

AMERICAN LITERATURE

1. THE AGE OF FAITH - Early American literature (1607-1750)

- **Captain John Smith** (1580-1631)
 - He helped to found
 - - a captivity narrative about the famous story of his rescue by
- **William Bradford** (1588-1657)
 - He was among the passengers of the
 - He was elected governor of
 - - a compelling account of the colony's beginning
 - - a document signed on the English ship
- **John Winthrop** (1588-1649)
 - He became the governor of Colony,
 - He reached America on a ship called
 - - a lay sermon delivered aboard the ship
 - He admonishes the colonists that their new community will be a watched by the World.

Massachusetts Bay

Plymouth

Pocahontas

Of Plymouth Plantation

Jamestown

and New England

Mayflower

'city upon the hill'

A Model of Christian Charity

Mayflower Compact

Arbella

The General History of Virginia

2. THE AGE OF REASON - the Revolutionary Period in American Literature (1750-1800)

- **Benjamin Franklin** (1706-1790)
 - He was the first great self-made man in America.
 - - his essay, a *collection* of adages
 - *God helps them that help themselves.*
 - *There will be sleeping enough in the grave.*
 - - unfinished record of his own life which is written to advise his son.
- **Thomas Paine** (1737-1809)
 - - a stirring pamphlet in favour of a complete break with England.
 - It is the most historically important pamphlet in American history
- **Thomas Jefferson** (1743-1826) - was the third President of the United States.
 - - the most important document in the political history of the USA
 - It claims that all men had a natural right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

Common Sense

The Way to Wealth

The Declaration of Independence

The Autobiography

3. American Romanticism

Leaves of Grass

The Last of the Mohicans

'The Raven'

Annabel Lee

The Black Cat

The Pit and the Pendulum

'The Legend of Sleepy Hollow'

- **Washington Irving** (1783–1859) – was the first American writer to win international reputation
 - He is the father of short story – he introduced the genre to American context.
 - – a town teacher is chased by a headless horseman
- **James Fenimore Cooper** (1789–1851)
 - In Europe, he became known as 'the American Walter Scott'
 - – It depicts life in the frontier, which was considered a very exotic topic.
- **Edgar Allan Poe** (1809-1849)
 - – a narrative poem often noted for its musicality and supernatural atmosphere.
 - – his last complete poem exploring the theme of the death of a beautiful woman.
 - He also wrote horror and detective stories:
 - – about the torments endured by a prisoner of the Spanish Inquisition
 - – the narrator has a strong affection for pets until he turns to abusing them
- **Walt Whitman** (1819-1892) - was an American poet, essayist and journalist. He influenced the beat generation.
 - – has a symbolical title, because grass is regarded as a symbol of freedom.

4. American Renaissance

- **Henry David Thoreau** (1817-1862)
 - – his masterpiece,
 - – an essay about his theory of passive resistance
- **Nathaniel Hawthorne** (1804–1864)
 - – considered his masterpiece.
 - It is a story set in Puritan Massachusetts Bay Colony about a woman convicted of adultery and forced to wear a letter A on her chest for the world to see her crime.
- **Herman Melville** (1819–1891) - was born in New York City.
 - – his greatest novel and one of the most significant novels in American literature
 - Moby Dick was a Great White Whale that was hunted by Captain Ahab and eventually caused his death.

Moby-Dick

"Civil Disobedience"

Walden

The Scarlet Letter

5. Realism in American literature

The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn

Of Mice and Men

What Masie knew

The Adventures of Tom Sawyer

- **Henry James** (1843-1916)
 - He introduced psychological novel to American literature.
 - – a novel about a sensitive daughter of divorced parents
- **Mark Twain** real name: **Samuel Langhorne Clemens** (1835-1910)
 - – a novel about a boy growing up in a small town along the Mississippi River.
 - – his greatest novel
 - The protagonist is a typical westerner (American) but not educated, close to nature, very realistic and pragmatic.
- **John Steinbeck** (1902 – 1968) - American author and winner of the Nobel Prize in 1962
 - – a novella about an unusual friendship between two migrant workers

6. American literature in the 20th century

was a group of young US writers of the 1920s,

- They rejected literally tradition and American post World War I values.

emerged in the 50s.

- It was a group of poets and novelists who rebelled against the conventions of mainstream American life and writing.

The Beat Generation

The Lost Generation

A Coney Island of the Mind

"I Am Waiting"

One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest

The Old Man and The Sea

The Great Gatsby

On the Road

Ernest Hemingway (1898 – 1961) in full **Ernest Miller Hemingway**

- He was an American novelist and short-story writer, awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1954.
 - – a novella which contributed to Hemingway's Nobel prize.

Francis Scott Key Fitzgerald (1896 – 1940)

- It is the American writer most closely identified with the 1920s, which he named the Jazz Age.
 - – his best known novel about the American dream of the self-made man.

Lawrence Ferlinghetti (1919-)

- He is an American poet, one of the founders of the Beat movement in San Francisco in the mid-1950s.
- – a collection of poetry
- – a poem in which he expresses his view on America, he is very critical.

Jack Kerouac (1922 – 1969)

- – a manifesto of the beat generation
 - It that was based on the spontaneous road trips of Kerouac and his friends across mid-century America.

Ken Kesey (1935 - 2001) - was an American author, Kesey worked for a while as a ward attendant in a mental hospital.

- He considered himself a link between the Beat Generation of the 1950s and the hippies of the 1960s.
- - The novel is set in a psychiatric ward that is dominated by a character called the Big Nurse, who appears to have limitless power over the inmates.

7. OTHER WELL-KNOWN AMERICAN AUTHORS

Sophie's Choice

Fahrenheit 451

The Green Mile

Catch-22

Lolita

Ray Bradbury (1920 - 2012)

- – a dystopian novel
 - It presents a future American society where reading is outlawed, and firemen burn books.

Vladimir Nabokov (1899 – 1977)

- – a sad account of a middle-aged professor who falls for a twelve-year-old schoolgirl.

Joseph Heller (1923-1999) was a New York author who served in the air force in World War II.

- – a dark comedy about American soldiers who serve in Europe.

William Styron (1925 – 2006)

- – poignant and dramatic account of the Holocaust

Stephen King is one of the most influential authors of today.

- *The Shining*, *The Shawshank Redemption*, and