.'s *Slaughterhouse-Five* (1969). John Updike was notable for his novel *Rabbit, Run* (1960). Philip Roth explores Jewish identity in American society. From the early 1970s to the present day the most important literary movement has been postmodernism and the flowering of literature by ethnic minority writers.

This book, with vivid illustration of pictures and detailed explanation and Chinese version presents you the best works of American literature and will help you have a profound understanding of the classics. I hope that this book will be helpful for your English learning.

Jiang Xiaoyu

June 2015



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Unit 1

Benjamin Franklin (1706 – 1790)

Bibliography

Benjamin Franklin (1706 – 1790) was one of the Founding Fathers of the United States and in many ways “the First American”. A renowned polymath, Franklin was a leading author, printer, political theorist, politician, postmaster, scientist, inventor, civic activist, statesman, and diplomat. As a scientist, he was a major figure in the American Enlightenment and the history of physics for his discoveries and theories regarding electricity. As an inventor, he is known for the lightning rod, bifocals, and the Franklin stove, among other inventions. He facilitated many civic organizations, including Philadelphia’s fire department and a university.



Franklin earned the title of “The First American” for his early and indefatigable campaigning for colonial unity; as an author and spokesman in London for several colonies, then as the first United States Ambassador to France, he exemplified the emerging American nation. Franklin was foundational in defining the American ethos as a marriage of the practical values of thrift, hard work, education, community spirit, self-governing institutions, and opposition to authoritarianism both political and religious, with the scientific and tolerant values of the Enlightenment. In the words of historian Henry Steele Commager, “In a Franklin could be merged the virtues of Puritanism without its defects,

the illumination of the Enlightenment without its heat.” To Walter Isaacson, this makes Franklin “the most accomplished American of his age and the most influential in inventing the type of society America would become.”

Franklin, always proud of his working class roots, became a successful newspaper editor and printer in Philadelphia, the leading city in the colonies. With two partners he published *the Pennsylvania Chronicle*, a newspaper that was known for its revolutionary sentiments and criticisms of the British policies. He became wealthy publishing *Poor Richard's Almanack* and *The Pennsylvania Gazette*. Franklin was also the printer of books for *the Moravians of Bethlehem, Pennsylvania* (1742 on). Franklin's printed Moravian books are preserved, and can be viewed, at the Moravian Archives located in Bethlehem. Franklin visited Bethlehem many times and stayed at the Moravian Sun Inn.

He played a major role in establishing the University of Pennsylvania and was elected the first president of the American Philosophical Society. Franklin became a national hero in America when as agent for several colonies he spearheaded the effort to have Parliament in London repeal the unpopular Stamp Act. An accomplished diplomat, he was widely admired among the French as American minister to Paris and was a major figure in the development of positive Franco-American relations. His efforts to secure support for the American Revolution by shipments of crucial munitions proved vital for the American war effort.

For many years he was the British postmaster for the colonies, which enabled him to set up the first national communications network. He was active in community affairs, colonial and state politics, as well as national and international affairs. From 1785 to 1788, he served as governor of Pennsylvania. Toward the end of his life, he freed his own slaves and became one of the most prominent abolitionists.

His colorful life and legacy of scientific and political achievement, and status as one of America's the most influential Founding Fathers, have seen Franklin honored on coinage and the MYM100 bill; war-

they do not always get along very well, Ben learns much from James and proves to be quite helpful. When James is arrested for holding subversive political ideas, Ben takes over the paper until James' release. When Ben breaks his contract and leaves for Philadelphia, James grows angry and spiteful.

4. Andrew Bradford—A printer in Philadelphia, he is unable to hire Franklin but he does allow Franklin to stay in his house. Later on, when Franklin runs his own paper, the two are competitors until Bradford leaves the printing industry.
5. Samuel Keimer—The printer in Philadelphia for whom Franklin works. Their relationship deteriorates over time, and eventually they have a falling out. Keimer, however, tries to make amends when he realizes that Ben can supply him with important printing tools.
6. John Read—A resident of Philadelphia, he houses Franklin shortly after Franklin arrives in Philadelphia.
7. Deborah Read—The daughter of John Read, she eventually marries Franklin even though their courtship is interrupted by his 18-month trip to England, during which time she marries another man who disappears thus allowing her marriage to Franklin.

Summary

Part One

Part One of the *Autobiography* is addressed to Franklin's son William, at that time (1771) Royal Governor of New Jersey. While in England at the estate of the Bishop of St. Asaph in Twyford, Franklin, now 65 years old, begins by saying that it may be agreeable to his son to know some of the incidents of his father's life; so with a week's uninterrupted leisure, he is beginning to write them down for William. He starts with some anecdotes of his grandfather, uncles, father and mother. He deals with his childhood, his fondness for reading, and his service as an apprentice to his brother James Franklin, a Boston printer and the publisher of the *New England Courant*. After improving his writing

skills through study of the Spectator by Joseph Addison and Sir Richard Steele, he writes an anonymous paper and slips it under the door of the printing house by night.

Part Two

The second part begins with two letters Franklin received in the early 1780s while in Paris, encouraging him to continue the Autobiography, of which both correspondents have read Part One. (Although Franklin does not say so, there had been a breach with his son William after the writing of Part One, since the father had sided with the Revolutionaries and the son had remained loyal to the British Crown.)

At Passy, a suburb of Paris, Franklin begins Part Two in 1784, giving a more detailed account of his public library plan. He then discusses his “bold and arduous Project of arriving at moral Perfection”, listing thirteen virtues he wishes to perfect in himself. He creates a book with columns for each day of the week, in which he marks with black spots his offenses against each virtue. Of these virtues, he notices that Order is the hardest for him to keep. He eventually realizes that perfection is not to be attained, but feels himself better and happier because of his attempt.

Part Three

Beginning in August 1788 when Franklin had returned to Philadelphia, the author says he will not be able to utilize his papers as much as he had expected, since many were lost in the recent Revolutionary War. He has, however, found and quotes a couple of his writings from the 1730s that survived. One is the “Substance of an intended Creed” consisting of what he then considered to be the “essentials” of all religions. He had intended this as a basis for a projected sect but, Franklin says, did not pursue the project.

In 1732, Franklin first publishes his Poor Richard’s Almanac, which becomes very successful. He also continues his profitable newspaper. In 1734, a preacher named Rev. Samuel Hemphill arrives from County Tyrone Ireland; Franklin supports him and writes pamphlets on

his behalf. However, someone finds out that Hemphill has been plagiarizing portions of his sermons from others, although Franklin rationalizes this by saying he would rather hear good sermons taken from others than poor sermons of the man's own composition.

Franklin studies languages, reconciles with his brother James, and loses a four-year-old son to smallpox. Franklin's club, the Junto, grows and breaks up into subordinate clubs. Franklin becomes Clerk of the General Assembly in 1736, and the following year becomes Comptroller to the Postmaster General, which makes it easier to get reports and fulfill subscriptions for his newspaper. He proposes improvements to the city's watch and fire prevention regulations.

In 1740 he invents the Franklin stove, refusing a patent on the device because it was for "the good of the people". He proposes an academy, which opens after money is raised by subscription for it and it expands so much that a new building has to be constructed for it. Franklin obtains other governmental positions (city councilman, alderman, burgess, justice of the peace) and helps negotiate a treaty with the Indians. After helping Dr. Thomas Bond establish a hospital, he helps pave the streets of Philadelphia and draws up a proposal for Dr. John Fothergill about doing the same in London. In 1753 Franklin becomes Deputy Postmaster General.

The next year, as war with the French is expected, representatives of the several colonies, including Franklin, meet with the Indians to discuss defense; Franklin at this time draws up a proposal for the union of the colonies, but it is not adopted. General Braddock arrives with two regiments, and Franklin helps him secure wagons and horses, but the general refuses to take Ben's warning about danger from hostile Indians during Braddock's planned march to Frontenac (now Kingston, Ontario). When Braddock's troops are subsequently attacked, the general is mortally wounded and his forces abandon their supplies and flee.

A militia is formed on the basis of a proposal by Benjamin Franklin, and the governor asks him to take command of the northwestern

frontier. With his son as aide de camp, Franklin heads for Gnadenhut, raising men for the militia and building forts. Returning to Philadelphia, he is chosen colonel of the regiment; his officers honor him by personally escorting him out of town. This attention offends the proprietor of the colony (Thomas Penn, son of William Penn) when someone writes an account of it in a letter to him, whereupon the proprietor complains to the government in England about Franklin.

Now the Autobiography discusses “the Rise and Progress of [Franklin’s] Philosophical Reputation”. He starts experiments with electricity and writes letters about them that are published in England as a book. Franklin’s description of his experiments is translated into French, and Abbé Nollet, who is offended because this work calls into question his own theory of electricity, publishes his own book of letters attacking Franklin. Declining to respond on the grounds that anyone could duplicate and thus verify his experiments, Franklin sees another French author refute Nollet, and as Franklin’s book is translated into other languages, its views are gradually accepted and Nollet’s are discarded. Franklin is also voted an honorary member of the Royal Society.

Part Four

Written sometime between November 1789 and Franklin’s death on April 17, 1790, this section is very brief. After Franklin and his son arrive in London, the former is counselled by Dr. Fothergill on the best way to advocate his cause on behalf of the colonies. Franklin visits Lord Granville, president of the King’s Privy Council, who asserts that the king is the legislator of the colonies. Franklin then meets the proprietaries (the switch to the plural is Franklin’s, so apparently others besides Thomas Penn are involved). But the respective sides are far from any kind of agreement. The proprietaries ask Franklin to write a summary of the colonists’ complaints; when he does so, their solicitor for reasons of personal enmity delays a response. Over a year later, the proprietaries finally respond to the assembly, regarding the summary to be a “flimsy Justification of their Conduct”. During this delay the assembly has pre-



vailed on the governor to pass a taxation act, and Franklin defends the act in English court so that it can receive royal assent. While the assembly thanks Franklin, the proprietaries, enraged at the governor, turn him out and threaten legal action against him; in the last sentence, Franklin tells us the governor “despised the Threats, and they were never put in Execution”.

Comments on *Autobiography*

It is regarded as one of the most important works of American literature produced during the 18th century. It is a record of a man rising to wealth and fame from a state of poverty and obscurity, an account of the colorful career of America's first self-made man. It is perhaps the first real post-revolutionary American writing as well as the first real autobiography in English. First of all, it is a puritan document. The most famous section describes his scientific scheme of self-examination and self-improvement.

Its style shows the pattern of Puritan simplicity, directness, and concision. The narrative is lucid, the structure is simple, the imagery is homely. It is an exemplary illustration of the American style of writing.

“Firsts” associated with the *Autobiography*

1. It is considered the first popular self-help book ever published.
2. It was the first and only work written in American before the 19th century that has retained bestseller popularity since its release.
3. It was the first major secular American autobiography.
4. It is also the first real account of the American Dream in action as told from a man who experienced it firsthand.

Introduction to Part One

The *Autobiography* opens with a salutation to Ben Franklin's son, William Franklin who at the time was the royal governor of New Jersey. Franklin is writing in the summer of 1771 on vacation in a small town about 50 miles south of London. Franklin says that because his son may