

# AMERICAN LITERATURE

Shedding New Identity in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century





**There was a diverse oral tradition of literature among Native American tribal cultures.**

01

**Native American cultures worshipped sacred persons, deities, and even animals or plants.**

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03

**The political and social order of the tribes also varied: councils, theocracies, and democracies**

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**Precolonial American literature took the form of creation stories, legends, songs, tales, riddles, proverbs, fairy tales, and epics.**





## *The coming of the English colonists...*




1. brought about the written aspect of American Literature;
2. early accountants' exploits in the New World became part of the American fabric while providing documentation for their countrymen in England;
3. notable texts included narratives from John Winthrop, William Bradford, and Captain John Smith.





01

A great deal of  
American literature  
advances the tenets of  
**Puritanism.**




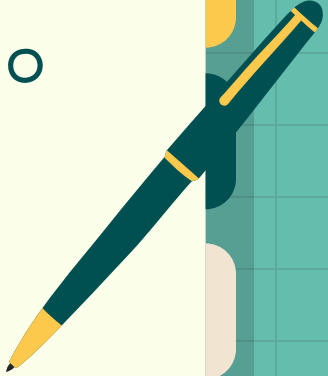
02

Puritan works served to transform the colonized and to ensure that the colonizers would walk the right path.



**Prominent names of Puritan literature are:**

- **Thomas Hooker**
  - **Jonathan Edwards**
  - **Roger Williams**
  - **Edward Johnson**
  - **Cotton Mather**
  - **Edward Taylor**
  - **Anne Bradstreet**
  - **Michael Wigglesworth**
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**03**

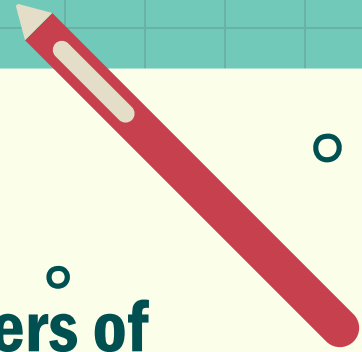
The historical period of the American Revolution brought about the rise of intellectuals who molded the identity of the new country.



a. **Philip Freneau** - pioneer of American lyrical poetry

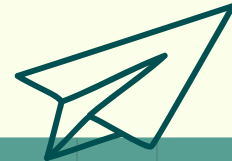
b. **Thomas Paine** – effective in using pamphlets

a. **Francis Hopkinson** – prominent polemicist



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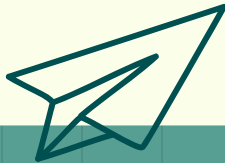
Among the founding Fathers of America, the writings of *Benjamin Franklin, Alexander Hamilton, and Thomas Jefferson* were especially powerful.







**05**

**The theater scene and the novel were also on the rise in the 18th century.**



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- **William Dunlap and Royall Tyler** – the plays were infused with the theme of love for their newly liberated nation.
  - **William Hill Brown and Charles Brockden Brown** – the earliest American novelist.
  - **Washington Irving** – wrote the story “Rip Van Winkle.”
  - **James Fenimore Cooper** – wrote the novel “The Last of the Mohicans.”

*Irving and Cooper were among the American writers who won critical acclaim for the European literary Scene.*



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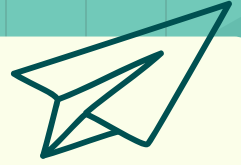
The literary movements of *transcendentalism* and *romanticism* surged in the 19th century.



- Henry David Thoreau, Margaret Fuller, and Ralph Waldo Emerson produced **works espousing the transcendentalist views of social reformation and moral excellence.**

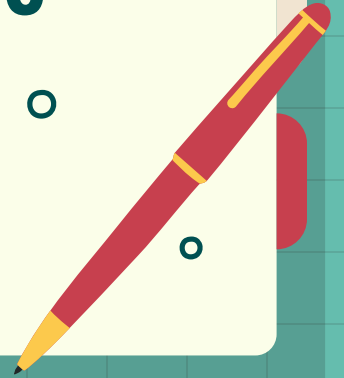
- The distinct works of Edgar Allan Poe, Walt Whitman, Nathaniel Hawthorne, and Herman Melville brought American flavor to the **Romantic Movement that originated in Europe.**





07

**The division and tension caused by the Civil War led to the creation of realistic and passionate works.**






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• Harriet Beecher Stowe's **Uncle Tom's Cabin (anti-slavery).**

• William Gilmore Simm's **The Sword and the Distaff (pro-slavery).**




The work's of Mark Twain, Bret Harte, George W. Cable, and Henry Timrod were among the texts that transcended their regional confines.

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- In the 19th century, American fiction went from the realism of **William Dean Howells** to the psychological mastery of **Henry James and Edith Wharton**.
  - Poetry was revolutionized by **Emily Dickinson** and in the early 20th century, **Ezra Pound and E.E. Cummings** continued to push the boundaries of the genre.
  - Other powerful poets included **Robert Frost and Carl Sandburg**.

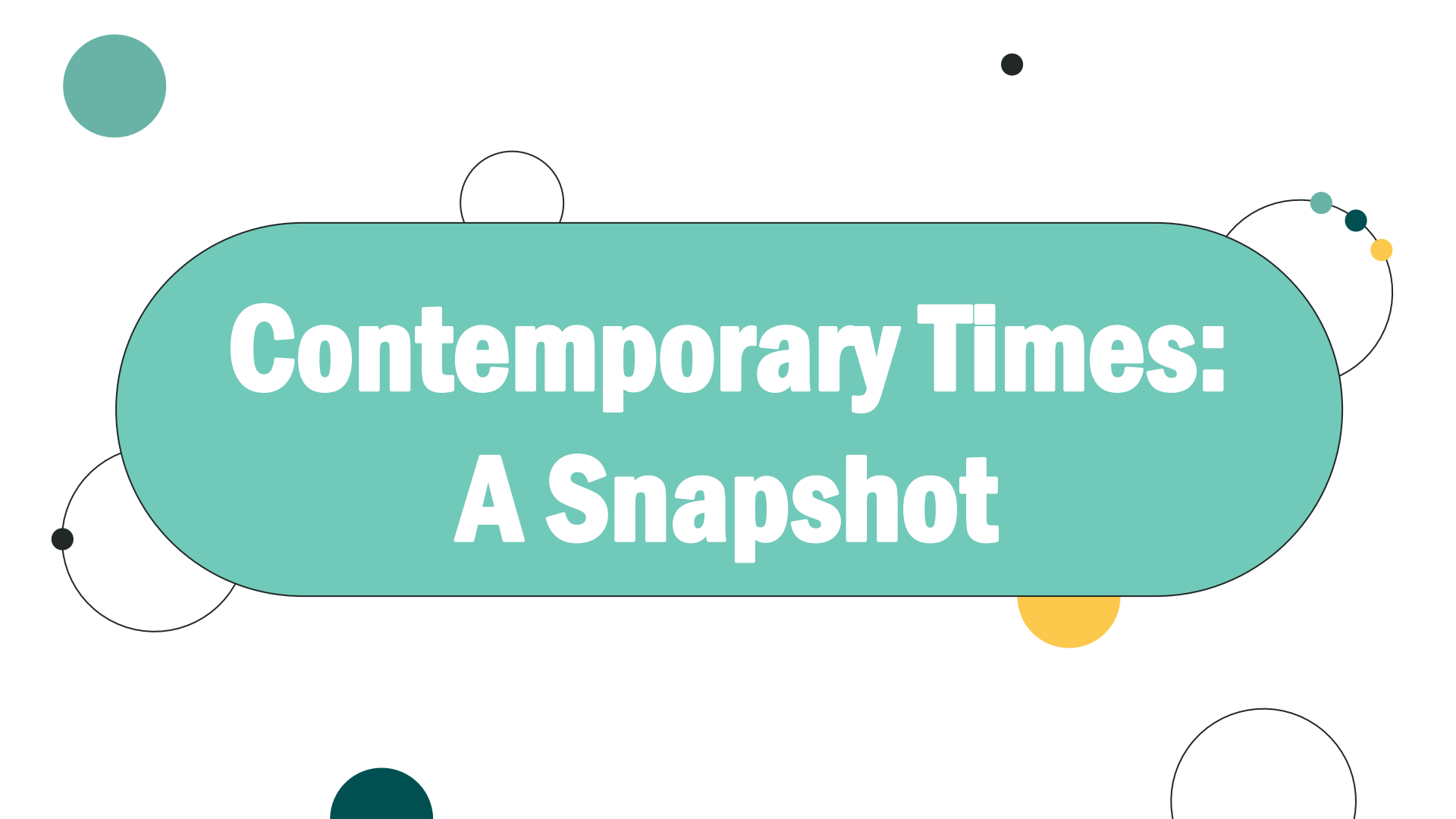


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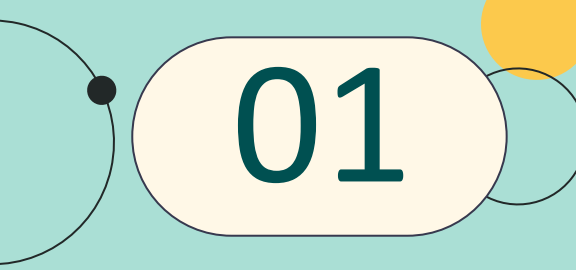
In the early 1900s, fictionists drew from ideas like the **Marxian social theory** and the new psychology.

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- Writers of drama include **Ernest Hemingway, John Steinback, F. Scott Fitzgerald, and Thomas Wolfe Eugene O'Neill** as the lead.

O'Neill was followed by **Arthur Miller, Tennessee Williams, Maxwell Anderson, and Philip Barry** in the aftermath of World War I. Exceptional writers include **Langston Hughes, Paul Lawrence Dunbar, and Countee Cullen.**




# Contemporary Times: A Snapshot



01

## The 20th marked literary criticism in America

A movement influenced by the poet **Ezra Pound**. Critics like **Edmund Wilson, Allen Tate, Robert Penn Warren, and Malcolm Cowley** pioneered the highly analytical study of several different literary genres.



# 02

In the 1960s and 70s, novelist like **Saul Bellow** , **Hortense Calisher**, **John Updike**, **William Burroughs**, and **Joyce Caril Oates** depicted the hollow, tense life of contemporary America .

Poets like **Lawrence Ferlinghetti**, **Gregory Corso**, and **Allen Ginsberg** became the leaders of the beat generation.



**Thank you!**

