**The New World**

**This four-week unit, the first of six, allows students to experience the earliest American literature.**

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**Overview**

* + It focuses primarily on the nonfiction prose—including sermons and diaries—and some poetry in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. Students examine the works of some of the earliest settlers in various parts of the “new world.”  They consider the significance of the intersection of Native American, European, and African cultures. They explore whether conflicts were inevitable and how language and religion served as barriers and as bridges. Students look for emerging themes in American literature, such as the “new Eden” and the “American dream.” Finally, art works from the period are examined for their treatment of similar themes.
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**Focus Standards**

* + These Focus Standards have been selected for the unit from the Common Core State Standards.
    - **RL.11–12.4:** Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including words with multiple meanings or language that is particularly fresh, engaging, or beautiful. (Include Shakespeare as well as other authors.)
    - **RL.11–12.9:** Demonstrate knowledge of eighteenth-, nineteenth-, and early-twentieth-century foundational works of American literature, including how two or more texts from the same period treat similar themes or topics.
    - **RI.11–12.6:** Determine an author’s point of view or purpose in a text in which the rhetoric is particularly effective, analyzing how style and content contribute to the power, persuasiveness, or beauty of the text.
    - **W.11–12.2:** Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.
    - **SL.11–12.1:** Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.
    - **L.11–12.3:** Apply knowledge of language to understand how language functions in different contexts, to make effective choices for meaning or style, and to comprehend more fully when reading or listening.

[Common Core State Standards, ELA](http://commoncore.org/free/resources/CCSSI_ELA_Standards.pdf) (1.5 MB)

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**Suggested Student Objectives**

* + - Identify emerging themes in early American literature.
    - Explain the First Great Awakening and how it affected religious belief in Colonial America.
    - Identify and explain elements of Puritan literature.
    - Compare and contrast the experiences of America’s earliest settlers, as revealed through the reading material .
    - Explain the role of religion in early American life.
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**Suggested Works**

* + (E) indicates a CCSS exemplar text; (EA) indicates a text from a writer with other works identified as exemplars.

**Literary Texts**

**Poems**

* + - “An Hymn to the Evening” (Phillis Wheatley) (EA)
    - “To His Excellency General Washington” (Phillis Wheatley) (EA)
    - “On Being Brought from Africa to America” (Phillis Wheatley) (E)
    - “To My Dear and Loving Husband” (Anne Bradstreet)
    - “Upon the Burning of Our House” (Anne Bradstreet)
    - “Upon a Spider Catching a Fly” (Edward Taylor)
    - *An Almanack for the Year of Our Lord 1648* (Samuel Danforth) (selections)
    - “The Day of Doom” (Michael Wigglesworth)
    - “The Sot-Weed Factor” (Ebenezer Cook)

**Plays**

* + - *The Crucible* (Arthur Miller) (EA)

**Informational Texts**

* + - *Of Plymouth Plantation* (William Bradford) (selections)
    - “Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God” (Jonathan Edwards)
    - *The Bloody Tenent of Persecution, for Cause of Conscience* (Roger Williams) (selections)
    - *A Key into the Language of America* (Roger Williams) (selections)
    - *The Secret Diary of William Byrd of Westover, 1709-1712* (William Byrd) (selections)
    - *A Narrative of the Captivity and Restoration of Mrs. Mary Rowlandson* (Mary Rowlandson)
    - *The Selling of Joseph: A Memorial* (Samuel Sewall)
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**Sample Activities and Assessments**

* + ***Teachers Note:*** *After reading and discussing a work or pairing of works as a class, students prepare for seminars and essays by reflecting individually, in pairs, and/or in small groups on a given seminar/essay question. Ideas are student generated in this way. (Seminar/Essay assignments may include more than one question. Teachers may choose one or all the questions to explore in the course of the seminar; students should choose one question for the essay.) Seminars should be held before students write essays so that they may explore their ideas thoroughly and refine their thinking before writing. (Click here to see a sample seminar scoring rubric.) Page and word counts for essays are not provided, but teachers should consider the suggestions regarding the use of evidence, for example, to determine the likely length of good essays. In future iterations of these maps, links to samples of student work will be provided.*

**Collaborate**

Reflect on seminar questions, take notes on your responses, and note the page numbers of the textual evidence you will refer to in your seminar and/or essay answers. Share your notes with a partner for feedback and guidance. Have you interpreted the text correctly? Is your evidence convincing? (RL.11-12.1, RL.11-12.10, SL.11-12.1)

**Seminar and Essay**

“Does Anne Bradstreet’s work typify or differ from the other Puritan literature that you have read?” Write an essay in which you use at least three pieces of textual evidence to support an original thesis statement. (RL.11-12.9, W.11-12.9, SL.11-12.1)

**Seminar and Essay**

Select one passage from one of the poems and one from one of the informational texts that treat a similar theme. How are the themes revealed in the different genres? What different techniques/literary devices do the authors use to convey theme? Write an essay in which you use at least three pieces of textual evidence to support an original thesis statement. (RL.11-12.2, W.11-12.2, W.11-12.9, L.11-12.5)

**Seminar and Essay**

How could contemporary Americans approaches to religion be traced to Puritan origins? Write an essay in which you use at least three pieces of textual evidence to support an original thesis statement. (RI.11-12.4, RI.11-12.9, W.11-12.2)

**Classroom Activity, Essay or Seminar Question**

View a staged or film version of *The Crucible.* Discuss the question “Is John Proctor a tragic figure? Why or why not?” Compare him to other tragic figures studied in grade 9, such as Oedipus Rex. Write an essay in which you use at least three pieces of textual evidence to support an original thesis statement. (RL.11-12.3, RL.11-12.7)

**Speech**

Select a one to two minute passage from one of the texts and recite it from memory. Include an introduction that states:

* + - What the excerpt is from
    - Who wrote it
    - Why it exemplifies Puritan literature. (RL.11-12.9, SL.11-12.6)

[Scoring Rubric](http://commoncore.org/free/resources/Socratic_Seminar_Rubric_SP.doc)

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**Additional Resources**

* + [Religion in Eighteenth Century America](http://edsitement.neh.gov/view_lesson_plan.asp?id=696) (National Endowment for the Humanities) (RI.11-12.2, RI.11-12.3)

This curriculum unit, through the use of primary documents, introduces students to the First Great Awakening, as well as to the ways in which religious-based arguments were used both in support of and against the American Revolution.

[A](http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/aia/part1/index.html)[fricans in America (Part 1)](http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/aia/part1/title.html)(PBS) (RL.11-12.1, RI.11-12.1, LS.11-12.1)

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**Terminology**

* + - allegory
    - apostrophe
    - conceit
    - covenant of grace
    - didactic poetry
    - idealism
    - lyric poetry
    - oxymoron
    - parallelism
    - pragmatism
    - sermon
    - The Great Awakening