

American Literary Movements Project

Directions: Working in small groups of 2-3 people, you will select and research a specific literary movement in American Literature. Your research will cover 4 areas:

- 1) Historical Context
- 2) Values and Beliefs
- 3) Genre and Style
- 4) Significant Authors and Works.

With your research, you will create a multimedia presentation with bullet pointed information, accompanying images, and audio/visual clips. And, your presentation will creatively embody the values, genre, and style of your literary movement. For instance, if your literary time period is known for dramas, you might want to have part of your presentation in play format. If your literary movement is known for a specific type of poem, you could summarize the most important information in poetic form or write your slides with the common rhyme scheme of that literary movement. Modify the class setting, atmosphere, format of information, etc. to creatively and accurately reflect your literary movement. Once you complete your presentation, you will create a notes handout that your peers will complete in class.

These presentations will provide the class with a sense of the scope and depth of American literature, helping to aid your understanding as you study the progression of specific topics and themes throughout this course.

Major American Literary Movements:

- Colonial/ Puritan (1650-1750)
- Revolutionary/ Age of Reason (1750-1800)
- Romanticism (1800-1860)/ Transcendentalism (1840-1860)
- The Civil War Era (1850-1890)
- Modern (1914-1950)
- Harlem Renaissance (1920s)
- Contemporary (1950s-present)

Requirements:

I. Content

A. Topics to Include

- **Historical Context:** Discuss major events that *influenced writers* of this period. Consider trends and innovations in economics, religion, politics, technology, philosophy, art, etc. How is historical context reflected in the ideas—and writings—of this period?
- **Values and Beliefs:** Discuss the major *ideas* of the period. Is there a specific philosophical or religious movement attached to this period? How did the writers of the time answer some of our most essential questions—what is the nature of God? What is the relationship between nature and man? What does it mean to be a “good” person? Are humans innately good or evil? What is the relationship between society and the individual? How does a person find true happiness? Etc. This section should be the heart of your presentation since it is what distinguishes your period from others in the American timeline. Let your research be your guide.
- **Genre and Style:** Discuss the dominant genres (essay, novel, speech, letter, narrative, poem, etc.) that characterize this literary period. Be sure to clearly define all terms as you present this information.

- Significant Authors and Works: Select between four and eight highly acclaimed (these tend to be names and titles you recognize) writers and/or their works to share with the class. Include a *brief* biography of summary for each example you choose to discuss. Which authors and/or works are most representative of this period?
- Highlighted passage: Select an excerpt, poem, essay, etc. from the period to read to the class. You may tie this to the “Significant Authors and Works” portion of your presentation, if you see fit. Discuss the ways in which the passage exemplifies your period. Consider both thematic and stylistic elements in your analysis.

II. Presentation

- Use Power Point, video clip, audio clip, image, overhead, etc.
- Format your presentation to compliment and help thoroughly teach the class the period you were assigned.
- Embody your literary movement through the delivery of your information.

III. Handout

- Create a handout to distribute to the class that includes an outline of the major points from your presentation, a copy of the passage you will read to the class, and a bibliography of recommended websites or textbook passages that contain information about your period.
- Incorporate blank spaces throughout your notes handout, blank spaces that students will fill-in while watching your presentation.
- Write the notes in a concise, thorough, easy-to-read manner

IV. Lit Analysis

- Select one piece from the textbook that you will *use* to lead the class through discussion.
- This piece will be assigned as homework the day before you give us your “overview presentation”, and the rest of the class will read the piece to prepare for your lesson.
- In your lesson, choose elements that you would like your peers to see and/ or analyze. Plan a discussion, complete with questions that will adequately examine and review the elements of your literary movement.

Grading:

Content

- 1) Historical Context, Values and Beliefs, Genre and Style, and/or Significant Authors and Works
 - Thorough examination of topic _____/7 points
 - Accurate information _____/5 points

Presentation

- 2) Multimedia Present _____/2 points
- 3) Audio/video clips adds to presentation with accurate, relevant information _____/5 points
- 4) Clear explanation of content in Multimedia _____/3 points
- 5) Image on nearly every slide, contribute to presentation _____/3 points

Handout

- 6) Concise overview of content _____/3 points
- 7) Thorough overview of content _____/3 points
- 8) Blank spaces for students to fill in important information _____/2 points
- 9) Extra sources referenced _____/2 points

Lit Analysis

- 10) Important passage selected _____/2 point
- 11) Most important phrases and lit devices identified _____/3 points
- 12) Accurate analysis of diction _____/3 points
- 13) Accurate analysis of lit devices _____/3 points
- 14) Accurate identification of literary movement elements _____/4 points

Total _____/50 points