

# Fri 4- American Literature timeline

Made with a creative frenzy

## Outline/instructions

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### Colonial/Early

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↻ Period of early American history, includes ealy religious and political writers before /during the American Revolution as well as creation of an American identity soon afterwards.

(Religious leaders were influential in early colonies/settlements/communities and their sermons and intercommunication are some of the most organized records of early American writing available.)

Political writings such as the Federalist Papers and the AntiFederalist Papers were written by the "Founding Fathers" including the most famous, although they were published as essays and anonymously at the time. (Feds - James Madison, Alexander Hamilton, Antifeds - Jefferson)

Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin - combines the political with the idealized, "rags to riches" story (mostly fictionalized)

### Romanticism

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↻ **Basic info**

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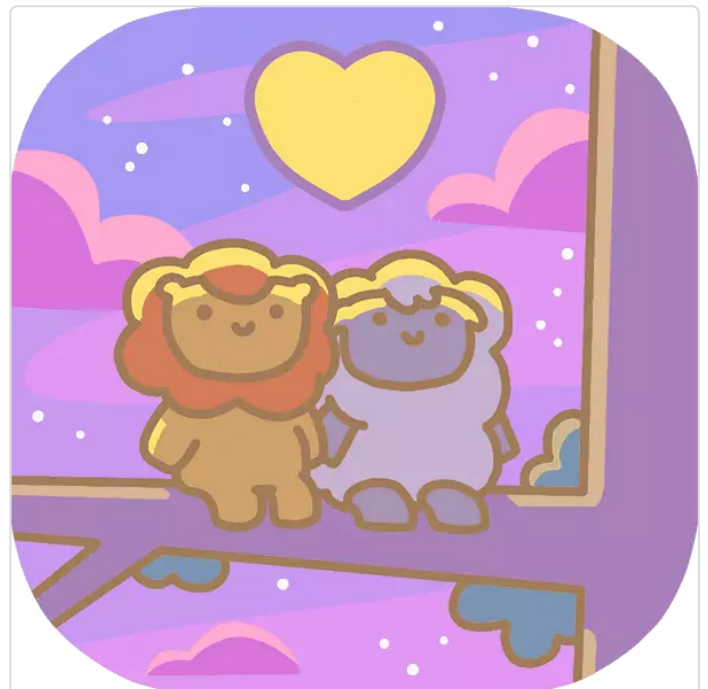
↻ **Characteristics**

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↻ **Romanticism**

Romanticism was a literary, artistic and philosophical movement that began in 1830 and ended in 1870. It emphasized the nature, symbolism and individualism. Main themes are: the freedom of the individual and emotional connection to nature. Examples of American authors: William Cullen Bryant, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Emily Dickinson, Edgar Allan Poe, Walt Whitman.

The purpose of the movement was to advocate for the importance of subjectivity, imagination, and appreciation of nature in society and culture during the Age of Enlightenment and the Industrial Revolution. Authors often rejected social conventions. They were inspired by Middle Ages and their values such as chivalry, in contrast to their own time's focus on materialism.



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⇒ **More(?) poets, specific authors...**

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⇒ **Edgar Allan Poe**

Poet, author, editor and literary critic. He is known for his poetry, but also short stories. He often wrote horror like and mysterious poetry. He is credited for inventing detective fiction genre.

Works: The Fall of the House of Usher - Its a short story about the moral and societal fall of the family of Ushers.

The Raven: Poem. Everyone kinda knows this one.



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⇒ **Nathaniel Hawthorne**

Novelist and short story writer. He is most famous for his tales of colonial national history. His work often focuses on history, morality and religion.

Works: The Scarlet letter - Historical fiction set in 17th century Massachusetts. About a woman who gets pregnant with a guy thats not her husband and faces the societal consequences.

The House of the Seven Gables

The Birth-mark



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⇒ **Emily Dickinson**

She is the one of the most important figures in American poetry, but she was not well known during her life. Her poems used unusual forms and dealt with topics of death, suffering, society and spirituality.

Works: Poems - Hope is the thing with feathers; Because I could not stop for Death; Success is counted sweetest



## Naturalism and Realism

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### ⇒ Naturalism - basic info

Emerged in the late 19th and early 20th century. Portrays human life in a deterministic fashion, leaving little to no means of changing destiny. As such naturalistic works focus on characters in harsh conditions, struggling against the environment they were born in.

Much like realism, it tries to portray life as it is with no artistic flourish. It pays great attention to detail often leading to gruesome depictions.

In contrast to realism, it almost exclusively sees life in a pessimistic way. Characters usually fail to win against the odds of life and are met with a tragedy.

The most prominent authors include Stephen Crane, Frank Norris and Donna M. Campbell.

### ⇒ Authors - Naturalism

#### Frank Norris

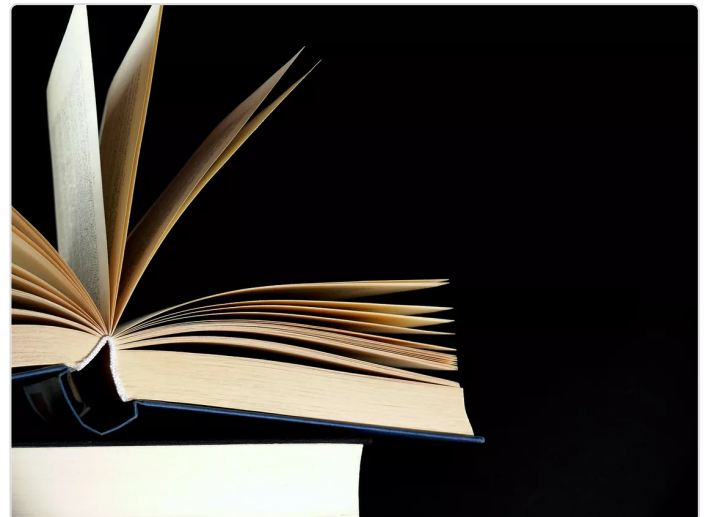
- Reputable novelist
- The Pit, The Octopus: A Story of California
- Racist and antisemitic opinions :(((

#### Jack London

- Real name: John Chaney
- Renowned novelist - The Crowd
- Socialistic worldviews
- The Call of The Wild, The White Fang

#### Stephen Crane

- Poet and a novelist
- Writing style close to impressionism
- Depressing themes like war, death, poverty
- A poem called The Open Boat
- Novels: Maggie: A Girl of the streets, Red Badge of Courage



### ⇒ Realism - basic info

American Realism was a style in visual art, music and even literature, it's main objective desired to depict contemporary social realities as they truly were and in particular concentrated on everyday life of ordinary people. This movement emerged in mid-19th century, peaked at the beginning of 20th century and persisted successfully ever since, including major works by famous artists such as painter Robert Henri, writers Mark Twain or Stephen Crane and composer Scott Joplin. In conclusions it stood as an inspiration for naturalism and many other art styles, as well as influencing the overall socio-cultural life in the United States.



## ⇒ **Mark Twain and his work of realism**

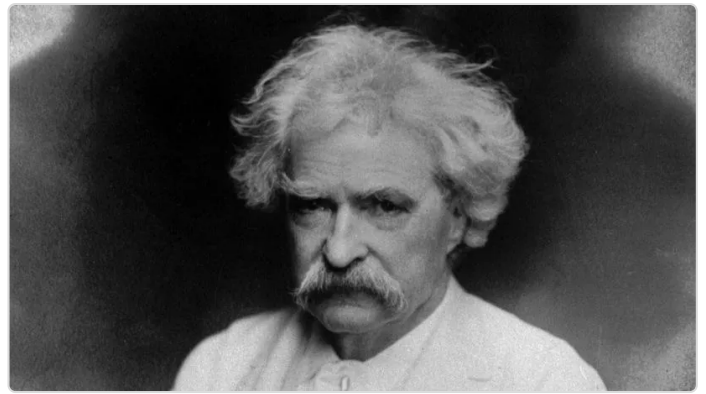
Real name: Samuel Clemens

Most popular realistic novels

- The Adventures of Tom Sawyer
- The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn

Use of realism

- Regional dialects throughout the journey of HF
- Depiction of the social situation in The South, slavery and racial issues
- Contrast of the cruel reality and a romantic illusion



## ⇒ **Basic historical context**

1776 - The Declaration of Independence

1789 - George Washington elected as the first president of the US, adopting the Bill of rights and establishing the federal judiciary

-> Manifest destiny

Idea to conquer the whole of America to the west coast/Pacific ocean as a natural, God given right to the new state and it's people

= rapid expansion to the west, clashes with French, later Spanish/Mexican and British troupes, mainly with the natives

= industrialisation in the North X heavily agricultural South resulting in social injustice on both sides, and Slavery

-> population and immigration boom, exploiting of newly conquered lands, massacres of the natives, newly declared states = tension about the institution of Slavery

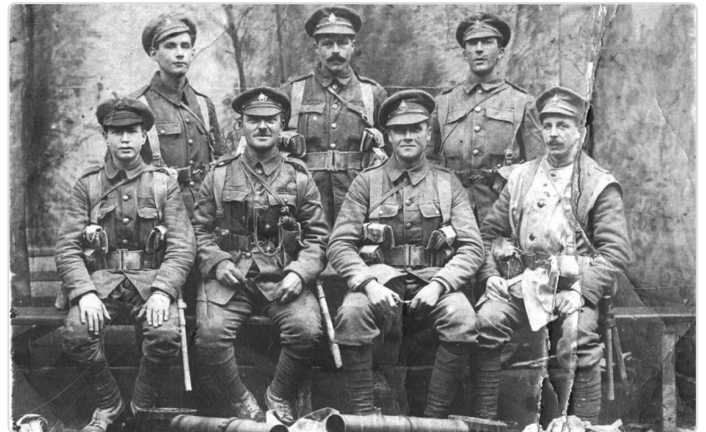
-> Abraham Lincoln elected as the 16th president's of the US, Southern secession and the bloody Civil war

-> abolishing of Slavery, yet racial segregation laws persist

## **The Lost Generation**

⇒ ...

- Authors who reached adulthood during World War I
- Affected by World War I, Spanish flu, The Great Depression
- Till 30's: their work reflected war and other tragic events
- After 30's: focused on different topics
- Characteristic traits:
  - Feelings of despair
  - Cannot integrate into society well
  - Their protagonists are often lonely, sad, broken, skeptical, hopelessness





## ↪ Ernest Hemingway

Full name: Ernest Miller Hemingway

Born: 1899

Died: 1961 (suicide)

Prizes:

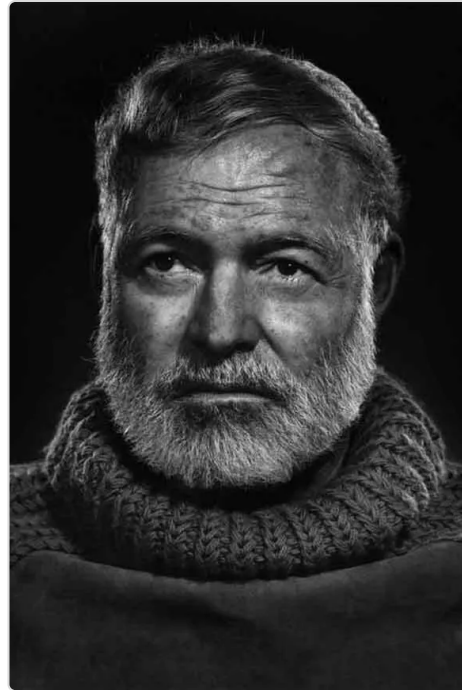
- Pulitzer Prize for Fiction (1953)
- Nobel Prize in Literature (1954)

Life:

- Volunteer in 1. WW - Italian front, reporter in Spanish civil war
- After 2. WW - lived in Kuba and USA

Work:

- The old man and the sea
- For Whom the Bell Tolls
- A Farewell to Arms



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## ↪ Francis Scott Fitzgerald

Born: 1896

Died: 1940

Life:

- Volunteer in 1. WW

Work:

- Mostly focused on jazz age
- Fated love
- Protagonists conflict with "american dream"
- The Great Gatsby
- Tales of the Jazz Age



## ↳ Gertrude Stein

Born: 1874

Died: 1946

Life:

- Hosted a Paris salon where famous figures would meet (Pablo Picasso, Ernest Hemingway, F. Scott Fitzgerald)

Interesting:

- Created the term "Lost generation" in her short story "The Good Anna"



## The Beat Generation

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### ↳ Basic info

### ↳ The Beat Generation

Basic info:

- literary group, started in the Columbia University where the main authors met, 1944
- USA, Post-World War II. era
- the fifties, McCarthyism, The Cold War
- rejection of the standard values
- free-spirited lifestyle, drinking alcohol, using drugs, listening to jazz music, sexual liberation
- inspired by buddhism, east-asian religion
- they recited in bars and restaurants accompanied by jazz music
- Beat as in tired or beaten down but also upbeat
- Poets: Allen Ginsberg - the poem "Howl" is the essential work for the beat generation  
Lawrence Ferlinghetti - he created the bookstore City Lights - the centre of the group in San Francisco  
next poets: Gregory Corso or Gary Snyder
- Prose writers: Jack Kerouac - "On the Road" novel which describes the postwar life in the USA  
Charles Bukowski - the novel "Hollywood"  
William S. Burroughs - novel "The Naked Lunch"

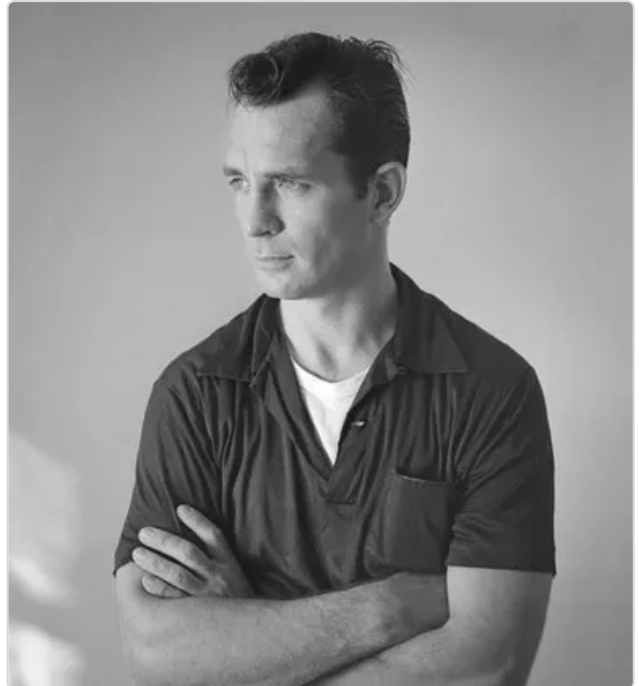


↔ **Allen Ginsberg**



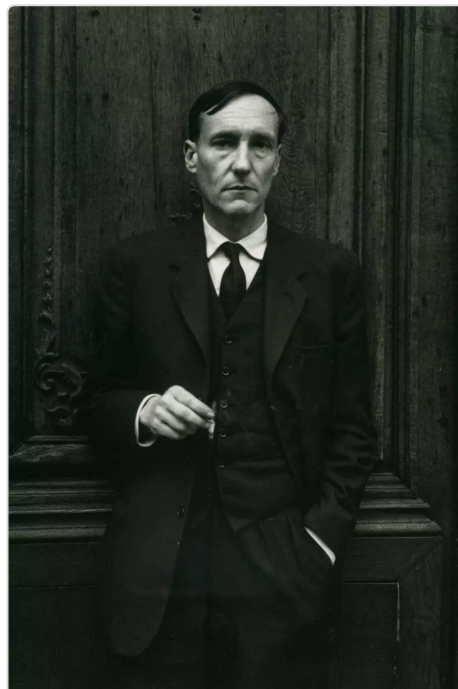
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↔ **Jack Kerouac**

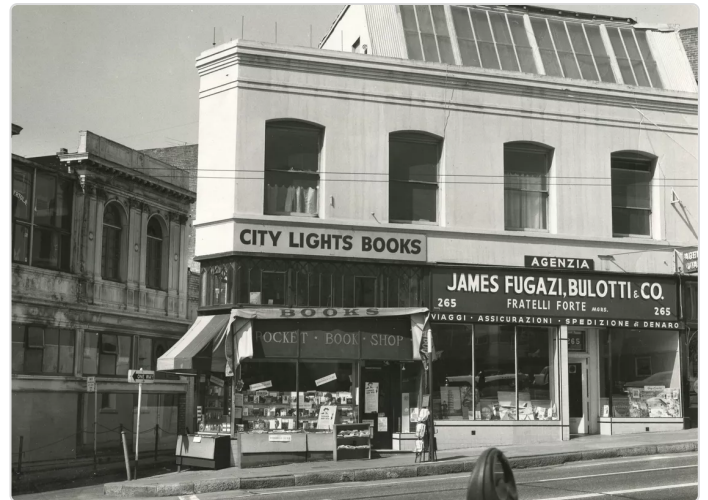


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↔ **William S. Burroughs**



⇒ **City Lights Books, San Francisco**



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**Modern/Contemporary**

⇒ **Modernism and contemporary literature**

Modernism:

- Characteristics: Individualism, Experimentation, Absurdity, Symbolism, Formalism, Advances in science and technology

Period: 1910 - 1945

Contemporary lit.:

- literature that is being written in the now about the now

Characteristics:

reality-based stories, strong characters, believable story

