

# American literature

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American Literature The American Scholar entails a speech delivered by Ralph Waldo Emerson. The speech was given at the Phi Beta Kappa Society in Cambridge, Massachusetts, on August 31, 1837. Emerson was invited to deliver the speech because of the important literary work, *Nature*, which was published in 1836. *Nature* illustrated the new approach needed by the fledging American society to view the international community. For more than sixty years since the declaration of independence, the culture of the American society was heavily influenced or determined by Europe. Emerson is among the first individuals in the American literary world to spearhead efforts of developing a unique American cultural identity (Levine et al, 2013).

Emerson applies Transcendentalist opinions in explaining the most appropriate relationship to nature, by the American scholars. In the unique American vision, Emerson applies important points. He illustrates that the American society comprises fragments from a superior creature of mankind. This is because the American society is very diverse socially, economically and politically. The literary work also illustrates that the individual lives in only one of the two states. In the busy state, the individual identifies with one monotonous action or occupation. In the right state, the individual is illustrated as one with the entire humankind. To achieve the higher mind state (right state), current American scholars should reject old thinking and become “man thinking,” instead of being a victim of the community (Levine et al, 2013).

“The American Scholar” possesses the responsibility of “man thinking.” This enhances the ability of viewing the world effectively and clearly, with minimal influence from historical perspectives. The scholar’s learning entails <https://assignbuster.com/american-literature-essay-samples-6/>

three issues (Levine et al, 2013). First, nature significantly influences the mind. Secondly, the past is illustrated through literary works like books. Finally, action is directly related to experience.

The work by James Cooper meets the challenges illustrated by Emerson; through the development of unique aspect of the American literature. The challenge is achieved by illustrating past engagements and activities in literary books. Cooper wrote History of the Navy of the United States of America (1839) to explain the operations of the navy, like the defense measures. Another challenge which has been achieved illustrates that nature influences the mind directly. His experience at the sea empowered him to competently write several works on sea experiences; for instance, The Water Witch. Finally, action is determined by experience. He wrote the Bravo (1831) to attack the anti-republicanism perceptives in Europe. This is because the republicanism political concept proved to be successful (Thomas 117).

#### Reference

Baym, N., Levine, R., Franklin, W., Gura, P., Klinkowitz, J., Krupat, A. Wallace, P. (2013). In The Norton Anthology: American Literature (8th ed).

Thomas, Philbrick. (2011). James Fenimore Cooper. Harvard University Press.