

Course Title

# American Literature 11<sup>th</sup> Grade



# INNOVATIVE ARTS ACADEMY

Course Overview

The American Literature course is an exploration of the literature written in America over hundreds of years, including stories, poems, essays, and plays. It is presented as joining a huge conversation that Americans have been having across time about important ideas such as freedom, justice, self-determination, identity, and community. Throughout the year, students will read these works while also working on becoming stronger readers, thinkers, and writers. Key skills include digging deep into texts, understanding authorial choices, and clearly explaining ideas using evidence. Students will also practice revising their writing and build their vocabulary to discuss complex ideas. The course aims to show how literature helps understand America's past, present, and potential future.

## Unit 1: Foundations and Encounters: Early American Literature

## Unit 2: Building a Democracy: The Revolutionary Period

## Unit 3: The Individual and the Society: Literature of the American Renaissance

## Unit 4: The Quest for Freedom: The Civil War and its Aftermath

Time Frame

2 Weeks

Time Frame

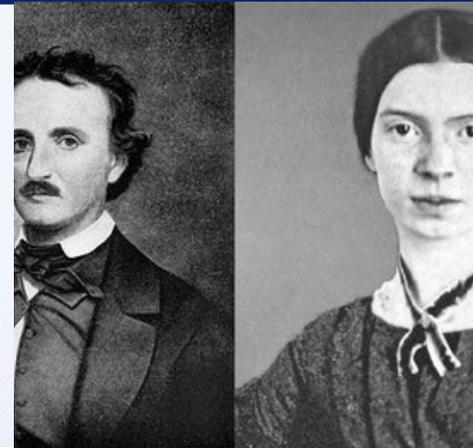
2 Weeks

Time Frame

4 Weeks

Time Frame

4 Weeks



### Focus of the Unit

This unit focuses on why people come to new places, the interactions when different cultures meet, and the feeling of being a stranger in a new land. It dives into the earliest American stories and accounts, such as myths and historical writings. Students will work closely with older, sometimes challenging texts, using strategies to understand the language and exploring the historical background before reading. The objective is to practice analyzing both old stories and historical writings to understand the beginnings of American experiences.

### Focus of the Unit

Exploring ideas about freedom, fairness, and power. Questions include how people resist control and how they collaborate to build something new, like a nation. Students will read important documents and writings from this period. They will practice analyzing the arguments writers make in both literary and historical texts and connect historical events directly to the ideas in the reading. A focus will also be placed on building vocabulary related to government and change.

### Focus of the Unit

Looking inward to understand the self and figuring out how individuals relate to the world and others. It explores finding one's own identity and deciding when to conform or stay true to oneself. The unit includes poems and essays on these themes. Students will use strategies to break down complex language and ideas in these older texts. They will practice writing essays analyzing these big ideas in depth and work on revising their writing for clarity.

### Focus of the Unit

Examining major conflicts that divide people, particularly concerning issues of race and freedom. Key questions involve self-determination, societal division, facing defeat, and the meaning of "progress" after struggle. Texts include speeches, letters, stories, and photographs from this era. Students will ensure understanding of historical events before analyzing the texts. They will practice analyzing different types of texts (literary and informational) about the same events, focusing on language and evidence.

Board approved 8/2025

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The American Literature course is an exploration of the literature written in America over hundreds of years, including stories, poems, essays, and plays. It is presented as joining a huge conversation that Americans have been having across time about important ideas such as freedom, justice, self-determination, identity, and community. Throughout the year, students will read these works while also working on becoming stronger readers, thinkers, and writers. Key skills include digging deep into texts, understanding authorial choices, and clearly explaining ideas using evidence. Students will also practice revising their writing and build their vocabulary to discuss complex ideas. The course aims to show how literature helps understand America's past, present, and potential future.

## Unit 5: America Transformed: An Age of Realism

## Unit 6: Contemporary Voices and Visions

## Unit 7: Slaughterhouse-Five by Kurt Vonnegut

## Unit 8: Literature Circles / Argumentative Essay

Time Frame

8 Weeks

Time Frame

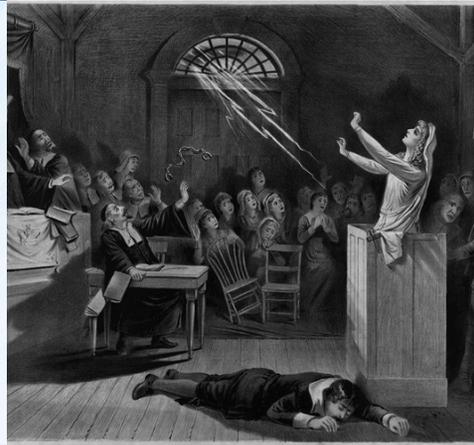
4 Weeks

Time Frame

6 Weeks

Time Frame

4 Weeks



### Focus of the Unit

Reading literature reflecting the social and economic changes of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, such as industrial growth and urbanization. It questions the extent of individual control versus external forces and explores the consequences of change. Texts include realistic stories and expository pieces. Students will practice analyzing how authors depict character and setting, and how they construct arguments in nonfiction. Emphasis is placed on revising essays to write with depth about the complex consequences of social and economic change.

### Focus of the Unit

Delving into more recent American literature from diverse perspectives. Themes include fitting in or feeling isolated, questioning the relevance of the American Dream, and prioritizing personal integrity over civic duty. Texts explore isolation, identity, and social issues. Students will analyze how authors use literary techniques in modern texts and explicitly compare these skills to analyzing arguments and ideas in contemporary nonfiction. They will practice sustaining depth in writing when analyzing complex topics.

### Focus of the Unit

An in-depth study of one major modern novel that addresses the destructiveness of war, free will versus fatalism, and the potential of literature as a tool for social change. This unit dedicates significant time to this single, complex text. Students will use specific strategies to understand challenging parts of the novel and make strong connections between Vonnegut's own experiences and the book's themes. They will write analytical essays focusing on developing ideas in depth, supported by textual evidence.

### Focus of the Unit

This unit revolves around reading powerful personal narratives or stories within Literature Circles, where students discuss key ideas and literary elements. A central focus is on using the texts' insights and textual evidence to build strong argumentative essays. Significant time is dedicated to the writing process, particularly revising, to ensure clear claims, reasons, and compelling evidence. Students will also practice using relevant vocabulary related to the texts and argumentation. The overall aim is to connect individual experiences to broader societal issues and communicate analytical arguments effectively based on literary analysis.

**Unit Title**

**Unit 1: Foundations and Encounters: Early American Literature**

**Time Frame**

2 Weeks



**INNOVATIVE**  
ARTS ACADEMY

**Essential Question(s)**



- Why are we bound to certain places?
- What motivates people to explore the unknown?
- What does it mean to be a stranger in a strange land?
- What happens when cultures collide?

**Focus of the Unit**



We'll explore the very first stories and writings about America, like myths and historical accounts. We'll focus on why people came here and what happened when different cultures met. You'll learn how to read older texts and understand the history that shaped them, and practice analyzing both old stories and historical writings from this time.

**Standards**

**CC.1.3.11-12.C Analyze the impact of the author's choices regarding how to develop and relate elements of a story or drama.**  
**CC.1.2.11-12.D Evaluate how an author's point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text.**  
**CC.1.3.11-12.F Evaluate how words and phrases shape meaning and tone in texts.**  
**CC.1.4.11-12.S Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.**

**Learning Targets**

I can analyze literary elements like theme, character, and plot to understand early American stories.

**Learning Targets**

I can analyze historical and informational texts from this period, evaluating the author's purpose and evidence.

**Learning Targets**

I can analyze the language and voice of authors in early American texts, including figurative language and allusions.

**Learning Targets**

I can write analytical responses or arguments supported by evidence from early American texts and research.



**Resources**

**HMH, IXL, Google**

<b>Unit Title</b>	<b>Unit 2: Building a Democracy: The Revolutionary Period</b>
<b>Time Frame</b>	2 Weeks



**INNOVATIVE**  
ARTS ACADEMY

	<b>Essential Question(s)</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What does oppression look like?</li> <li>• How do we gain our freedom?</li> <li>• How can we share power and build alliances?</li> <li>• How do we transform our lives?</li> </ul>

	<b>Focus of the Unit</b>
	<p>This unit is about the fight for freedom and creating a new nation. We'll read important speeches and documents from the American Revolution. You'll learn to analyze the arguments writers made and connect them directly to the historical events.</p>

<b>Standards</b>	<p>CC.1.2.11-12.H Analyze seminal texts based upon reasoning, premises, purposes, and arguments.          CC.1.2.11-12.A Determine and analyze the relationship between two or more central ideas of a text.          CC.1.3.11-12.C Analyze the impact of the author's choices regarding how to develop and relate elements of a story or drama.          CC.1.2.11-12.D Evaluate how an author's point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text.</p>
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<b>Learning Targets</b>
I can analyze arguments in speeches and documents from the Revolutionary period.

<b>Learning Targets</b>
I can analyze the structure and purpose of informative texts from this era.

<b>Learning Targets</b>
I can analyze how authors use literary elements in stories and poems from the Revolutionary period.

<b>Learning Targets</b>
I can evaluate how author's purpose, voice, and tone shape the meaning of texts.



<b>Resources</b>	<b>HMH, IXL, Google</b>
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<b>Unit Title</b>	<b>Unit 3: The Individual and the Society: Literature of the American Renaissance</b>
<b>Time Frame</b>	4 Weeks



**INNOVATIVE**  
ARTS ACADEMY

	<b>Essential Question(s)</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In what ways do we seek to remain true to ourselves?</li> <li>• How do we relate to the world around us?</li> <li>• What do we secretly fear?</li> <li>• When should we stop and reflect on our lives?</li> </ul>

	<b>Focus of the Unit</b>
	<p>We'll explore literature that looks inward to understand ourselves and figure out how we fit in with society. We'll read poems and essays about identity, self-reflection, and being an individual. You'll learn strategies to understand older, complex language and ideas and practice writing and revising essays to explain your thoughts clearly and in depth.</p>

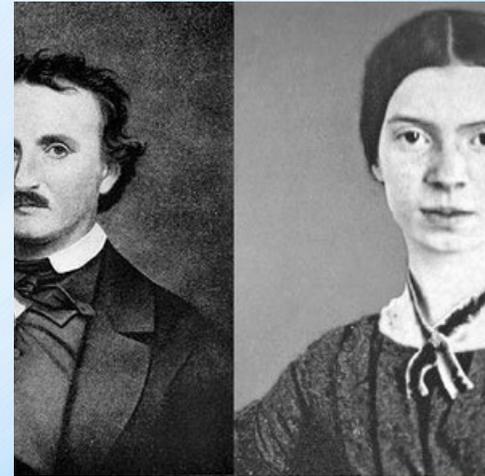
<b>Standards</b>	<p>CC.1.3.11-12.A Determine and analyze the relationship between two or more themes or central ideas of a text.          CC.1.2.11-12.C Analyze the interaction and development of a complex set of ideas... over the course of the text.          CC.1.3.11-12.E Evaluate the structure of texts including how specific sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions... relate to each other and the whole.          CC.1.4.11-12.G Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics.</p>
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<b>Learning Targets</b>
I can analyze the theme and structure of poems from the American Renaissance.

<b>Learning Targets</b>
I can analyze how authors develop key ideas and structure their arguments in essays.

<b>Learning Targets</b>
I can analyze how authors use literary elements like structure, symbolism, and mood in prose texts.

<b>Learning Targets</b>
I can write argumentative or explanatory essays analyzing the big ideas in these texts and revising my writing for clarity and depth.



<b>Resources</b>	<b>HMH, IXL, Google</b>
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**Unit Title**

**Unit 4: The Quest for Freedom: The Civil War and its Aftermath**

**Time Frame**

4 Weeks



**INNOVATIVE**  
ARTS ACADEMY

**Essential Question(s)**



- When is self-determination possible?
- What divides us as human beings?
- How do we face defeat?
- What is the price of progress?

**Focus of the Unit**



This unit focuses on the Civil War and what happened afterward. We'll look at big conflicts that divided Americans like race and freedom. You'll read speeches, letters, stories, and look at photos. We'll make sure we understand the history before we analyze the texts and practice analyzing different kinds of texts (like stories and articles) about these events.

**Standards**

CC.1.2.11-12.H Analyze seminal texts based upon reasoning, premises, purposes, and arguments.  
 CC.1.2.11-12.G Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in different media or formats.  
 CC.1.3.11-12.H Demonstrate knowledge of foundational works... including how two or more texts from the same period treat similar themes or topics.  
 CC.1.4.11-12.S Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

**Learning Targets**

I can analyze and evaluate the arguments presented in speeches and historical documents from this era.

**Learning Targets**

I can analyze and integrate information from different media related to historical events, such as Civil War photographs.

**Learning Targets**

I can compare and contrast how different literary texts from this period treat similar themes of freedom, conflict, or identity.

**Learning Targets**

I can draw evidence from texts to support my analysis and arguments about this historical period.



**Resources**

**HMH, IXL, Google**

<b>Unit Title</b>	<b>Unit 5: America Transformed: An Age of Realism</b>
<b>Time Frame</b>	8 Weeks



**INNOVATIVE**  
ARTS ACADEMY

	<b>Essential Question(s)</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To what degree do we control our lives?</li> <li>• Why do humans cause harm?</li> <li>• What are the consequences of change?</li> <li>• What makes a place unique?</li> </ul>

	<b>Focus of the Unit</b>
	<p>We'll read stories and articles that show life as it really was during a time of big changes in America (like growing cities and industries). We'll explore whether people control their own lives or if outside forces are more powerful and look at the consequences of these changes. You'll analyze how authors show characters and settings realistically and how they make arguments in nonfiction, and practice revising your essays about these complex changes.</p>

<b>Standards</b>	<p>CC.1.3.11-12.D Evaluate how an author's point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text.          CC.1.2.11-12.F Evaluate how words and phrases shape meaning and tone in texts.          CC.1.2.11-12.G Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in different media or formats.          CC.1.4.11-12.G Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics.</p>
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<b>Learning Targets</b>
I can analyze how authors use literary elements like character, setting, and point of view to create realistic portrayals of life.

<b>Learning Targets</b>
I can evaluate how words and phrases shape meaning and tone in both literary and informational texts from this period.

<b>Learning Targets</b>
I can synthesize information and evaluate arguments presented in multiple texts about social or economic issues.

<b>Learning Targets</b>
I can write argumentative or analytical essays, developing complex ideas and revising for depth and clarity.



<b>Resources</b>	<b>HMH, IXL, Google</b>
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<b>Unit Title</b>	<b>Unit 6: Contemporary Voices and Visions</b>
<b>Time Frame</b>	4 Weeks



**INNOVATIVE**  
ARTS ACADEMY

	<b>Essential Question(s)</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How do we deal with rejection and isolation?</li> <li>• For whom is the American Dream relevant?</li> <li>• When should personal integrity come before civic duty?</li> <li>• What would we do if there were no limits?</li> </ul>

	<b>Focus of the Unit</b>
	<p>This unit dives into more recent American literature from many different voices and perspectives. We'll explore themes like isolation, identity, the American Dream, and social issues. You'll analyze how authors use literary techniques in modern texts and compare those skills to analyzing arguments in contemporary nonfiction. You'll also practice writing with depth about sometimes sensitive topics.</p>

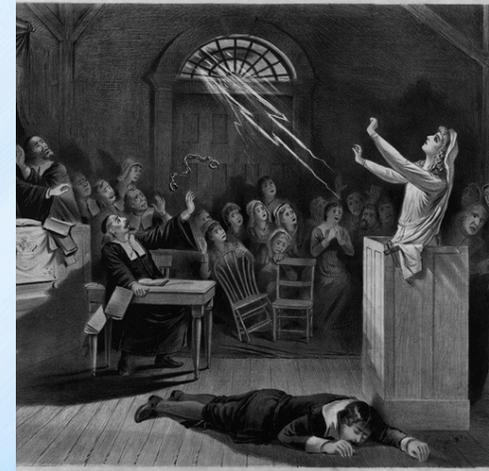
<b>Standards</b>	<p><b>CC.1.3.11-12.D Evaluate how an author's point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text.</b>  <b>CC.1.3.11-12.C Analyze the impact of the author's choices regarding how to develop and relate elements of a story or drama.</b>  <b>CC.1.2.11-12.H Analyze seminal texts based upon reasoning, premises, purposes, and arguments.</b>  <b>CC.1.4.11-12.G Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics.</b></p>
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<b>Learning Targets</b>
I can analyze how authors use literary techniques to develop themes and characters in modern and contemporary stories and poems.

<b>Learning Targets</b>
I can analyze dramatic elements when reading and discussing contemporary plays.

<b>Learning Targets</b>
I can analyze and evaluate arguments and rhetorical devices in contemporary nonfiction texts.

<b>Learning Targets</b>
I can write analytical and argumentative essays, comparing skills to analyzing arguments and ideas in contemporary nonfiction and sustaining depth in my analysis.



<b>Resources</b>	<b>HMH, IXL, Google</b>
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<b>Unit Title</b>	<b>Unit 7: Slaughterhouse-Five by Kurt Vonnegut</b>
<b>Time Frame</b>	6 Weeks



**INNOVATIVE**  
ARTS ACADEMY

	<b>Essential Question(s)</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How does pain isolate and alienate an individual?</li> <li>• Is the American Dream real or a fantasy?</li> <li>• What is free will? Is it real?</li> <li>• How can literature be an instrument of social change?</li> <li>• Is it better to know how others see you, or be oblivious?</li> <li>• How does an author's own experience affect his writing?</li> </ul>

<b>Focus of the Unit</b>
<p>We'll do a deep study of one important modern novel, Slaughterhouse-Five. We'll explore big ideas like the effects of war, free will, memory, and how literature can be a tool for social change. We'll spend a lot of time understanding this complex book, analyzing literary devices like satire and symbolism, understanding the history behind the novel, and connecting it to Vonnegut's own experiences. You'll practice writing analytical essays using clear evidence from the book.</p>

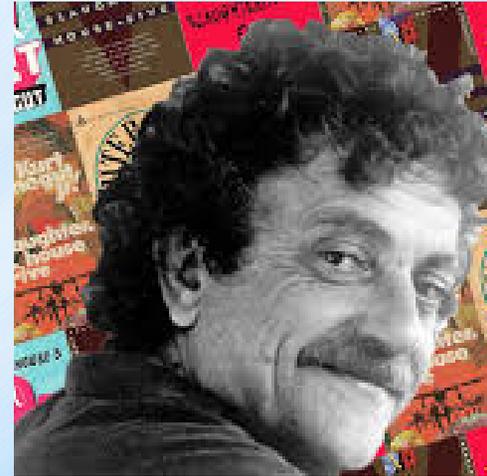
<b>Standards</b>	<p><b>CC.1.3.11-12.C Analyze the impact of the author's choices regarding how to develop and relate elements of a story or drama.</b>  <b>CC.1.3.11-12.A Determine and analyze the relationship between two or more themes or central ideas of a text. (This standard can encompass connecting themes to context).</b>  <b>CC.1.3.11-12.A Determine and analyze the relationship between two or more themes or central ideas of a text. (Used again as it directly addresses theme analysis).</b>  <b>CC.1.4.11-12.A Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately.</b></p>
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<b>Learning Targets</b>
I can analyze how literary devices like irony, symbolism, satire, and structure impact the meaning of Slaughterhouse-Five.

<b>Learning Targets</b>
I can analyze the historical context in which Slaughterhouse-Five was written and how it affects the novel's themes.

<b>Learning Targets</b>
I can determine and analyze the major themes of Slaughterhouse-Five and their development throughout the novel.

<b>Learning Targets</b>
I can write analytical or persuasive essays about Slaughterhouse-Five, supporting my claims with clear evidence from the text.



<b>Resources</b>	<b>Slaughterhouse-Five, IXL, Google</b>
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<b>Unit Title</b>	<b>Unit 8: Literature Circles / Argumentative Essay</b>
<b>Time Frame</b>	4 Weeks



**Focus of the Unit**

This unit is about reading powerful, personal stories within Literature Circles. You'll work in groups to discuss the key ideas in books like *Black Boy* and *The Absolutely True Story of a Part-Time Indian*. The main goal is to use ideas and evidence from these books to build strong arguments in your own writing. We'll spend focused time on planning, drafting, and revising your argumentative essays, practicing using relevant vocabulary, and connecting individual experiences in the stories to bigger social issues.



	<b>Essential Question(s)</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What writing strategies do authors use to strengthen their personal stories?</li> <li>• How are we shaped by our environment and experiences?</li> </ul>

<b>Standards</b>	<p><b>CC.1.5.11-12.A</b> Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions on grade-level topics, texts, and issues.</p> <p><b>CC.1.3.11-12.C</b> Analyze the impact of the author's choices regarding how to develop and relate elements of a story or drama.</p> <p><b>CC.1.4.11-12.S</b> Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.</p> <p><b>CC.1.4.11-12.T</b> Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach.</p>
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<b>Learning Targets</b>
I can actively engage in collaborative discussions within Literature Circles, building on others' ideas and expressing my own clearly.

<b>Learning Targets</b>
I can analyze the key ideas and literary elements in personal narratives or stories read in Literature Circles.

<b>Learning Targets</b>
I can draw strong, relevant evidence from the texts to support my analysis and arguments.

<b>Learning Targets</b>
I can plan, draft, and revise argumentative essays to ensure clear claims, logical reasons, and compelling evidence.



<b>Resources</b>	<b>TBD, IXL, Google</b>
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