

# Summary of american literature i works



" A Model of Christian Charity" Governor John Winthrop

Ideas about how the Puritans should treat each other

God has made some of mankind poor/rich, powerful/not

1. hold conformity in variation and difference
2. manifest the work of spirit against oppression
3. every man needs the bond of affection

Justice and mercy

Law of Nature vs. Law of Grace

Show kindness or God will ruin the colony

Reason, question, answer, objection, answer

Social contract and social class hierarchy" A Description of New England"

Captain John Smith

Using merit to advance - no idleness

Faithful people will waste time converting others

Embrace employment

Raise your kids even if they hate you

If he doesn't execute everything perfectly, you never have to read his work

again" What is An American?" J. Hector St. John de Crevecoeur

Rejoice that one lived at the time America was founded

" Train of pleasing ideas"

No aristocracy, only fairness - American dream

" American" not just a race but a man that recognizes the wealth of differences

European foreigner - citizen - welcome

Accepting WHITE people without looking at exact race" The Flesh and the Spirit" Anne Bradstreet

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2 sisters arguing by a river

Spirit: lives only on meditation, no sinful pleasures

Flesh: values material possession

2 aspects of human nature

Spirit prefers AMBITION

Puritan reassurance in doing the right thing" As Weary Pilgrim" Anne

Bradstreet

Listing things the pilgrim will never do again - death" To My Dear and Loving

Husband" Anne Bradstreet

Woman's point of view - feminist criticism

Imagery of happy marriage, unification, love > gold

Man is receiver

Marxist- why does the speaker feel the need of reward and repayment,  
comparing love to material wealth?

Low key insecurity" The Life of Olaudah Equiano" Olaudah Equiano

African in London, autobiography by former-slave

1789: well-known in abolitionist circles

Comes from nation of dancers, musicians, poets

Came from freedom??

Sold over and over again - saw white men as wasteful

Given new names like Gustavus Vassa" To the University of Cambridge in

New England" Phillis Wheatley

Recently left shores of Africa - slave poet

Compares herself to Harvard students

Recently brought from " land of errors" ad the students have world's best  
wisdom and " sons of science"

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Race and devout Christian - enslavement is a deadly sin" On Being Brought

From Africa to America" Phillis Wheatley

Black slaves can be Christians too

God saved me

Refined" The Power of Fancy" Philip Freneau

Pursue imagination

American quest for freedom

Searching for your own answers

Controls the mind" To Sir Toby" Philip Freneau

Sees the brutality of slavery

Hell and fear

Torture

Devil" On a Honey Bee" Philip Freneau

Pondering the existence and duties of our lives" Rip Van Winkle" Washington

Irving

Myth

Henpecked husband helps everyone but his family

Goes into the woods and falls asleep for 18 years

Comes back and everything has changed

SHORT STORY - NEW GENRE" The Legend of Sleepy Hollow" Washington

Irving" Thanatopsis" William Cullen Bryant

Revising our human relationship with death

Unconcerned with what happens afterwards

Nature can help ease dark thoughts

Everyone will die and be reunited in the ground

Death is a happy, dream-filled sleep

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" Communion" with Earth's visible features

Meditation on death

Announcement of change - away from rationalism" The Prairies" William

Cullen Bryant

As fresh as before Adam sinned

Man has no part in this glorious work

Magnificent earthly creatures

Peace can be broken as easily as it is formed

Alone in the wilderness - experience the beauty

Bees humming - civilization to come

COMMUNION WITH NATURE AND PAST" The Aeolian Harp" Herman Melville"

Bartleby, the Scrivener" Herman Melville

ISOLATIONISM IN AMERICA

Bartleby: clinical depression, abandonment from society, worked at Dead

Letter Office, repetitive " I prefer not to"

Narrator: feels responsible for him, understand, better interaction,

motivation, human nature and caring

What is the meaning of communication?" Fall of the House of Usher" Edgar

Allan Poe

Identity: physical vs. mental - self exploration

Fear: fear is scarier than the thing to fear

Isolation: extremely isolated family

House = house AND family" The Tell-Tale Heart" Edgar Allan Poe

Madness is just " over acuteness of the senses"

All of us have good and bad

Logic? sanity vs. insanity" The Raven" Edgar Allan Poe

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Grief doesn't end or leave

Trusting perception

Dark bird sitting on the head of the goddess of wisdom" Nature" Ralph Waldo

Emerson

1. Nature
2. Commodity
3. Beauty
4. Language
5. Discipline
6. Idealism
7. Spirit
8. Prospects

Purpose: foundation of transcendentalism

Espouses a non-traditional appreciation of nature

Communion with nature - finding God in nature

Kingdom of man over nature - domination" Self Reliance" Ralph Waldo

Emerson

self = individuality

Self = unified self - all connected

Trusting yourself

Believing that what's in your heart is the same as everyone else = genius

Virtues are expectations not rules

No law is sacred except for nature

Communion with nature" Resistance to Civil Government" Henry David

Thoreau

" That gov't is best which governs least" turns into:

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" That gov't is best which governs not at all"

In jail for not paying taxes to support the Mex-US war" Conscience" Henry

David Thoreau

Instinct

Feeling and thinking cultivate sin

Earnest, pure, simple life

Complex human emotion vs. simple conscience" My Life has been a Poem"

Henry David Thoreau

Short life of 45 years - short poem

Living, not uttering - Transcendentalism

Trying to dictate how your life will go is complicated

Poem of life is an extensive burden

GO LIVE YOUR LIFE DON'T SPEND IT RECORDING IT" Song of Myself" Walt

Whitman

Sec 1 : ground rules, I am you, you are me

Sec 2 : you can't learn everything from books, go discover

Sec 3 : all history is history of the present moment

Sec 6 : what is grass

Sec 11 : widow watches men bathe

Sec 20 : mysteries of nature

Sec 21 : poet of the body, poet of the soul

Sec 50 : past and present wilt, he contradicts himself

Sec 52 : proud of himself, waiting for us to catch up" When Lilacs Last in the

Dooryard Bloom'd" Walt Whitman

Star : Venus falling in the sky = dead man

Lilacs : full bloomed = vital nature

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Hermit Thrust : natural place = pure and holy nature" When I Heard the  
Learn'd Astronomer" Walt Whitman

GO LEARN SOMETHING FOR YOURSELF

Lectures, charts, diagrams aren't needed sometimes

We would learn better by doing - kinesthetic" Narrative of the Life of  
Frederick Douglass" Frederick Douglass

Identity

Quest for freedom

Freedom of the mind leads to freedom of the body

Learnt to read from his mistress and kids on the street

" Brutalize" = make people into brutesPoemsEmily Dickinson

Private poems

Inspired aspiring writers

Seeks authentic " self"

Rebel - the dark was a momentary inspiration

Cliché crazy woman in the attic ONSUMMARY OF AMERICAN LITERATURE I

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