

American Literature

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The early history of America actually begins in the 10th century when it was first discovered by Scandinavians. In 1492 it was mistook for India by Christopher Columbus. In the 16th century a Florentine traveller Amerigo Vesputchi discovered it and announced that it was a new continent. It was called after him America. The Indians were the native population, agriculture was their main occupation, industry developed later. They were engaged in hunting and fishing.

In the 17th century colonization of America began by the Europeans. Among the first countries were Holland, France, England and Spain. The natives met the first Europeans with hospitality and answered their enemies with blood and fire. The way the Indians were annihilated by the white settlers constitutes the darkest page in the history. The colonizers were commercial adventurers, wealth-seekers, capitalists and land speculators. They tried to capture and use the Indians, but they would never make slaves, they would better die. So, colonists started bringing convicts from the prisons of Europe as labour force and Negroes from Africa. Black population increased rapidly. Indians (the red-skinned) were driven away from their land by the Europeans (pale faces). In the 18th century a war between the ruling classes of the 4 countries began. In 1875 colonies began its struggle for independence. In 1776 the democratic republic was formed, August, 8 is the Independence Day. In 1783 the war ended.

The dawn of national American literature

Pilgrims from England came to America on board a ship "Mayflower". They were the majority in the colony of 20000 people. This colony was called New England and it was there

that the literature of the new American nation appeared. Pilgrim Fathers, as they were called played a historical role in this process.

1. Most of them were well educated, had a higher university education.
2. They brought books with them.
3. They opened schools. In 1636 Harvard College, the 1st American university was opened.
4. They set up the 1st printing - press and published the 1st book. The only book recommended for reading was the Bible at first, later they also printed histories, journals and theological tracts.
5. The 1st American writers appeared: William Bradford, Anne Bradstreet and Sarah Kemble Knight.

American literature is more than 300 years old. It should not be considered as a branch of British literature, as it is written in English. It combined national customs and traditions, Indian Mythology, Negro folklore and the spirit of revolutions. It is independent literature, connected with the history of the country.

The development of the English language in America

In the 17th century the New Englander in the North as well as the Virginians in the South spoke English. It was the London dialect which was in the 16th century *the model language or standard English*. But in America it suffered a change. It led to the development of various American dialects.

Dialect – is a collection of words, phrases and accent of the colloquial speech used in a certain locality.

Later Americanisms appeared.

Americanisms – the new words and word combinations which have appeared in American English, but have not been accepted in Britain.

Types of Americanisms:

1. The names of things, plants and animals unfamiliar to the immigrants (may be borrowed Indian names).
2. *Archaisms* – words and combinations that were out of use in England in the 18th century, but have survived in America.
3. Words made up by negro slaves and words borrowed from other European languages, not English
4. A great number of English words began to have a different meaning and synonyms appeared.
5. New words connected with administration of the country appeared after the formation of the state as a result of the American Revolution (1775-1783).
6. Slang – bold and lawless words used in informal speech. Later they penetrated over the Atlantic into the English language.

After the civil war of 1861-1865 the abolition of slavery and the unification of the country literary norms for the English language of the nation began to be established. America's writers refused to accept British English blindly. Cooper, Whitman, London, O'Henry, Twain used the vivid language of the people. Now America has its norms of pronunciation, spelling and syntax; the language of the US is called the American variant of the English language or American English.

Enlightenment (18 century)

The ideas of the Age of Reason were expressed in the Revolution or war for independence of 1775-1783. The motto of the period was *Liberty, equality and the pursuit of happiness for all*. The most outstanding representatives of this time were Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson, Thomas Paine and Philip Freneau.

Benjamin Franklin was a printer, a writer, a philosopher, a scientist, an economist, a statesman, one of the leaders of revolution. He issued "Poor Richard's Almanac" for 25 years. It was a kind of a calendar with a section of useful information, full of progressive ideas under the pen-name Richard Saunders. He experimented on electricity and invented a lightning-rod. Later he became a statesman and contributed into the development of a young American state. He wrote satirical pamphlets on political problems defending the rights of all men including the Negroes and the Indians. He became the president of the Society for the abolition of slavery. His *Autobiography* intended to his sons and grandsons became widely read in America.

Thomas Jefferson was a lawyer, a philosopher, an architect, a statesman. He made a fundamental contribution into the Declaration of Independence. Thanks to Jefferson's work "Notes on the State of Virginia" we learn about the Indians, the names of their tribes and their customs, the history of their struggle with colonizers. He criticized slavery and inequality based on property and urged for safety and happiness. In 1800 he won the elections and became the 3d American president. He was the founder of democratic values: freedom of speech, press, worship and education.

Thomas Paine was the most democratic writer of Enlightenment, an international revolutionary publicist. His motto was: My country is the world, my religion – to do good. Among his best pamphlets are “The Age of Reason”, “Common Sense”, “American Justice” and “The Rights of a Man”. He fought against tyranny.

Philip Freneau represented Revolutionary poetry. He put forth anti-British and anti-capitalist ideas. His motto was “Equal rights for all, special privilege to none.

Folklore was very popular. Yankee Doodle was the character of funny songs. which appeared during the War of Independence and after it. Yankee –from the Dutch name Yan, used by the British for the “New Englander”. Doodle – “do little”. This folklore inspired poets and writers of the later period.

Conclusion: The chief aim of the writers of Enlightenment was to defuse republican ideas among the people: to expose the tyranny of monarchism and defend the rights of man against the Church and the outdated feudal laws. It was the period of the development of journalism.

As well as the English Enlighteners they had a firm belief in the reality of the world as revealed to the senses, the interest in science, a distrust to the mystical, another step to atheism, confidence in progress and education and solution of social and political problems.

Romanticism (the 1st half of the 19th century)

Romanticism appeared in America in the period of social unrest which followed the Revolution of 1775-1783 as great disappointment with the Revolution took hold of the people. The ideals for which people had fought (Liberty, Equality and the pursuit of Happiness for all) became a privilege for

the few instead of being protected by law and enjoyed by all people. Poets and writers repulsed by the dishonest practice of businessmen romanticized the “common man”, and sought the beauty and happiness in the primitive life of the American Indian, they idealized life and portrayed heroic personages. The impulse of Romanticism was humanitarian and rebellious. The writers depicted life as struggle between vice and virtue and reflected the great gap between reality and the ideal. The writers creating the personages brought moral judgment on the nation as a whole, disregarding the existence of classes. The approach of the writers to life was through emotions. They developed such genres as the novel (historical, social, fantastic, utopian, philosophical, intellectual), the romance and the short story. They were true patriots and gave their readers a taste for old ballads, epics and the folk tales of the Indians. Romanticism demanded intrigue, a dynamic movement of events and sudden changes in hero's life.

The three periods of Romanticism include:

- 1) the 20ies-30ies of the 19th century : romances and short stories of Washington Irving, J.F Cooper, E.A.Poe
- 2) the 40ies-50ies: Cooper's later novels, Poe's romances and novels, H.W.Longfellow
- 3) the 50ies-60ies W.Whitman

Washington Irving (1783-1859)

Was as much a writer of Enlightenment as of Romanticism. He was the first prose writer in American literature. Born in the city of New York in the family of a prosperous merchant, he was educated at home by his mother because of his sickness in the childhood. He started

writing at the age of 15 and travelled a lot around the country. In 1804 after travelling to Europe he became interested in foreign culture. Irving wrote on the topics of modern America in the style of the 18th century essay with humour and irony. He wrote in the style of clever humour, the mixture of fine irony and jolly caricature. His graceful style and colourful descriptions of nature make him the Father of American prose, its short story.

James Fenimore Cooper (1789-1851)

Born in New Jersey, Cooper was educated in a village school. At the age of 13 his parents sent him to Yale College in Albany, but he showed no interest in studies and his father soon sent him to sea. He served on a merchant ship and later in the US Navy. After the death of his father he became a country gentleman in Cooperstown devoting himself to his family of 7 children and to social interests. He started writing at the age of 30. He recorded the heroic past of the country and expressed nation's mind.

He wrote 32 novels, a history of the US Navy, articles and pamphlets on social problems. He published 10 volumes about his travels in Europe "Red Rover", the cycle of historical novels "The Leather-Stocking Tales" and the trilogy of novels "The Satanstoe", "The Chainbearer" and "The Redskins". Cooper is called the first American writer of historical novels.

"The Leather-Stocking Tales" includes 5 novels:

1. "The Pioneers" (1823)
2. "The Deerslayer" (1841)
3. "The Last of the Mohicans" (1826)
4. "The Pathfinder" (1840)
5. "The Prairie" (1827)

The main character of all these novels is Natty Bampoo or Nathaniel, a European or a pale-faced, a poor young hunter, a scout. In different novels he is called differently, like the Leather Stocking, the Deerslayer, the Hawk Eye, the Long Rifle or the Trapper. He is illiterate but noble, honest, courageous, modest and free-loving. He likes independence and virgin nature but he has to serve cruel colonizers. He is a real child of the forest.

The action takes place in North America in the regions of Salt Lake, Lake George, Lake Ontario, Lake Otsego, St. Laurence Lake and Hudson River.

Cooper wrote his novels from the 20ies to the 40ies of the 19th century and compared America of the 18th and the 19th centuries. Comparing the present and the past of the country, he thought about its future. In his works he preserved the names of the Indian tribes: Delawares, Lenaps, Hurons, Sagamores and Mohicans (the red-skinned), their traditions and peculiarities

The main problems in the novels are: destruction of nature, extinction and annihilation of the Indians.

Edgar Allan Poe (1809-1849)

Poe, an outstanding romantic poet, a romancer, and short story writer, was one of the first professional writers of America. He was a man of rare talent and rich imagination, but many Americans of his time didn't understand him.

He was born in 1809 in Boston in the family of poor actors. Soon his father disappeared and his mother died. A childless couple – Mr. and Mrs. Allan brought him up. Mr. Allan was a well-to-do Scotch tobacco merchant, so Edgar lived in Scotland, and England, studied at school, played boxing, entered the University of Virginia. Edgar ran away

from Allans' family, went to Boston, started writing, but unsuccessfully. He was enlisted in the army. After the death of Mrs Allan, his stepfather helped him to enter The Military Academy. Edgar provoked his dismissal as he disobeyed the orders. 2 years later the merchant died but Edgar was not mentioned in his will, so he was left penniless. He continued to publish his poems. By 1831 3 volumes of his poems were published. He also wrote detective stories for magazines, soon he became the editor of a magazine. He could hardly support his life on the money he earned.

In 1843 his story "The Gold Bug" won him a prize of \$100. It was his first success in writing. In 1845 a collection of poetry "The Raven and Other Poems" appeared. In 1836 Poe married a young girl Virginia Clemm, they were very happy, but soon she died of tuberculosis at the age of 24.

Poe's last poems were "Bells" and "Annabel Lee". Poe was weak to alcohol (took to drinking and gambling) and died in 1849 in the Baltimore City Hospital after having taken opium.

In Poe's poetry we feel sadness for bygone days, the feeling of pain. He urged for harmony between the emotional and practical, for ideal beauty.

There were 3 types of his tales and romances:

1. Tales of horror
2. Detective stories
3. Science fiction.

Edgar Poe was a creator of new symbolic poetry and the new short story based on psychological analysis and detective stories. His most popular stories are "The Gold Bug", "A Descent into the Maelstrom", "The Fall of the

House of Asher", "The Black Cat", "Purloined Letter", "The Unparalleled Adventure of One Hans Pfaal".

Abolitionism (the beginning of the 19th century)

Was the most progressive movement of that time. Abolitionists understood the hard life and toil of the common people wanted the Negro people freed from slavery, expressed their sympathy for the Indian tribes who had been persecuted and slaughtered by the white settlers.

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (1807-1882)

created under the influence of Abolitionism. He continued to spread the humanistic ideas which had been so successfully introduced into literature by the earlier generation of the American romanticists. He described the life of the Indian people in America based on their folklore.

Born in Portland in the family of a well-to-do lawyer, at the age of 16 Henry entered Bowdoin College where he wrote his first verses and stories. In 1826 he was sent to Europe to study languages. He visited England, France, Spain, Italy and Germany. In 1829 he returned home and began teaching foreign languages. In 1834 Longfellow became a professor at Harvard University. In 1835-1839 he again visited Europe and published his novel "Hyperion" and collection of poems "Voices of the Night". In 1841 "Ballads and Other Poems" was published. His third trip to Europe resulted in verses "Poems on Slavery" in 1842 in which he blamed the institution of slavery.

It took him 30 years to compile and translate a vast anthology "Poets of Europe" which consists of 31 volumes.

In 1865-1867 the poet translated Dante's "Divine Comedy". Longfellow was awarded honorary degrees and

became the member of the Russian, British, French and Spanish Academies of Sciences. His most popular poem is "*The Song of Hiawatha*" (1855). Russian translation is made by Ivan Bunin. The humanistic ideas of peace, brotherhood and liberty, the struggle between man and nature found their reflection in the poem. The themes of Indian life, their traditions and beliefs, nature of America were the main topics in his works. The poem shows the combination of romantic and realistic elements. The motto of the poet is "All people are equal".

Longfellow wrote verses, ballads, dramas, essays and stories and lectured on American poetry, Negro and Indian folklore. He knew 12 languages, was a scientist, a linguist, a poet and a philologist. His motto was "Man must be proud and strong, life is full of heroism and courageous struggle, man has no right to submit to oppression, but should stand up for his rights. His bust occupies a place in Westminster Abby's Poets' Corner (the only American).

Harriet Beecher-Stowe (1811-1896)

belongs to Romantic literature as well as to Abolitionism. She developed social novel by introducing realistic details about laws and customs of that time.

Harriet was born in Litchfield (Connecticut) in a family of a pastor. When she was 4 her mother died. Her elder sister was her best friend. In 1832 the family moved to Cincinnati, where Dr. Beecher accepted presidency of a Theological Seminary. There she began writing and got a prize for one of her short stories published in a magazine.

In 1836 she married Professor Calvin Stowe, her father's friend who taught in the Seminary. Mrs. Stowe had several children and had no time to write. In 1850 the family moved

to New England (State of Maine) and began writing the novel "Uncle Tom's Cabin" in 1851 under the influence of the Fugitive Slave Act adopted in 1850. It was a great success with the public and helped to bring on the Civil War between the Northern and Southern states. In her books she depicted viciousness of slavery. After the Civil War she bought a house in Mandarin, Florida, where she lived and worked. She wrote realistic novels about her time. After "A Key to Uncle Tom's Cabin" was published to prove the truth of all written facts.

Critical Realism (the end of the 19th century)

Critical realism as a trend reached full development after the Civil War. They saw a man as a product of his environment. The period embraced all aspects of American life. Many old themes were treated in a new way. Their portrayal of life may seem rude and unpolished but it was always original and truthful. American Realism advanced the problems of social injustice, the Negro and the Indian questions, the fate of the young generation and the problem of emancipation of women.

Walt Whitman (1819-1892)

is the 1st American realist and truly national poet, he reformed the language of poetry and linked it with life. He developed the traditions of antichurch, social satire and realism.

Walt was born in the family of a farmer in a village on Long Island.

Later the family moved to Brooklyn (a suburb of New York), but he had no opportunity to obtain secondary schooling, so was self-educated by reading. He received his education on the roads and big rivers of America.

He worked from his childhood as a carpenter, a printer, a schoolteacher, a journalist and in 1846 became editor-in-chief. He sympathized with the ideas of abolitionism. For his bold and fearless public protest against the policy of the government he was dismissed from his post.

Some years later he found his place of a newspaper reporter, but worked there only for 3 months. He returned to his father's profession of a carpenter and was always on good terms with working people, cabmen, fishermen and sailors. During the Civil War between the North and the South he fought against it as a journalist and served at New York hospital as a nurse.

"Leaves of Grass" was printed by himself in 1855. In it he declared love for men of hard physical labour using folklore. He was a poet-democrat, spoke for the masses, praised a man of toil.

Walt Whitman rejected the usual rhyming forms and created his own *conventional metre* without rhyme but with a fluid rhythm and blank verse. He introduced new subject-matters: brotherhood, equality, human worth and progress.

His poetry is characterized by hyperbolism, sharp criticism, anti-religious elements and optimism. Optimism is seen in his love for all men and for life. In his opinion "People are immortal and countless as the leaves of grass".

His poem "Oh, Captain! My Captain!" is devoted to Abraham Lincoln. In "Song of the Broad Axe" he constructs his ideal of democracy. The "Song of Myself" states equality of all people disregarding their race or nationality. *Myself* in the poem is a personification of all men. Walt Whitman criticized American literature of that time.

Mark Twain (1835-1910) **(Samuel Langhorne Clemens)**

used scathing satire and trenchant journalist style, bubbling humour and subtle lyricism to mock at the vices of contemporary society. He was a full-fledged writer, a great humanist a versatile person and many-sided talent, a celebrity of the world magnitude.

He created in the following genres: a short story, an essay, a novel, a pamphlet. In all his works he teaches his readers to love a man.

Most popular and critical are his pamphlets – short satirical works on social or political problems. His other popular works include "The Innocents Abroad" (1869), "Running for Governor" (1870), "The Gilded Age" (1874), "The Adventures of Tom Sawyer" (1876), "Life on the Mississippi" (1883), "The Prince and the Pauper" (1882), "The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn" (1885).

Three books are really parts of one masterpiece: "The Adventures of Tom Sawyer", "Life on the Mississippi" and "Huckleberry Finn". In them he brought his own childhood to literary life.

The difference between Tom and Huck is the difference between early and the late Mark Twain. The creator of Tom was a lover of life, the creator of Huck was a skeptic who turned against mankind because of its unhumanity to Man.

Three honorary degrees were conferred on Mark Twain by American universities in 1900. Oxford University gave him Honourary Doctorate of Letters in 1907.

The beginning of the 20th century (1900-1917)

O'Henry (1862-1910)

(Sidney Porter)

O'Henry occupies an intermediate position between the critical tendency and the "genteel tradition" in the neo-romantic trend. He is called "The American Maupassant" and is ranked among the most widely published short-story writers.

Sidney Porter was born in Greensboro, a little town in North Carolina during the Civil War. His mother died of tuberculosis when he was 3. His father spent all his life working on inventions of all kinds, none of which were ever a success. His aunt had a private school and encouraged him to read. He also liked drawing. He left school at 15. And became a clerk in his uncle's drugstore, where he worked for 5 years and practiced drawing humorous sketches of the customers. He was interested in history, biographies of great men and everything that went on around him. He learned the life of cowboys while living on a ranch in Texas for 2 years. He spoke Spanish, French and German. He tried a variety of jobs and finally became a book-keeper, later a draftsman and a teller in a bank in Austin. He was accused of stealing a great sum of money and changed his places of living to hide from persecution. When he learned that his young and beautiful wife was seriously ill with consumption, he returned to Austin and was arrested.

While in prison he made acquaintance with different types of people and later wrote about them in his short stories under the name of the prison guard – O'Hery. The first collection was "Cabages and Kings". His first works were published in magazines while he was standing trial.

When he was released from prison in he lived in New York and wrote his first collection of stories "Cabages and Kings" in 1904, later "Four Million" (1906) about its citizens. He died of a stroke in 1910 at the age of 47.

He can be called one of New York biographers, as he wrote 150 stories with a New York background. "The Gift of the Magi", "A Service of Love" are among 25 stories of "Four Million". O'Henry was an outstanding humourist. He enriched all the various types of short story: the anecdote, the monologue, the dialogue, the grotesque, satirical, paradoxical; the adventure story, psychological story, the parody; poems in prose, tales and sketches. His credo was: art should be true, democratic, it should address contemporary life and embrace all aspects of life.

His closest friend Bob Davis wrote about him: "Where did he learn so much of life? By living it, I suppose. He had considerable of that thing called experience." In 1919 the New York Society of Arts and Science founded the O'Henry Memorial Award for the best American short story.

Socialist Realism (pre –war literature) is the name of a trend in literature, which is committed with socialist ideas. It appeared in America in 1917 and was influenced by Socialist revolutions in Russia and other countries. Theodor Dreiser, Michael Gold and John Reed represented it in America. Major topics were: revolution and class struggle, working movement. A new method of narration appeared which combined 3 aspects: fictional, publicist and documentary.

Jack London (1876-1916)

(John Griffith)

laid the foundation for American socialist literature and enriched the American sociological story and novel. He was among the few writers who dared to create the realistic critical laws while the main tendency was to avoid reality.

John Griffith was born in San Francisco but soon his family moved to Oakland, California. He was poor and often hungry, he started working while a schoolboy – he sold newspapers. At the age of 13 he graduated from Oakland grammar school and continued working for a year. Then he worked 18-20 hours a day at a cannery. Later he was attracted by the sea, borrowed money and began diving for oysters. In 1893 Jack sailed on the ship for the Bering Sea to hunt seals. Back in Oakland London found work in a jute mill. He started writing in that time.

He participated in the contest for the best descriptive article announced by one of the magazines and found the 1st prize. But he couldn't earn enough by writing and got a job at a plant. Soon he found himself unemployed and joined "Kelly's Army", the organization of unemployed in San Francisco. He marched with it to Washington to demand bread and justice, was arrested and jailed. He took to writing seriously. In 1895 he joined the Socialist Labour Party. He finished high school courses and successfully passed entrance exams to the University of California. But his stepfather, John London, became ill and Jack again had to support the family, so in 1897 Jack left the university and took a job in a steam laundry. The wages were low and the work exhausting. When he heard that gold was found in Klondike he went to Alaska with his brother-in-law. They found no gold, but a lot of material for his stories.

On returning back he again was searching for work but could find only odd jobs and continued writing. At first his manuscripts were rejected, but in 1899 some of his stories were published and his literary career began.

In 1902 he began working as a correspondent in a newspaper agency and reported the South-African War. Soon he left for England and wrote "The People of the Abyss" there. After the Russian Revolution of 1905 he toured the country and lectured to support the revolution. The years of 1905-1910 were the peak of his literary activity. He wrote his best revolutionary articles and sociological novels. In 1916 he became ill as a result of his trips and hard labour. Before his death he said to his friends: "I am dead tired".

As a writer London was a master of dynamic plot. His stories are full of fiction and conflict. The author combines romantic and realistic elements of narration. The action is usually laid far from bourgeois society. His personages are of adventurous type, such as hunters, gold miners, hobos, who have left the corrupted civilization in the hope of being able to live freely and independently.

"*Martin Eden*" is a sociological novel the main problem of which is the tragic destiny of art and talent under the conditions existing in bourgeois society. It contains many autobiographical features but Jack and Martin are antipodes. Jack was a socialist while Martin was an individualist.

"This novel is an indictment of individualism"

J. London

"It shows that man can't live for himself alone"

J. London

In "*Arctic Cycle*" or "*Nothern Stories*" people were judged by their courage and their code of friendship and

love; by their deeds and not their words, or the colour of their skin, or their social position. London's heroes value freedom, they strive to be individuals. Jack London was a true poet of the North – the country of grief, mockery and white silence. London is a praiser of strong – willed people, struggling with severe nature and tricks of fortune. The motto of his works is “The hope dies last”.

In “*Love of Life*” he puts forth the problems of survival, man and nature, man versus society, sense of life, education.

“A man may lose his own life in the struggle with nature, but life goes on; and Man by the strength of his body and **IS**, in the end the conquerer of nature.”

J.London

“A man is a man and life is life though not so beautiful”.

J.London

“Love of Life” is a collective image of all human beings possessing the same trait of character – love of life”.

J.London

“It was in Klondike I found myself”

J.London

Jack London was 40 when he died. He left a heritage of 19 novels, 18 books of short stories and articles, 3 plays and 8 autobiographic and sociological books. He remains one of the most significant American writers because he concerned himself with the vital problems of his age.

Theodor Dreiser (1871-1945)

Was a writer, a publicist, a public figure, who laid the foundation for Socialist Realism in American Literature.

Born in a little town of Terre Haute, Indiana, Theodor was the 12th child in the family of Sarah Dreiser, a

descendant of Czech emigrants and John Paul Dreiser, a local factory worker, who came to America from Germany.

His childhood was full of want and deprivation. At the age of 16 he went to Chicago, managed to study for a short time at the Indiana University. Leo Tolstoy impressed him greatly and he decided to start writing. His first works were published in magazines and newspapers. His first novels were “Sister Carrie” (1900) and “Jenny Gerhardt” (1911). Among his most notorious works is the “Trilogy of Desire” which includes “The Financier” (1912), “The Titan” (1914) and “The Stoic” (published posthumously in 1947).

“*An American Tragedy*” (1920-1925) reveals the decay of American spiritual life of the start of the 20th century and the crisis in the capitalist system. It told the truth about what was hidden behind the facade of seeming prosperity and well-being. The destruction of human dignity was given by the author as an inevitable result of the normal workings of American bourgeois society.; as a manifestation of a profound national disease and national poverty, a national catastrophe of the US: The American Tragedy. “American writing, before and after his time, differed almost as much as biology before and after Darwin”.

Ernest Miller Hemingway (1899-1961)

Hemingway became a classic of American literature, a brilliant naturalist, a keen observer of life around him, a Nobel Prize laureate of 1954.

His novels “A Farewell to Arms”, “To Have and Have not”, “For Whom the Bell Tolls”, “The Old Man and the Sea” are world known. He took part in World War I, Civil War in Spain and World War II, so he fought actively against fascism and war.

He was born in 1899 in Oak Park, a suburb of Chicago. His father was a doctor, a sportsman and ethnographer. He taught his son to be a man and to love and understand nature. At school Ernest took part in all activities. He started writing for school periodicals and became an editor of the school's weekly paper. After school he worked as a reporter for the paper "Kansas City Star". He was badly wounded during the World War I when he volunteered as an ambulance driver for the American Red Cross. After the war he wrote for a newspaper in Canada, travelled to Europe, lived in France. He devoted 36 years of his life to journalism, then he used his experience in writing stories and novels. He visited Africa and Cuba, where he met the prototype of Santiago, the hero of "The Old Man and the Sea".

Hemingway was a democrat and a humanist, critic of the so-called "American Way of Life". He praised ordinary men with strong character.

F. Scott Fitzgerald (1894-1940)

His grandparent Philip Mc. Kivilan was a successful Irish businessman, who died at the age of 43. His father didn't inherit his business in St. Paul, but Fitz had an opportunity to study in Princeton University. His marriage was his greatest mistake, but they had a daughter, Scotti.

His first novel "This side of the Paradise" appeared in 1920. The prototype of Rosalinda was his wife Zelda. The collection of stories under the title "The century of Jazz" became the most famous. "*Great Gatsby*" (1925) reflects the "American tragedy" in the period of American prosperity. Jay Gatsby, the main character, proved the existence of the so-called "American dream" and achieved

it. Gatsby, persuading the idea of becoming rich, lost himself; the idea of throwing all his life to the feet of Daisy is stupid. His Goddess Daisy is also mean. But Gatsby is really great as the brightest representative of the type of "American dreamer", though his path leads him to tragedy. It's a philosophical, psychological and social novel.

"My novel is about how illusions are spent, which make the world so colourful; and having experienced this magic a man becomes indifferent to true and false."

F.S. Fitzgerald

Literature of the 2nd half of the 20th century (post-war literature)

is characterized by the appearance of sociological novel, naturalism, realism and humanism. The greatest achievement of American Realism of the 20th century is the exposition of discrepancy between capitalist reality and American dream, that is contradiction between industrial and material progress and spiritual degradation of the bourgeois society. The theme of tragedy and absurdity of existence, despair, voluntary self-separation from public life has become more and more distinct and dominating in the 20th century.

Margaret Mitchell (1900-1949)

M. Mitchell was born in Atlanta, Georgia and wrote her first plays for the school theatre. In 1918 her bridegroom died at the front in France. In 1925 she married another person and worked as a newspaper reporter. Soon she left her work and became a typical lady. She was working at the novel "*Gone with the wind*" from 1926 till 1936. When it was published it became one of the most loved works in

America. It has become the only book she ever wrote. The author was even frightened with the popularity of its main character Scarlet O'Hara, a cynical and immoral woman. Scarlet is a connection of vices and virtues symbolizing all the contradictions of America in those times. The novel became the symbol of the South of America. The title is taken from the poem of Horatium:

"I forgot much, Cinara: gone with the wind,
Gone with the wind, lost the smell of these roses."

The name of the estate – Tara (ancient capital of the Irish Kings) is taken from the ballad of Thomas More.

The main problems in the novel are:

- 1) war and peace
- 2) slavery and its abolishment
- 3) race relations
- 4) love and friendship
- 5) moral principles and moral norms.

"Gone with the wind is the best-selling love story ever written. It has sold over 28 mln copies around the world since 1936.

M. Mitchell puts forth the theme of survival in extreme situation. The major idea is "Dum spiro spero" (lat. – Пока живу надеюсь) or "Hope dies last".

Jerome David Salinger (1919-)

Was the son of a Jewish father and Christian mother, he grew up in New York City, attending public school and a military academy. After brief periods at New York and Columbia Universities, he devoted himself entirely to writing. His stories began to appear in magazines. In 1940 after his return from the service in the US army he published his works in New Yorker.

"*The Catcher in the Rye*" (1954) is a novel – monologue, novel – confession. It is a tragedy of the youth trying to find a contact with people and discovers that "human race had disappeared" and the society consists of beasts.

The conflict of *man and society* is as old as literature itself. It is a consequence of American reality and democratic ideals: equality, reason, good, justice, endless abilities in the development of human soul.

The theme of *Fathers and sons* is also actual in the novel. Holden Caulfield, the main character uses all his abilities not to win the society, but to rebel against it. The lack of mutual understanding, and "showing out" are actual in the novel. Holden has a deep feeling of false and "phony". He sees lie, flattery, hypocrisy and pretention everywhere. He is extremely lonely, he would like to write his story without decorations, truthfully. The novel shows the phenomenon of social immaturity typical for the American youth of the 40ies-50ies. The greatest truth comes to his mind: "Man can't do anything alone!"

The search of truth is the main problem in life.

Family is very important. Self-improvement and love for the nearest and dearest is a political programme of Salinger.

Trends in American Literature

1. Enlightenment / Revolutionary Trend (18th cent.)

B Franklin, T Jefferson, T Paine, Ph. Freneau

2. Romanticism (I half 19th cent.)

J.F.Cooper

- Knickerbockers (after a region in New York) -W.Irving
- Fireside poets
- Brooding Romantics - A.Poe, Nathaniel Hawthorne, H. W.Longfellow, W.Whitman

3. The Abolition Literature - H.Beecher -Stowe

- Philosophers -Emerson, Thoreau

3 Critical Realism / Literature of the Civil War (2nd half 19 cent.)

W.Whitman, M.Twain, Bret Harte

- Naturalism - Stephen Crane, Frank Norris

4. Decadence (20ies 20th cent.)

- Neo-Romanticism - O'Henry

5. Socialist Realism - the start of the 20th cent. (30^{ies}-50^{ies})

- Symbolism - J.Steinbek

J.London, J.Reed, M.Gold, Th.Drizer, E.Hemingway, C.Sandburg, R.Frost, F.S.Fitzgerald, M.Mitchell

- Negro Folk Songs - Langston Hughes

6 Post-War Literature (after 50^{ies}-60^{ies})

- Science fiction – Isaak Azimov, Ray Bradbury
- Realism - W. Faulkner, Robert Frost, Carl Sandburg, W. Irving Shaw, Jerome D. Salinger

7. Modern Literature (end 20th cent.-start 21 cent.)

John Grisham, Stephen King, Michael Crichton, Elmore Leonard, Danielle Steel, Kurt Vonnegut, Sidney Sheldon,

Questions for the Credit

11 form

1. The dawn of the American literature. Americanisms. American English.
2. Enlightenment in America, its features and representatives.
A.A. Poe's creative activity. Analytical approach and scientific aspects of Poe's short stories.
4. H. W. Longfellow. Historical reality in the poem "Song of Hiawatha".
5. Abolitionist literature. Typical features and representatives. The main ideas of the novel "Uncle Tom's Cabin".
6. Motives of lyrics of W. Whitman.
7. Critical Realism in America. Social views of M. Twain.
8. Literary principles of O' Henry.
9. Social and philosophical problems in the works of J. London. The theme of love of life in his short stories.
10. Social views of Th. Dreiser. The main problems and ideas in the novel "An American Tragedy".
11. The theme of survival in the works of E. Hemingway.
12. Features and representatives of modern American literature.

Темы для докладов

- Индейская культура, язык, обычаи
- Афро - американцы и их творчество
- Спиричуэл, гимн, негритянский фольклор
- Б. Франклин - ученый и государственный деятель
- Т. Пейн, Ф. Френо, революционная поэзия
- Абсолютизм в Америке. Истоки и идеи
- Юмор М. Твена
- Ф. Норрис, С. Крейн
- Герои Дж. Лондона
- Великая американская мечта и «Американская трагедия» Т. Драйзера
- Сила духа и любовь к жизни в произведениях Э. Хэмингуэя
- К. Сендберг, М. Крайтон
- Дж. Стэйнбек, Р. Фрост, Э. Колдуэлл
- Р. Брэдбери, С. Кинг
- М. Митчелл «Унесенные ветром»
- поэзия Л. Хьюз
- Д. Стил и «женский роман»
- Американская драма

Literary Genres

Romance (Рыцарский Роман) — a medieval story in verse about heroes of chivalry

Poem - } verse = poetry

Song - }

Legend (lat. “legend” = must be read) — old story handed down from the past, especially one of doubted truth

Hymn — religious song

Chronicle — record of events

Ballad (Fr. “ballet”; Ital. “ballere”) — song or poem that tells a story

Epic [epic] (эпос) — story in verse about historic events or historic people

Longer poem (поэма) — a long story in verse having a plot

Fable (басня) — a moral tale with animals for characters

Fairy-tale (сказка) — teaching story about imaginary characters or mysterious creatures with fantastic plot

Story — account of events; narration

Novel (роман) (social, psychological, historical, philosophical...) — a story in prose long enough to fill for more volumes about imaginary or historical people

Novellette — short novel (новелла)

Long/ short story (повесть)

Play (drama) (пьеса) — literary work intended to be acted out (performed)

Tract (трактат) — short printed essay, esp. on moral or religious topic

Essay (эссе, очерк) — piece of writing on any one subject

Article (Статья, заметка) — piece of writing complete in itself in a newspaper or periodical

Pamphlet — small paper - covered book esp. on a topic of current interest

Sonnet — lyrical story in verse consisting of 14 lines (2 stanzas & a final rhyming couplet)

Expressive Means:

(Выразительные средства)

Metaphor - transference (перенос) of some quality from one object to another,

implicit comparison (нечетко выраженное сравнение)

Eg: a slice of life

Time is flying

A leg of a chair

Epithet- the exact evaluative (оценочная) characterization of a person or thing,

that expresses the author's attitude to it.

Eg: warm atmosphere

Golden hair

Deep feelings

Simile (=comparison)

Eg: He is like a fox;

As clever as his mother;

Fell like a stone

Metonymy (analogy) - the quality of the whole object is transferred to its part.

Eg: The hall applauded.

The marble spoke.

He drank a cup.

The class wrote the text.

Pun (play upon words)

Eg: The importance of being Earnest

Periphrasis is a unit of poetic speech, which both names and describes

Eg: the better sex= women

Man in the street = an ordinary person

Organs of vision = eyes

My better half = my wife

Oxymoron - usage of contrastive words to create a certain meaning

Eg: horribly beautiful

Pleasantly ugly face

A glad terror

A polite rudeness

Eloquent silence

Sweetness of pain

A sweet sorrow

Parallelism (= repetition)

a) anaphora (the beginnings are similar)

Eg: the more we know, the more we forget

b) epiphora (the endings are similar)

c) reduplication (reversed order — Обратный порядок)

Eg: I know the world and the world knows me.

Alliteration is a phonetic stylistic device, which aims at imparting ~усиление) a melodic effect to the utterance. It is the repetition of similar sound (consonants — согласных) usually at the beginning of successive words (соответствующих слов).

Eg: weak and weary

Stepped a stately raven

Stopped or stayed he

Feather then he fluttered

**ДОКУМЕНТ ПОДПИСАН
ЭЛЕКТРОННОЙ ПОДПИСЬЮ**

СВЕДЕНИЯ О СЕРТИФИКАТЕ ЭП

Сертификат 603332450510203670830559428146817986133868575840

Владелец Расторгуева Светлана Владимировна

Действителен с 25.02.2021 по 25.02.2022