

PREFACE

A CONTEXTUAL APPROACH TO TEACHING AMERICAN LITERATURE

As an idea and as a classroom subject, American literature has been undergoing a transformation. As the nation has come to understand its own diversity, literary scholars and teachers have opened up the anthologies and the curriculum to include more works by American women and minority writers. This broadening of the canon has been accompanied by a shift in the way literature is being read and discussed. We are recovering the pleasure of reading imaginative literature within its own special historical moment, of understanding its response to the social forces and moral crises that helped to define that moment. These new options for reading can be both exhilarating and disconcerting for teachers and students. The aim of this *Instructor's Guide* and of the *American Passages* series is to support instructors as they experiment with these new strategies.

American Passages is organized in sixteen units, each of which covers one literary movement by exploring two or three authors in depth while linking their work to that of other writers associated with that movement. Featured authors reflect both traditional and newly recovered American voices. The *Instructor's Guide* provides instructional resources, including suggested thematic approaches, discussion questions, reading lists, and information for lecture and discussion to aid the instructor in offering a contextual approach. The goals of the *Instructor's Guide* are as follows:

- 1. To encourage critical appreciation of American literature** within the structure, and in accordance with the traditional goals, of an American literature survey course:
 - to teach close reading skills and narrative strategies;
 - to introduce important American writers, styles, themes, and imaginative concerns;
 - to stimulate students to make connections among texts;
 - to illustrate how American literature has changed and evolved over time.
- 2. To promote an understanding of American diversity and continuity** by presenting both canonical works and voices that have traditionally been unheard or discounted.
- 3. To promote an understanding of American literature in broader contexts** by offering biographical, historical, and cultural contextual materials to support and enrich the readings.

Using Media to Explore Context

American Passages uses a combination of video, digital, and print media to aid the teaching of American literature in its cultural context.

Video Documentaries

For each unit there is a thirty-minute video documentary featuring two to four authors from the designated literary movement. To capture the artistic, political, historical, and literary settings for these authors, the documentaries draw upon an extensive archive of photographs, historical film clips, fine art, artifacts from popular culture, and other imaginative and historical resources. The videos include original interviews with literary scholars and historians, as well as readings and interviews featuring American authors, including, among others, Dorothy Allison, Sandra Cisneros, and Robert Stone. You will also find dramatized moments from the texts and montages to enhance student understanding of the author, the work, and the historical situation.

Online Archive and Slide Show Tool

The Online Archive is an extensive collection of materials illustrating the historical and cultural developments that influenced and were influenced by American literature. The Online Archive provides access to primary-source materials for student research and for classroom presentations. These materials include visual art, newspaper articles, sound files of traditional storytellers, government documents, diaries, musical recordings, maps, and photos of cultural artifacts. Occasionally, a unit contains questions about a work that is not included in the Online Archive or in *The Norton Anthology of American Literature* but is readily available from other Internet sources. You can find these works easily with the help of an online search engine such as Google.com.

The Online Archive is browseable for open-ended visits and easily searchable by students and instructors who have a specific writer or topic in mind. One advantage of the Online Archive is that its materials are situated within the site itself. Because the site is not dependent on URL links to other Web sites, it allows students to focus on content rather than on the acquisition of Web research skills; it provides materials that have been verified for accuracy and appropriateness; it invites inquiry into why specific materials have been included; and it ensures that the curriculum materials will be available whenever students and instructors want them.

All of the materials in the Online Archive are organized in a searchable database. Every item is cross-referenced by multiple fields, ensuring that users are presented with a wide and deep collection of materials upon each inquiry. Probing the database with a variety of approaches will yield different outcomes that can catalyze independent thought as users analyze and synthesize connections and relationships. Each artifact in the archive is accompanied by a caption and a brief description that helps make connections to the literature of its era.

The Online Archive includes a media composition feature (the Slide Show Tool) that allows students and instructors to compose audio and visual presen-

tations using the materials in the archive. A “point and click” user interface allows Web site visitors to compose slide shows that integrate audio clips of authors, historical documents, fine art, musical selections, and other materials. The Slide Show Tool allows instructors to create class presentations with multimedia and to ask students to use the site for analysis and synthesis assignments. All materials are available for downloading onto personal CDs, e-mailing to others, or saving on individual computers for educational use.

COMPANION ANTHOLOGY AND STUDY GUIDES

The videos and digital media are complemented by *The Norton Anthology of American Literature*, available in both a six-volume edition and a one-volume shorter edition. Both versions contain a rich blend of canonical and newly recognized voices in American literature and draw on a wealth of traditions.

Also published by Norton, the *American Passages Study Guide* contains material (reproduced in the *Instructor's Guide*) that you may wish to assign, including the following:

- student overview and questions;
- video overviews and questions;
- author biographies and questions;
- contextual material and questions;
- personal and creative response projects and problem-based learning projects;
- glossary, selected bibliography, and further resources.

The *Study Guide* also contains resources not found in the *Instructor's Guide*:

- a guide to writing about literature;
- an overview of how to read literature across the disciplines of fine arts, history, material culture, architecture, religion, politics, music, psychology, cultural geography, folklore, and anthropology.

Instructor Overview

One of the most challenging aspects of teaching literature in its cultural context is seeing the forest for the trees. The Instructor Overview at the start of each unit is intended to provide a view of that forest. The overview offers information about key historical events as well as the artistic innovations and literary hallmarks of the movement. Preceding each overview is a series of Overview Questions to help you check for comprehension of this big picture and to be used as a framework for guiding the students through the unit. These questions are designed to tie in the five *American Passages* Overview Questions (see pp. xxxiv–xxxv) to the specific content of each unit. A condensed version of this overview geared to students is available in the *Study Guide*, and you may find it helpful to have students read the overview and the questions before you begin the unit and before they watch the video documentary.

Tips on Using the Videos

Each of the sixteen videos is designed to introduce you and your students to the style, themes, and genres of one movement in American literature. Only a few of the ten authors covered in the unit curriculum materials can be featured in the video. When selecting authors to represent a particular literary moment, therefore, you may find it helpful to begin with one or more of the authors presented in the video.

The videos themselves have been designed to be “hooks”: their goal is to intrigue the viewer rather than to deliver large amounts of information. Hence, you may have a richer class discussion if you have students read the Student Overview, the Video Overview, and the appropriate Author/Text Reviews before watching the video. The videos should lead the students back to the Overview Questions at the start of each unit; that is, they are designed to open up discussion rather than to be the final word. Once your students have watched the video, the Discussion Questions for the video will guide them from simple comprehension to more sophisticated analysis.

Author/Text Review

The Author/Text Review section provides biographical information about each author or a historical introduction to various anonymous texts, such as Native American Creation Stories, and commentary on what has made the author or texts important in the history of American literature. You may find it helpful to have students read these reviews before they read the works, to help focus their reading. Both the *Instructor's Guide* and the *Study Guide* provide information on 160 authors and texts.

Contexts

In each Context section, students can see how a literary work relates to an artistic, political, economic, or historical trend or event of the era. For example, for Unit 10, “Rhythms in Poetry,” Context sections on the New Negro movement, radio, primitivism, and the cultural geography of Harlem invite students to consider questions that connect literature to culture: How does the poetry of Langston Hughes, for example, respond to the art deco style of Harlem Renaissance muralist Aaron Douglass? When you teach Unit 3, “Utopian Promise,” the Context sections will help students understand how and why the writings of seventeenth-century Puritans and Quakers use the plain style and how that style reverberated through everyday life in the New England colonies.

Discussion Questions

In the *Study Guide*, as in the *Instructor's Guide*, there are questions on each video, author, and Context to help you prepare for class and to encourage group discussion. You may find it helpful to have students keep a journal about their reading or answer some of these questions before class or exams. The questions are arranged in three levels of sophistication and difficulty: Comprehension, Context, and Exploration.

Comprehension Questions are close-reading questions that help the students comprehend the work's basic subject and major themes. They also include questions that focus on the interpretation of specific parts of the text. Comprehension Questions are designed to be a point of entry: they're meant to ease students into the material, encourage attention, and help them to be more perceptive viewers and readers. Here is an example:

- Why does Frederick Douglass refuse to narrate the details of his escape in his 1845 autobiography? What effect does this gap in information, and the reason Douglass provides for it, have on his *Narrative*?

Context Questions relate a specific literary work to a specific cultural-historical event, artifact, or person from the period. Some questions also compare works by one writer to works by other writers from the same unit. Others direct the reader to specific artifacts in the Online Archive. These artifacts are identified by their item number (e.g., [2356]). Context Questions usually provide background information before posing a specific problem. Here is an example:

- Walt Whitman was the most photographed American writer who lived and died in the nineteenth century (there are 130 extant photographs of him). He frequently sent pictures of himself to friends and admirers and included portraits of himself in his editions of *Leaves of Grass*. Examine the Whitman portraits featured in the archive. How does Whitman present himself in the portraits? How does he manipulate clothing and expression to achieve different effects? How does his self-presentation change over time? Why do you think Whitman might have been so interested in circulating photographs of himself?

Exploration Questions encourage speculation about broader themes and issues. These questions are intertextual across the sixteen units. Here is an example:

- In both “The Judge’s History of the Settlement” and “The Slaughter of the Pigeons” James Fenimore Cooper describes the way “settlement” and “civilization” exploit and disrupt the natural abundance of the wilderness. While the Judge tends to view this process as “improvement,” Natty condemns it as destructive and wasteful. What does Cooper’s position seem to be here, with regard to the environmental impact of European American settlement? In what respects does he seem to side with the Judge’s position, and in what respects does he seem to side with Natty? How does *The Pioneers* raise environmental issues that still concern us today? How do contemporary debates about North American environmental issues reflect or extend concerns raised in *The Pioneers*?

You may want to encourage students to review the Comprehension questions before attempting the more challenging Context and Exploration questions.

Personal and Creative Responses

You have undoubtedly noticed that each student has different ways of learning. You have probably also noticed that students play different roles in classroom discussion: some are facilitators, some are instigators, and some are listeners. You may also have noticed that some of your students tend to learn using visual cues while others prefer memorization. Some students may find it easier to understand things using logic while others prefer symbolism and metaphors. Perhaps you have students who could express themselves better if they were encouraged to be creative. If so, this section of the *Instructor's* and *Study Guides* will be useful. In it you will find suggestions for creative writing, journal exercises, and hands-on activities that allow your students to demonstrate what they know in a variety of different formats.

Problem-Based Learning Projects

Problem-based learning (PBL) works from the assumption that a good way to help students think across disciplinary boundaries is to give them hands-on experience as researchers. The PBL sections of the *Instructor's Guide* can help you encourage students to connect their readings and in-class explorations to personal experiences, public events, and life beyond the classroom. PBL features group participation. Sharing ideas and working on complex problems in small groups or pairs may help your students make more headway than they would on their own.

PBL takes time. A single problem may be the primary class activity for several weeks or even for the entire term. When the question at hand is broad and multifaceted, working it out can take many hours of prowling through archives and other resources and quite a bit of intensive discussion with others. PBL also requires perseverance and confidence, from both the student and the teacher. If you are interested in integrating PBL into your exploration of American writers and cultural history, be sure to consult a thorough guide to PBL. Following are a few suggestions to get you started.

First, PBL is not an add-on activity; it is a special way of organizing a classroom, a special form of student-centered learning. Instructors who try PBL must decide whether to try the strategy in a “pure” or a “hybrid” form, depending on the course content and the skill levels and interests of students. In its “pure” form, PBL consists of assigning a problem to a class, having students discuss it to decide what they might need to know in order to make headway with the problem, allowing students to divide the tasks among themselves, and coaching them as they go through the problem-solving process. This process takes the place of the traditional syllabus of assigned readings and paper topics. Here are some examples of PBL assignments that could work with ambitious students in a survey course:

- Choose a literary work that appeals to you—a poem, a short story, a play—from a historical period at least thirty years in the past. How would you present this work to a large contemporary American audience? Would you present it as a “timeless” work requiring no special knowledge of the year in which it was written? Or would you present it as a work very much *in* and *of* that year? Construct your answer by learning about that year. What was hap-

pening in public life? In the arts? In technology and politics and other literary circles? After you have created a summary of that year, evaluate the importance of what you have found with regard to understanding and appreciating the author and work you have selected.

- Nearly every film is the product of many acts of selection, even educational films about literary history. Choose an *American Passages* video that caught your attention, and describe the strategy of the video as an introduction to an American historical period or literary movement. If you were rewriting or re-editing that film, what new or different material would you include? What would you decide to eliminate to make space for the new material and why? Propose and explain these changes; you will need to explore the Online Archive and to decide what is important, as well as what isn't, in telling the story of a bygone time.
- What dramatic changes have taken place in the way that Americans have imagined and represented the North American wilderness? Where do you see shifts in style, mood, expectations, hopes, and fears? This is not a question limited to literary works; you will need to consider painting, photography, map-making, and other media through which Americans represent the natural world.

Depending upon the sophistication and motivation of the students, some problems may take several weeks. Notice that you have not assigned any readings to any student in particular: this means letting go of the idea that everyone is doing the same work. You may also have to change how you assess your students. Some practitioners of PBL suggest that you rely upon graded group work and self-assessment (see below); others suggest that you use a combination of graded group work and graded individual work. In either case, self-assessment is an important way to help students take responsibility for their learning.

Self-Assessment: Please rate yourself and your group members using the following chart:

	1 (low)	2	3	4	5 (high)
My commitment to this project was					
My analysis of the materials was					
Did I help my group members see connections?					
My writing for the project was					
Group Member #1 _____'s commitment to this project was					
Group Member #1 _____'s analysis of the materials was					
Did Group Member #1 _____ help you see connections?					

	1 (low)	2	3	4	5 (high)
Group Member #1 _____'s writing for the project was					
Group Member #2 _____'s commitment to this project was					

In a “pure” PBL classroom, the entire course would consist of three or four PBL problems such as the ones given above or those in the PBL section of the *Instructor’s* and *Study Guides*. In a “hybrid” PBL classroom, PBL problems might be framed by assigned readings that provide some context for the problem or that introduce students to basic concepts. Another hybrid possibility is to assign specific novels and to have students solve problems about the novels.

Glossary (and Other Reference Sources)

As you and your students read the *Guides*, you will find words in **bold** such as **sentimentality**, **Creole**, and **Puritan**. These terms are defined in the Glossary at the end of each unit.

You may find that not every unfamiliar term is in the Glossary or that people and places you don’t know are alluded to in the overviews and Contexts. For that reason, it’s worth pointing your students toward some other general resources: two excellent starting places are *Benét’s Reader’s Encyclopedia of American Literature*, ed. George Perkins, Barbara Perkins, and Phillip Leininger (New York: Harper Collins, 1991), and James Hart’s *Oxford Companion to American Literature*, with revisions and additions by Phillip W. Leininger, 6th ed. (New York: Oxford UP, 1995). These books provide biographical information on American authors, plot summaries of major works, and explanations of key references. Your students can find explanations of cultural references and identifications of historical figures and events at <www.britannica.com> or <www.encyclopedia.com>. If they are stumped by an extended metaphor or symbol, send them to *The Herder Dictionary of Symbols: Symbols from Art, Archaeology, Mythology, Literature, and Religion*, trans. Boris Matthews (Wilmette: Chiron Publications, 1993). If they encounter a word used in an unfamiliar way, they can determine what that word meant for people who lived before the twentieth century by looking in the *Oxford English Dictionary*. Similarly, they can discover the cultural significance of key concepts (such as the “sublime” or Prohibition) in the 11th edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. Most of these resources can be found in the reference room of a typical college or university library.

Selected Bibliography and Further Resources

The Selected Bibliography at the end of each unit lists the works that the writers of the *American Passages* guides found most useful when composing the unit materials. Further Resources is a list of other interesting materials, such as museum exhibits (virtual and actual), video recordings, sound recordings,

and multimedia resources. These materials may enhance your students' learning and will provide rich contextual resources to help them understand the cultural milieu of the era they are studying.

TELLING THE STORY OF AMERICAN LITERATURE

One of the goals of this *Guide* is to help you teach your students to be literary historians—that is, to teach them to tell the story of how American literature has changed and evolved over time and to stimulate them to compare, contrast, and make connections between and among texts. When students make connections, they are telling a story: the story of how American literature came into being. Below are four organizing principles you might use to help your students narrate the story of American literature: one based on literary movements and historical change, one based on the Overview Questions, one based on Contexts, and one based on multiculturalism.

Literary Movements and Historical Change

American Passages is organized around sixteen literary movements or “units.” A literary movement centers around a group of authors that share certain stylistic and thematic concerns. Each unit includes ten authors that are represented either in *The Norton Anthology* or in the Online Archive. Two to four of these authors are discussed in the video that accompanies the unit. The video calls attention to important historical and cultural influences on these authors, defines a genre that they share, and proposes some key thematic parallels.

Tracking literary movements can help your students see how American literature has changed and evolved over time. In general, people think about literary movements as reacting against earlier modes of writing and earlier movements. For example, just as modernism (Units 10–13) is often seen as a response to realism and the Gilded Age (Unit 9), so Romanticism is seen as a response to the Enlightenment (Unit 4). Most of the units focus on one era (see the chart below), but they will often include relevant authors from other eras to help draw out the connections and differences. (Note: The movements in parentheses are not limited to authors/works from the era in question, but they do cover some material from it.)

Century	Era	<i>American Passages</i> Literary Movements
Fifteenth– Seventeenth	Renaissance	(1: Native Voices) 2: Exploring Borderlands 3: Utopian Promise
Eighteenth	Enlightenment	(3: Utopian Promise) 4: Spirit of Nationalism (7: Slavery and Freedom)

Century	Era	American Passages Literary Movements
Nineteenth	Romanticist	4: Spirit of Nationalism 5: Masculine Heroes 6: Gothic Undercurrents 7: Slavery and Freedom
Nineteenth	Realist	(1: Native Voices) 6: Gothic Undercurrents 8: Regional Realism 9: Social Realism
Twentieth	Modernist	(1: Native Voices) 10: Rhythms in Poetry 11: Modernist Portraits 12: Migrant Struggle 13: Southern Renaissance
Twentieth	Postmodernist	1: Native Voices 2: Exploring Borderlands 12: Migrant Struggle 14: Becoming Visible 15: Poetry of Liberation 16: Search for Identity

Each of the units contains a timeline of historical events along with the dates of key literary texts by the authors discussed in the unit. These timelines are designed to help your students make connections between and among the movements, eras, and dates covered in each unit.

Overview Questions

The units are also connected by Overview Questions that will help start the thinking process for your students. While some of these questions will be more appropriate for some authors than for others, at least one of the Overview Questions should be provocative when asked about any particular author or group of authors. The Overview Questions are as follows:

1. What is an American? How does literature create conceptions of the American experience and American identity?

This two-part question should trigger discussion about issues such as Who belongs to America? When and how does one become an American? How has the search for identity among American writers changed over time? It should also provoke discussion about the ways in which immigration, colonization, conquest, youth, race, class, and gender affect national identity.

2. What is American literature? What are the distinctive voices and styles in American literature? How do social and political issues influence the American canon?

This multi-part question should instigate discussion about the aesthetics and reception of American literature. What is a masterpiece? When is some-

thing considered literature, and how is this category culturally and historically dependent? How has the canon of American literature changed and why? How have American writers used language to create art and meaning? What does literature do? This question should also invoke the issue of American exceptionalism: Is American literature different from the literature of other nations?

3. How do place and time shape the authors' works and our understanding of them?

This question addresses America's location and the many ways in which place affects American literature's form and content. It should provoke discussion about how regionalism, geography, immigration, the frontier, and borders affect American literature, as well as the role of the vernacular in indicating place.

4. What characteristics of a literary work have made it influential over time?

This question should spark discussion about the evolving impact of various pieces of American literature and about how American writers used language to create art and respond to and call for change. What is the individual's responsibility to uphold the community's traditions, and when are individuals compelled to resist them? What is the relationship between the individual and the community?

5. How are American myths created, challenged, and re-imagined through this literature?

This question returns to the question "What is an American?" But it poses the question at a cultural rather than individual level. What are the myths that make up American culture? What is the American Dream? What are American myths, dreams, and nightmares? How have these changed over time?

Contexts

Another way that connections can be made across and between authors is through the five Contexts in each unit: three longer **Core Contexts** and two shorter **Extended Contexts**. The goal of the Contexts is not only to help your students read American literature in its cultural background but also to teach them close-reading skills and narrative strategies. Each Context features a brief narrative that introduces a key cultural metaphor or concept that had particular resonance for the writers in the unit and the average American of their era, questions that connect the Context to the authors in the unit, and a list of relevant items in the Online Archive. Some examples of Contexts include discussions of the concept of the Apocalypse (3: "Utopian Visions"), the sublime (4: "Spirit of Nationalism"), and baseball (14: "Becoming Visible"). The questions at the end of each Context will encourage your students to make connections across the Context, the writers in the unit, and the writers in other units.

The Core Contexts can be used in conjunction with an author or as stand-alone activities. You may find it helpful to skim the Context questions to see which authors are explicitly connected to that Context. While each Context is accompanied by a list of archive items, you may want to have your students search the Online Archive for other related materials. The Slide Show Tool on

the Web site is ideal for creating assignments that draw connections between archive items from a Context and a text that a student has read. And you can create your own contexts and activities using the Slide Show Tool: these materials can then be e-mailed, viewed online, projected, or printed out on overhead transparencies.

Multiculturalism

In the past twenty years, the field of American literature has undergone a radical transformation. Just as the mainstream public has begun to understand America as more diverse, so scholars have moved to integrate more texts by women and ethnic minorities into the standard literary canon. These changes can be both exhilarating and disconcerting, as the breadth of American literature appears to be almost limitless. Each of the videos and units has been carefully balanced to pair canonical and noncanonical voices. Your students may find it helpful, however, to trace the development of American literature according to the rise of different ethnic and minority literatures. The following chart shows which ethnic and minority groups are represented in the videos and the units. As the chart indicates, we have set different multicultural literatures in dialogue with one another.

Group	Video Representation	<i>Instructor's Guide and Study Guide</i> Representation
African American literature	7: Slavery and Freedom 8: Regional Realism 10: Rhythms in Poetry 13: Southern Renaissance 14: Becoming Visible 15: Poetry of Liberation	4: Spirit of Nationalism 5: Masculine Heroes 7: Slavery and Freedom 8: Regional Realism 9: Social Realism 10: Rhythms in Poetry 11: Modernist Portraits 13: Southern Renaissance 14: Becoming Visible 15: Poetry of Liberation 16: Search for Identity
Native American literature	1: Native Voices 5: Masculine Heroes 14: Becoming Visible	1: Native Voices 2: Exploring Borderlands 3: Utopian Promise 4: Spirit of Nationalism 5: Masculine Heroes 7: Slavery and Freedom 8: Regional Realism 14: Becoming Visible 15: Poetry of Liberation 16: Search for Identity
Latino literature	2: Exploring Borderlands 10: Rhythms in Poetry	2: Exploring Borderlands 5: Masculine Heroes

	12: Bounty of the Land 16: Search for Identity	10: Rhythms in Poetry 12: Migrant Struggle 15: Poetry of Liberation 16: Search for Identity
Asian American literature	12: Bounty of the Land 16: Search for Identity	9: Social Realism 12: Migrant Struggle 16: Search for Identity
Jewish American literature	9: Social Realism 11: Modernist Portraits 14: Becoming Visible 15: Poetry of Liberation 16: Search for Identity	9: Social Realism 11: Modernist Portraits 14: Becoming Visible 15: Poetry of Liberation 16: Search for Identity
Women's literature	1: Native Voices 2: Exploring Borderlands 3: Utopian Promise 6: Gothic Undercurrents 7: Slavery and Freedom 8: Regional Realism 9: Social Realism 11: Modernist Portraits 12: Bounty of the Land 13: Southern Renaissance 15: Poetry of Liberation 16: Search for Identity	1: Native Voices 2: Exploring Borderlands 3: Utopian Promise 4: Spirit of Nationalism 5: Masculine Heroes 6: Gothic Undercurrents 7: Slavery and Freedom 8: Regional Realism 9: Social Realism 10: Rhythms in Poetry 11: Modernist Portraits 12: Migrant Struggle 13: Southern Renaissance 14: Becoming Visible 15: Poetry of Liberation 16: Search for Identity
Gay and lesbian literature	2: Exploring Borderlands 5: Masculine Heroes 10: Rhythms in Poetry 11: Modernist Portraits 15: Poetry of Liberation 16: Search for Identity	2: Exploring Borderlands 5: Masculine Heroes 10: Rhythms in Poetry 11: Modernist Portraits 12: Migrant Struggle 13: Southern Renaissance 14: Becoming Visible 15: Poetry of Liberation 16: Search for Identity
Working-class literature	2: Exploring Borderlands 4: Spirit of Nationalism 5: Masculine Heroes 7: Slavery and Freedom 9: Social Realism 12: Bounty of the Land 16: Search for Identity	2: Exploring Borderlands 4: Spirit of Nationalism 5: Masculine Heroes 7: Slavery and Freedom 9: Social Realism 10: Rhythms in Poetry 12: Migrant Struggle 14: Becoming Visible 15: Poetry of Liberation 16: Search for Identity

GETTING STARTED

Defining Your Goals

Even if you have taught your American literature class a dozen times, it is worth asking yourself, What are my goals and what am I doing to accomplish these goals? The following chart provides examples of how to establish and meet class goals. This kind of preparatory exercise can help you identify the tasks that students find difficult.

Preparation for Activity	⇐ Activity That Teaches Skills	⇐ Goal ⇐	Assessment
Read the autobiographies of Benjamin Franklin and Frederick Douglass.	Have students read Booker T. Washington's <i>Up from Slavery</i> . Ask students to pay attention to the way Washington opens the story of his life.	Understand conventions of autobiography	To assess students' understanding of "as told to" autobiographies, have students write an autobiography of a classmate and include authenticating documents at the beginning.
Have a brainstorming session about what kind of narrators students have seen in the literature they have read up to this point. What is going on at the end of the eighteenth century that allows for innovations in point of view?	Have students read Susanna Rowson's <i>Charlotte Temple</i> and discuss how she uses her authorial voice to forestall criticism, heighten dramatic tension, and manage readers' reactions to her tale.	Understand conventions of narration in their cultural context	Quiz: Ask students how Clappe's authorial voice compares to Rowson's when we get to Unit 5.

The Personal and Creative Responses section in each unit provides you with a variety of assessment tools ranging from journal exercises, to creative assignments, to multimedia presentations. You may find that varying the types of assessment tools you use produces welcome results.

Using Technology in the Classroom

How can using technology in the classroom help your teaching? If used appropriately, technology can help students become more engaged, enable them to see connections, and make your life easier. In the past few years, there has been an explosion of materials available on the Internet for teaching American studies. These materials include art, manuscripts, music, criticism, and language guides that are otherwise not available outside of archives, special-interest libraries, or large research institutions. Technology brings new resources to your students in an appealing and accessible format.

The *American Passages* videos are designed to be shown either as a series or as stand-alone episodes. You may want to show a video every class, every week, every other week, or once a term. If you are using the video as an overview for a more advanced course, you may want to use the Context and Exploration rather than the Comprehension questions. Researchers have shown that people are more likely to retain information if it relates to information that they already know, so you may want to precede the video with a short brainstorming session to ascertain what the students already know about the writers and/or movement the video covers. You may want to return to this brainstorming diagram after the video to map out how their perceptions have changed.

The *American Passages* Web site at <www.learner.org> includes an Online Archive of American cultural materials from the colonial period to the present that has been compiled specifically with the literary scholar in mind; this Online Archive is a rich resource for instructors and students alike. It is designed to support the curriculum in the *Instructor's* and *Study Guides*: you will find archival materials that relate to each of the 160 authors, as well as archival materials for all 80 of the Contexts. Items of general cultural significance have also been included. Each item contains an analytical description that links it to the *American Passages* curriculum materials. These items are not meant to duplicate the online holdings of other institutions such as the Library of Congress, the National Archives and Records Administration, and the Smithsonian, but rather are intended to exemplify the ways one might use resources from institutions such as these and others in conjunction with American literature.

The Web site Slide Show Tool is an excellent and easy way to project both passages and images. This software allows you to place text and image next to one another, providing for better illustrations of the relationship between text and artifact. You may find it helpful to have students pair their written assignments with slide shows that allow them to move back and forth among images, sounds, and texts. This user-friendly software allows you to save work for up to fourteen weeks. If you or your students wish to save a slide show for a longer period, you can download it in a "read only" format onto your own machine or you can simply revisit it at the Slide Show portion of the site.

For First-Time Teachers: The Student-Centered Classroom

How do the *American Passages* materials relate to other pedagogical theories, such as the student-centered classroom? The goal of the student-centered classroom is to get students to think, and hence to learn. In this classroom, the teacher becomes a facilitator, guiding the student toward better learning rather than disseminating wisdom. One way to get students more actively involved in the learning process is to ask them to do some of the preparation work and to give them time to show what they know.

If you are a first-time teacher, here are a couple of tips: if you have a quiet class or students who have trouble relating their views concisely, try having them freewrite on one of the discussion questions before starting the conversation. If you have one or two people who monopolize conversation and other means of engaging the rest of the class have failed, bring a small, soft ball to class and have students throw it to the person they want to respond to their comment. Make it a rule that you can't throw the ball back to the person who threw it at you. If you have students who say great things but never make connections to anything anyone else has said, have them do the freewriting exercise and then pass their paper to the person on their right (or left) and have that person respond. An alternative is to have the first person write a discussion question (something debatable, not a factoid). If you have problems with students asking "going-nowhere-factoid-questions," ask them to bring discussion questions that you can write on the board and use to talk about the difference between questions of fact and thought questions.

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Oregon Public Broadcasting (OPB) An experienced producer of educational content with expertise in both traditional and new media approaches to formal education, community outreach, and television production, OPB has a long history of producing Web sites, teachers' guides, and other curriculum materials to accompany educational and PBS broadcast series. Working closely with national advisory boards, OPB's staff has produced curriculum materials in the humanities and sciences for a variety of grade levels and for teacher professional development. OPB is the third largest producer of documentary specials for PBS and has also produced programs for *NOVA*, *Frontline*, *American Experience*, and other series. In addition, OPB has undertaken co-productions with the BBC, NHK (Japan), ABC (Australia), and many other leading international producers.

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