

CLEP EXAMINATION: *American Literature*

DESCRIPTION OF THE EXAMINATION:

The American Literature examination covers material that is usually taught in a two-semester survey course (or the equivalent at the college level. It deals with the prose and poetry written in the United States from colonial times to the present. It is primarily a test of knowledge about literary works, their content, their background, and their authors—but also requires an ability to interpret poetry and prose, as well as a familiarity with the terminology used by literary critics and historians. The examination emphasizes fiction and poetry and deals to a lesser degree with the essay, drama, and autobiography.

In both coverage and approach, the examination resembles the chronologically organized survey of American literature offered by many colleges. It assumes that candidates have read widely and developed an appreciation of American literature, know the basic literary periods, and have a sense of the historical development of American literature.

The test contains 100 questions to be answered in 90 minutes. Some of these are pretest questions that will not be scored. Any time candidates spend on tutorials and providing personal information is in addition to the actual testing time.

An optional essay section can be taken in addition to the multiple-choice test. The essay section is graded by the institution that requests it and is still administered in a paper-and-pencil format.

|STUDY RESOURCES:

*To prepare for the American Literature exam, you should read critically the contents of at least one anthology, which you can find in most college bookstores. Most textbook anthologies contain a representative sample of readings as well as discussions of historical background, literary styles and devices characteristic of various authors and periods, and other material relevant to the test. The anthologies do vary somewhat in their content, approach, and emphasis; you are advised to consult more than one or to consult some specialized books on major authors, periods, and literary forms and terminology. You should also read some of the major novels that are mentioned or excerpted in the anthologies, such as Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter*, Twain's *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, and Chopin's *The Awakening*. Other novelists whose major works you should be familiar with include Melville, Crane, Wharton, Cather, Fitzgerald, Hemingway, Faulkner, Ellison and Wright. You can probably obtain an extensive reading list of American literature from a college English department, library or bookstore.*

American Literature

CLEP TEST KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS REQUIRED	ALIGNMENT TO MINNESOTA STANDARDS	
	Standard or Benchmark: <i>D. Literature Standard Benchmarks</i>	Notes
<i>Knowledge of particular literary works—their authors, characters, plots, style, setting, themes, etc.</i>	<i>1. Read, analyze, and evaluate traditional, classical and contemporary works of literary merit from American literature.</i>	<i>Alignment only if study area content is used. It is recommended an additional writing assessment be used to assess ability to analyze and evaluate.</i>
<i>Ability to understand and interpret short poems or excerpts from long poems and prose works presented in the text.</i>	<i>5.-Analyze, interpret and evaluate the use of figurative language and imagery in fiction and nonfiction selections, including symbolism, tone, irony, and satire.</i>	
	<i>8. Analyze classic and contemporary poems for poetic devices.</i>	
	<i>10. Interpret the effect of literary and structural devices.</i>	
<i>Knowledge of historical and social settings of specific works, their relations to other literary works and to literary traditions, and the influences on their authors.</i>	<i>11. Demonstrate how literary works reflect the historical contexts that shaped them.</i>	
<i>Familiarity with critical terms, verse forms, and literary devices.</i>		
<i>Understanding of basic literary periods of American Literature.</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The Colonial and Early Nation Period</i> • <i>The Romantic Period</i> • <i>The Period of Realism and Naturalism</i> • <i>The Modernist Period</i> <i>The Contemporary Period</i>		

