

A Review On Lectures Of American Literature

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American Literature and the Structure of the Lecture Course

The American Literature course is composed of 15 lectures taught in a very legible and fascinating manner. This course not only provides an overview of American Literature's background, and the basis of it laid down, but also provides a wide canvas portraying how the literature has eventually got incorporated into spoken English as we commonly know it today. The first lecture starts off by introducing the letter that was written by Christopher Columbus in 1492 when he set foot for the first time in the Caribbean Basin. It intended to inform his discovery of new land as he penned down his adventurous expedition. In the year 1606, authors like John Smith were employed to rule one of the hometowns in Virginia. This was the era when the English people made their first move to conquer the New World. (Library of Congress, n.d.)

American literature is composed of Voice which is the mode of communicating with the audience. Its different constituents include first-person narrative and second-person or third-person narrative to describe the story. Then, it describes the two types of authors who describe the story in their own way. Either the narrator is trustworthy as he describes the story himself, or his description could be obtrusive. The tone of the story is set up as the reader understands the context of the narrator or his characters. A story can include more than one voice in the form of the storyteller, the characters of his choice, and the author.

The Puritans believed that they were fighters in the way of God and that every matter on this planet was a consequence of God's plan. They inhabited the New World intending to create a quixotic society where they would implement the concept of democracy and faith. It was this time when the [Salem Witch Trials](#) (1692) encouraged the compartmentalization of the church from the state. Then arrived the time period of December 1773, which was marked by the revolutionary events. People rebelled against the uninformed taxations levied on them; nevertheless, in 1776, various authors archived pieces of paper such as *Common Sense* by Thomas Paine and Benjamin Franklin – "Remarks Concerning the Savages of North America" that described the unjust Britain rule whilst motivating youth for independence simultaneously.

Poetry, Drama, Prose, and the Variety of Literary Form

There are different types of literary forms of American literature, such as poems, drama, and prose, which are further into two types, i.e. fiction and non-fiction. However, there are various circumstances where fiction and non-fiction genres can be moulded or blended together. The wordsmiths of the early 1800s included Washington Irving, Edgar Allan Poe, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Ralph Waldo Emerson, and Henry David Thoreau, who jotted down and contributed the unforgettable and tasteful literature that is still appreciated.

The literary period of the American Renaissance (1825-1865) and literary movements such as American Romanticism and American Realism is considered the most important time period in the history of American literature. Romantic writers such as Thoreau and Emerson believed in fantasy and refuted mutiny, henceforth rebelling against American urbanization. They practised transcendentalism by loving nature and self-proclamation. These writers focused on the ordinary lifestyle of man and transcribed it in a beautiful manner. Then came the Civil War (1861-1865), which started as a result of slave rebellion, poor financial stability of the country, and its virtue. As a result of amendments in the country's law, the president of that time, Abraham Lincoln, nullified the concept of keeping slaves in the country. Subsequently, the post-war rise of journalism in the country led to the evolution of the pragmatic type of writing in literature. (OpenStax, 2022)

Douglass, Twain, Black Elk, and Du Bois in the Late Nineteenth Century

The authors of the late 1800s, such as Frederick Douglass, Mark Twain, Black Elk, and W. E. B. DuBois, wrote various legendary autobiographies and short stories. Amongst them were well-renowned poets like Walt Whitman, who wrote political poems that were, although non-rhythmical, revolutionary at the same time. Speaking of the different types of characters that are used in American literature, we can come across two such types. The character could be simple and monotonous, peeking at least the audience's interest whilst, on the other hand, it could be a deep and true-to-life kind of character that promulgates the emotional connection of the audience with itself. With respect to the story-telling genre, it is truly in the hands of a writer to either evolve a character as the story moves forward or flat-line it with the development of the story.

The literary form of poetry uses the poet's imagination and perfect choice of words to communicate his ideas to the audience. He not only uses the word-for-word description of his ideas but also uses the concept of symbolism and plays with words in an innovative manner. Then comes the literary period of Modernism (1900-1950) that covered World War I (1904-1915), the Great Depression (1929-1940), and World War II (1942-1945). Modernist writers such as Sigmund Freud and Charles

Darwin believed that the orthodox way of running a country is outdated and requires revolution. It was the same time when the Harlem Renaissance started. Modernist poets like Robert Frost, Carl Sandburg, and many others left a noticeable mark in the history of American literature by contributing poetic pieces like the 'Pasture' and 'Chicago'. Fictional storytelling was also appreciated a lot in the Modernist era, and writers such as F. Scott Fitzgerald penned the evergreen novel 'The Great Gatsby' which is still loved today.

The genre of drama has also been largely acknowledged in the late 1800s, mostly using the context of fiction in its portrayal. A drama is composed of various characters who are trained to perform different acts or scenes according to the directorial cue, either in the form of a monologue or soliloquy. Then came the post-modernism period, which started in 1950 and is still going on. The writers of the post-modern era think beyond traditional storytelling, giving way to the [concept of feminism](#), the use of high-end technology and the amalgam of fiction and non-fiction prose. The African American writer Toni Morrison who wrote the short story "Recitatif" has been acclaimed as the best writer and has been awarded with the Nobel Prize in American literature. (OpenStax, 2014)

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