

**The Evolution of the American Voice**  
**Periods of American Literature**

<b>Time Periods</b>	<b>Genres</b>	<b>Characteristics of Time Period</b>	<b>Purpose of Writings</b>	<b>Legacies</b>
<b>Early American (1492 - 1607)</b>	- oral tradition * legends * myths * songs	- creation stories	- reverence for nature  - explain the unexplainable	Storytelling
<b>Colonial Period (1607 - 1765)</b>  Major historical happenings: * Jamestown * Salem Witch Trials * The Great Awakening * Stamp Act	- histories - poetry - diaries - letters - sermons	- plain (common people must be able to understand)  - practical  - frequent religious references  - strong moral lessons	- reinforce authority of the Bible and church * Puritan social order/strict moral code * theocratic gov't  - show that life is a test between good and evil  - express opportunity for a Puritan utopia  - hard work is necessary for success/happiness	American Work Ethic  Community Good over the Individual
<b>Revolutionary Period (1765 - 1800)</b>  Major historical happenings: * Boston Tea Party * American Revolution	- political pamphlets - speeches - state papers (Constitution & Dec. of Ind.) - poems - letters	- rational approach to the world  - pragmatism: experience is a significant source for truth  - natural rights  - social contract theory	- reinforce that the foundation of society should be human reason and logic (intellectualism)  - show that is possible for the individual to improve situations of birth, economy, society, religion	Power of Political Writing  Government by the People
<b>Romanticism (1800 - 1855)</b>  Major historical happenings: * manifest destiny * Industrial Revolution * social reform (slavery, women's rights, worker's rights) * California gold rush * Seneca Falls Conv.	- essays - novels - short stories - poetry  - slave narratives  - abolitionist writings	- emphasis on emotions, imagination, and subjectivity  - some fascination with the supernatural  - not always optimistic (pictures of human frailty, weakness, limitation)  - focus on nature (transcendentalism)	- celebrate the individual  - emphasized the destructive effect of conformity on the individual  - proposes that intuition (not reason) is the highest human faculty  - nature is a source of truth and inspiration  - reject materialism/ live a simple life	Civil Rights  Modern Gothic  The Romantic Hero
<b>Civil War (1855 - 1870)</b>  Major historical happenings: * Harpers Ferry * Dred Scott case * 13 <sup>th</sup> /14 <sup>th</sup> Amendment	- slave narratives - abolitionist writings - diaries - letters - speeches	- portrayal of personal experience  - natural rights	- wanted to show personal responses to historical events	The Realistic War Story  African-American Influence

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<p><b>Realism: Regionalism and Naturalism (1860 – 1910)</b></p> <p>Major historical happenings:  * The Gilded Age  * transcontinental railroad  * Social Darwinism  * laissez faire vs progressivism</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- novels</li> <li>- short stories</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- first person or objective narrator</li> <li>- elements of The Real Life <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* characters</li> <li>* setting</li> <li>* dialect</li> <li>* local color</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- capture the customs, character, and landscapes of the nation’s distinct regions</li> <li>- show the brutality of nature and life</li> <li>- explore the idea that human beings are helpless creatures moved by forces beyond their understanding or control</li> </ul>	<p>The Wild, Wild West</p> <p>The Labor Movement</p>
<p><b>Modernism (1910 – 1940)</b></p> <p><b>Harlem Renaissance (1924 – 1929)</b></p> <p>Major historical happenings:  * World War I  * Roaring 20s  * mass production  * 19<sup>th</sup> amendment  * Prohibition  * The Great Depression  * Dust Bowl  * New Deal</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- novels</li> <li>- short stories (especially those published in magazines)</li> <li>- essays (especially those published in magazines)</li> <li>- poetry</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- highly experimental <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* inferior monologue</li> <li>* stream of consciousness</li> </ul> </li> <li>- focus on mood and character</li> <li>- free verse (poetry)</li> <li>- journalistic style</li> <li>- coming of age</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- show that mass society is a threat to the individual</li> <li>- explore the inconsistencies of the American Dream</li> <li>- explore racial inequalities</li> <li>- offer up social criticism</li> </ul>	<p>Mass Culture &amp; Media</p> <p>Journalism</p> <p>programs established by The New Deal (social security, FDIC, SEC)</p>
<p><b>Post-Modernism/ Contemporary (1940 – present)</b></p> <p>Major historical happenings:  * Pearl Harbor  * World War II  * Holocaust  * <i>Brown vs Board of Ed</i>  * The Cold War (McCarthyism)  * The Vietnam War  * Iraq War</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- novels</li> <li>- short stories</li> <li>- poetry</li> <li>- drama</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- science fiction</li> <li>- protest literature</li> <li>- present tense</li> <li>- flashback</li> <li>- narrative nonfiction</li> <li>- coming of age</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- explore the strivings of ordinary Americans reaching for the American Dream</li> <li>- explores the subjectivity of truth</li> <li>- questions authority, conventional values, nature of reality</li> <li>- gives detailed, brutal accounts of war</li> <li>- explores the dynamics of race relations and the injustice of discrimination</li> </ul>	<p>Exponential Growth of Technology</p> <p>Living in a Global Village</p>