

19th Century American Literature

The following list of literary and critical works, ranging from the beginning of the nineteenth century and into the first decade of the twentieth, is designed with two general goals in mind. First, this wide-ranging list contains texts that are generally considered to be among the most important works written during the period. Though we are wary of the term "canonical," it is also the case that professionals seeking expertise in the field should be familiar with the vast majority of these titles. Second, the list has been constructed with the intention of illustrating in broad strokes some of the fundamental themes and concepts of the peculiarly American ideologies that arose during the time period covered. While it is true that "ideology" can mean many things to many people, it is also clear that large amounts of effort in the field of American studies have historically been devoted to the meaning and effects of race, slavery, and conquest; the study of the rise of American empire; and the lingering influence of such concepts as "myth and symbol," American exceptionalism, and the American dream. The titles presented here are illustrative of these rhetorical and ideological constructs.

- 1) Alcott, Louisa May. *Little Women* (1868)
- 2) Alger, Horatio. *Ragged Dick* (1868)
- 3) Bellamy, Edward. *Looking Backward: 2000 - 1887* (1888)
- 4) Bierce, Ambrose. *Tales of Soldiers and Civilians* (1891)
- 5) Chesnut, Charles. *The Marrow of Tradition* (1901)
- 6) Chopin, Kate. *The Awakening* (1899)
- 7) Cooper, James Fenimore. *The Pioneers* (1828)
- 8) Crane, Stephen. *The Red Badge of Courage* (1895)
- 9) Dickinson, Emily. *Final Harvest* (Back Bay Books)
- 10) Douglass, Frederick. *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass* (1845)
- 11) Dreiser, Theodore. *Sister Carrie* (1900)
- 12) Du Bois, W. E. B. *The Souls of Black Folk* (1903)
- 13) Emerson, Ralph Waldo. Selected Essays: "Nature" (1836), "The American Scholar" (1837), "War" (1838), "The Divinity School Address" (1838), "Self-Reliance" (1841), "Circles" (1841), "Experience" (1844), "The Poet" (1844),
- 14) Fern, Fanny. *Ruth Hall* (1854)
- 15) Hawthorne, Nathaniel. *The Scarlet Letter* (1850)
- 16) Hawthorne, Nathaniel. Selected Tales: "My Kinsman, Major Molineux" (1832), "Young Goodman Brown" (1835), "Endicott and the Red Cross" (1836), "The Maypole of Merry Mount" (1836), "The Minister's Black Veil" (1836), "Rappaccini's Daughter" (1844), "Ethan Brand" (1850)
- 17) Howells, William Dean. *The Rise of Silas Lapham* (1885)
- 18) Irving, Washington. *The Sketch Book of Geoffrey Crayon* (1820)
- 19) Jacobs, Harriet. *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* (1861)
- 20) James, Henry. *The American* (1877)
- 21) Jewett, Sarah Orne. *The Country of the Pointed Firs* (1896)
- 22) Lincoln, Abraham. Selected Speeches: The "House Divided" Speech (1858); The Cooper Union Speech (1860); "First Inaugural" (1861); "Gettysburg Address" (1863); "Second Inaugural" (1865)

- 23) London, Jack. *Call of the Wild* (1903)
- 24) Melville, Herman. *Moby-Dick* (1851)
- 25) Melville, Herman. *Selected Tales*: "Bartleby the Scrivener" (1853), "Benito Cereno" (1855)
- 26) Norris, Frank. *McTeague* (1899)
- 27) Phelps, Elizabeth Stuart. *The Gates Ajar* (1868)
- 28) Poe, Edgar Allan. *Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym* (1838)
- 29) Poe, Edgar Allan. *Selected Tales*: "The Man of the Crowd" (1840), "The Murders in the Rue Morgue" (1840), "The Gold-Bug" (1843), "A Tale of the Ragged Mountains" (1844), "The Fall of the House of Usher" (1843), "The Purloined Letter" (1844-1845)
- 30) Riis, Jacob. *How the Other Half Lives* (1890)
- 31) Stowe, Harriet Beecher. *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1852)
- 32) Thoreau, Henry David. *Walden* (1854)
- 33) Twain, Mark. *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (1884)
- 34) Twain, Mark. *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court* (1889)
- 35) Washington, Booker T. *Up from Slavery* (1901)
- 36) Wharton, Edith. *The House of Mirth* (1900)
- 37) Whitman, Walt. *Leaves of Grass* (1855) and the following poems from later editions: "Crossing Brooklyn Ferry"; "Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking"; "As I Ebb'd with the Ocean of Life"; "Passage to India"; "When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloomed"

Critical Section -- INTERDISCIPLINARY READING

- 38) Blight, David W. *Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory* (2001)
- 39) Blum, Edward. *Reforging the White Republic: Race, Religion, and American Nationalism* (2005)
- 40) Douglas, Ann. *The Feminization of American Culture* (1977)
- 41) Gossett, Thomas. *Race: The History of an Idea in America* (1997)
- 42) Lewis, R. W. B. *The American Adam* (1995)
- 43) Limerick, Patricia Nelson. *The Legacy of Conquest* (1987)
- 44) Menand, Louis. *The Metaphysical Club: A Story of Ideas in America* (2001)
- 45) Reynolds, David S. *Beneath the American Renaissance: The Subversive Imagination in the Age of Emerson and Melville* (1988)
- 46) Rowe, John Carlos. *Literary Culture and U. S. Imperialism* (2000)
- 47) Said, Edward. *Culture and Imperialism* (1994)
- 48) Sundquist, Eric. *To Wake the Nations: Race in the Making of American Literature* (1998)
- 49) Tompkins, Jane. *Sensational Designs: The Cultural Work of American Fiction, 1790-1860* (1985)
- 50) Trachtenberg, Alan. *The Incorporation of America: Culture & Society in the Gilded Age* (1982)