

Thu 1 - American Literature

Made with a creative frenzy

Outline/instructions

- Colonial/Early Romanticism
- Realism and Naturalism
- Modern/Contemporary

"beat" and "lost" (generations)

Main instructions

As a group find some information and try to summarize it into a short form. (does not need to be in complete sentences)

Describe the period and choose at least one author to describe (some of their works and/or why they are the best representative of the period).

Colonial/Early

- Period of early American history, includes early 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

Basic info

19th century
-revolt against classicism and it's values - reason, order, logic

Characteristics

-imagination, nature, emotions, individualism
-also Transcendentalism (specific for the American literature)

-first novels by African American authors

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

Edgar Allan Poe

- sorrow and suffering
- inventor of the detective fictions
- main character - mad genius
- "The Raven" (poem)

Jack London

- novelist
- commercial fiction and American magazines
- White Fang (novel)

Harriet E. Wilson

- African American woman
- "Our Nig: Sketches from the Life of a Free Black" (autobiographical novel)



Naturalism and Realism

⇒ **Naturalism - basic info**

⇒ **naturalism in America**

Naturalism is a literary movement, it started in the late 19th century, in Europe and the United States. It is an extension of realism, with interest in portraying life accurately and objectively. Naturalist literature was often into dark human nature and depressing subject, including poverty, violence. It often portrayed characters in desperate situations, struggling with the harsh realities of life. Naturalism in American literature reflected broader societal problems of the time, including the impact of industrialization, urbanization.

Main authors:

- Jack London - The Call of the Wild
 - Stephen Crane - "Maggie: A Girl of the Streets"
 - Upton Sinclair - The Jungle
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↪ Realism

- 19th and 20th century
 - depicts reality truthfully, without embellishments, depicts truly existing things and phenomena
 - does not work with classicist or romantic aesthetic ideals
 - rejects romantic imagery, moodiness and dreaming
 - it does not strive for picturesque, but for truth
 - shows the present, not the past
 - themes are drawn from the countryside and simple facts
 - depicts ordinary tired people
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↪ Realism- American authors

1. **Mark Twain:**
 - “The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn”
 - “The Adventures of Tom Sawyer”
 2. **Henry James:**
 - “The Portrait of a Lady”
 - “The Turn of the Screw”
 3. **Theodore Dreiser:**
 - “Sister Carrie”
 - “An American Tragedy”
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↪ Realism- authors

- George Orwell- “1984” and “Animal Farm”
- Leo Tolstoy- “Anna Karenina” and “War and Peace”
- Honoré de Balzac
- Emile Zola
- Charles Dickens
- Gustave Flaubert

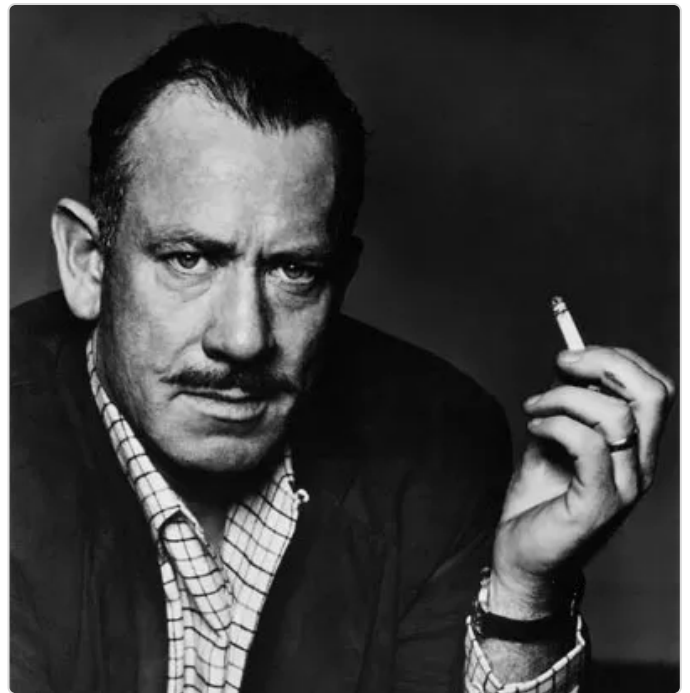
The Lost Generation

⇒ **John Steinbeck**

Nobel prize in literature 1962
themes of fate and injustice
everyman protagonists
most of his work set in central California

Books

Of Mice and Men
The Grapes of Wrath - Pulitzer Prize
East of Eden



⇒ **Ernest Hemingway**

=Nobel prize in literature

-The Old Man and the Sea
-For Whom the Bell Tolls
-A Farewell to Arms

⇒ **Basic info**

is used for a group of **American writers** who came of age **during World War I** and established their literary reputations in the **1920s**

The term

was coined by **Gertrude Stein** to categorise a group of American writers who **moved to**, and lived in, **Paris** during the that time.

Characteristics

The generation was "lost" in the sense that its inherited values were no longer relevant in the postwar world "disoriented, wandering, directionless" spirit of many of the war's survivors in the early postwar period

⇒ **Francis Scott Fitzgerald**

focus on the Jazz age, novels
novelist, essayist, and short story writer
popular after his death

Books

- The Great Gatsby
- Tender is the Night



The Beat Generation

⇒ **Basic info**

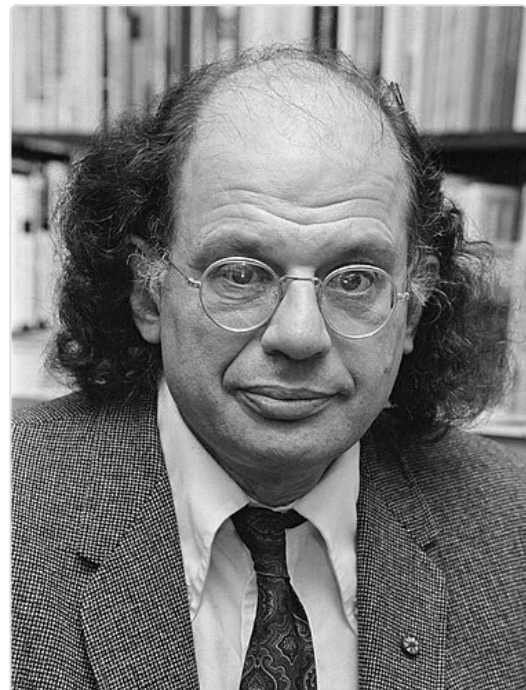
post WWII, 1950s - 1960s

- Rejection of standart narative values
- making spiritual quests
- exploration of religion
- experimentation with drugs
- rejection of economic materialism
- sexual liberation



⇒ **Allen Ginsberg**

- Nominated for Pulitzer price
- He was gay
- his mom was jewish and paranoid
- he stole and abused drugs
- 1965 was expelled out of Czechoslovak Republic because he was elected king of "majales"
- "Howl and poems" (1956)



⇒ **Jack Kerouac**

On the Road



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

