American Literature

Agee, James
A Death in the Family
Story of loss and heartbreak felt when a young father dies.

Anderson, Sherwood
Winesburg, Ohio
A collection of short stories lays bare the life of a small town in the Midwest.

Baldwin, James
Go Tell It On the Mountain
Semi-autobiographical novel about a 14-year-old black youth’s religious conversion.

Bellamy, Edward
Looking Backward: 2000-1887
Written in 1887 about a young man who travels in time to a utopian year 2000, where economic security and a healthy moral environment have reduced crime.

Bellow, Saul
Seize the Day
A son grapples with his love and hate for an unworthy father.

Bradbury, Ray
Fahrenheit 451
Reading is a crime and firemen burn books in this futuristic society.

Cather, Willa
My Antonia
Immigrant pioneers strive to adapt to the Nebraska prairies.

Chopin, Kate
The Awakening
The story of a New Orleans woman who abandons her husband and children to search for love and self-understanding.

Clark, Walter Van Tilburg
The Ox-Bow Incident
When a group of citizens discovers one of their members has been murdered by cattle rustlers, they form an illegal posse, pursue the murderers, and lynch them.

Cormier, Robert
The Chocolate War
Jerry Renault challenges the power structure of his school when he refuses to sell chocolates for the annual fundraiser.

Crane, Stephen
The Red Badge of Courage
During the Civil War, Henry Fleming joins the army full of romantic visions of battle which are shattered by combat.

Dorris, Michael
A Yellow Raft in Blue Water
Three generations of Native American women recount their searches for identity and love.

Ellison, Ralph
Invisible Man
A black man's search for himself as an individual and as a member of his race and his society.

Faulkner, William
As I Lay Dying
The Bundren family takes the ripening corpse of Addie, wife and mother, on a gruesomely comic journey.

Fitzgerald, F. Scott
The Great Gatsby
A young man corrupts himself and the American Dream to regain a lost love.

Gaines, Ernest
The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman
In her 100 years, Miss Jane Pittman experiences it all, from slavery to the civil rights movement.

Hawthorne, Nathaniel
The Scarlet Letter
An adulterous Puritan woman keeps secret the identity of the father of her illegitimate child.

Heller, Joseph
Catch-22
A broad comedy about a WWII bombardier based in Italy and his efforts to avoid bombing missions.

Hemingway, Ernest
A Farewell to Arms
During World War I, an American lieutenant runs away with the woman who nurses him back to health.

Hurston, Zora Neale
Their Eyes Were Watching God
Janie repudiates many roles in her quest for self-fulfillment.

Kesey, Ken
One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest
A novel about a power struggle between the head nurse and one of the male patients in a mental institution.

Lee, Harper
To Kill a Mockingbird
At great peril to himself and his children, lawyer Atticus Finch defends an African-American man accused of raping a white woman in a small Alabama town.

Lewis, Sinclair
Main Street
A young doctor's wife tries to change the ugliness, dullness and ignorance which prevail in Gopher Prairie, Minn.

London, Jack
Call of the Wild
Buck is a loyal pet dog until cruel men make him a pawn in their search for Klondike gold.

McCullers, Carson
The Member of the Wedding
A young southern girl is determined to be the third party on a honeymoon, despite all the advice against it from friends and family.

Melville, Herman
Moby-Dick
A complex novel about a mad sea captain's pursuit of the White Whale.

Morrison, Toni
Sula
The lifelong friendship of two women becomes strained when one causes the other's husband to abandon her.

O'Connor, Flannery
A Good Man is Hard to Find
Social awareness, the grotesque, and the need for faith characterize these stories of the contemporary South.

Parks, Gordon
The Learning Tree
A fictional study of a black family in a small Kansas town in the 1920s.

Plath, Sylvia
The Bell Jar
The heartbreaking story of a talented young woman's descent into madness.

Poe, Edgar Allan
Great Tales and Poems
Poe is considered the father of detective stories and a master of supernatural tales.

Potok, Chaim
The Chosen
Friendship between two Jewish boys, one Hasidic and the other Orthodox, begins at a baseball game and flourishes despite their different backgrounds and beliefs.

Salinger, J.D.
The Catcher in the Rye
A prep school dropout rejects the "phoniness" he sees all about him.

Sinclair, Upton
The Jungle
The deplorable conditions of the Chicago stockyards are exposed in this turn-of-the-century novel.

Steinbeck, John
The Grapes of Wrath
The desperate flight of tenant farmers from Oklahoma during the Depression.

Stowe, Harriet Beecher
Uncle Tom's Cabin
The classic tale that awakened a nation about the slave system.

Tan, Amy
The Joy Luck Club
After her mother's death, a young Chinese-American woman learns of her mother's tragic early life in China.

Twain, Mark
The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn
Huck and Jim, a runaway slave, travel down the Mississippi in search of freedom.

Vonnegut, Kurt
Slaughterhouse-Five
Billy Pilgrim, an optometrist from Ilium, New York, shuttles between World War II Dresden and a luxurious zoo on the planet Tralfamadore.

Walker, Alice
The Color Purple
A young woman sees herself as property until another woman teaches her to value herself.

Welty, Eudora
Thirteen Stories
A collection of short stories about people and life in the deep South.

Wolfe, Thomas
Look Homeward, Angel
A novel depicting the coming of age of Eugene Gant and his passion to experience life.

Wright, Richard
Native Son
Bigger Thomas, a young man from the Chicago slums, lashes out against a hostile society by committing two murders.

World Literature

Achebe, Chinua
Things Fall Apart
Okonkwo, a proud village leader, is driven to murder and suicide by European changes to his traditional Ibo society.

Allende, Isabel
House of the Spirits
The story of the Trueba family in Chile, from the turn of the century to the violent days of the overthrow of the Salvador Allende government in 1973.

Austen, Jane
Pride and Prejudice
Love and marriage among the English country gentry of Austen's day.

Balzac, Honore de
Pere Goriot
A father is reduced to poverty after giving money to his daughters.

Borges, Jorge Luis
Labyrinths
An anthology of literary fireworks based on Borges' favorite symbol.

Bronte, Charlotte
**Jane Eyre**
An intelligent and passionate governess falls in love with a strange, moody man tormented by dark secrets.

Bronte, Emily

**Wuthering Heights**
One of the masterpieces of English romanticism, this is a novel of Heathcliff and Catherine, love and revenge.

Camus, Albert

**The Stranger**
A man who is virtually unknown to both himself and others commits a pointless murder for which he has no explanation.

Carroll, Lewis

**Alice's Adventures in Wonderland**
A fantasy in which Alice follows the White Rabbit to a dream world.

Cervantes, Miguel de

**Don Quixote**
An eccentric old gentleman sets out as a knight "tilting at windmills" to right the wrongs of the world.

Conrad, Joseph

**Heart of Darkness**
The novel's narrator journeys into the Congo where he discovers the extent to which greed can corrupt a good man.

Defoe, Daniel

**Robinson Crusoe**
The adventures of a man who spends 24 years on an isolated island.

Dickens, Charles

**Great Expectations**
The moving story of the rise, fall, and rise again of a humbly-born young orphan.

Dostoevski, Feodor

**Crime and Punishment**
A psychological novel about a poor student who murders an old woman pawnbroker and her sister.

Eliot, George

**The Mill on the Floss**
Maggie is miserable because her brother disapproves of her choices of romances.

Esquivel, Laura

**Like Water for Chocolate**
As the youngest of three daughters in a turn-of-the-century Mexican family, Tita may not marry but must remain at home to care for her mother.

Flaubert, Gustave

**Madame Bovary**
In her extramarital affairs, a bored young wife seeks unsuccessfully to find the emotional experiences she craves.

Forster, E.M.

**A Passage to India**
A young English woman in British-ruled India accuses an Indian doctor of sexual assault.

Fuentes, Carlos

**The Death of Artemio Cruz**
A powerful Mexican newspaper publisher recalls his life as he lies dying at age 71.
Garcia Marquez, Gabriel
One Hundred Years of Solitude
A technique called magical realism is used in this portrait of seven generations in the lives of the Buendia family.

Gogol, Nikolai
The Overcoat
Russian tales of good and evil.

Golding, William
Lord of the Flies
English schoolboys marooned on an uninhabited island test the values of civilization when they attempt to set up a society of their own.

Grass, Gunter
The Tin Drum
Oskar describes the amoral conditions through which he has lived in Germany, both during and after the Hitler regime.

Hardy, Thomas
Tess of the D'Urbervilles
The happiness of Tess and her husband is destroyed when she confesses that she bore a child as the result of a forced sexual relationship with her employer's son.

Hesse, Hermann
Siddhartha
Emerging from a kaleidoscope of experiences and pleasures, a young Brahmin ascends to a state of peace and mystic holiness.

Huxley, Aldous
Brave New World
A bitter satire of the future, in which the world is controlled by advances in science and social changes.

Joyce, James
A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man
A novel about a young man growing up in Ireland and rebelling against family, country, and religion.

Kafka, Franz
The Trial
A man is tried for a crime he knows nothing about, yet for which he feels guilt.

Lawrence, D.H.
Sons and Lovers
An autobiographical novel about a youth torn between a dominant working-class father and a possessive genteel mother.

Mann, Thomas
Death in Venice
In this novella, an author becomes aware of a darker side of himself when he visits Venice.

Orwell, George
Animal Farm
Animals turn the tables on their masters.

Pasternak, Boris
Doctor Zhivago
An epic novel of Russia before and after the Bolshevik revolution.

Paton, Alan
Cry, the Beloved Country
A country Zulu pastor searches for his sick sister in Johannesburg, and discovers that she has become a prostitute and his son a murderer.

Remarque, Erich Maria
All Quiet on the Western Front
A young German soldier in World War I experiences pounding shellfire, hunger, sickness, and death.

Scott, Sir Walter
Ivanhoe
Tale of Ivanhoe, the disinherited knight, Lady Rowena, Richard the Lion-Hearted, and Robin Hood at the time of the Crusades.

Shelley, Mary W.
Frankenstein
A gothic tale of terror in which Frankenstein creates a monster from corpses.

Solzhenitsyn, Aleksander
One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich
Ivan Denisovich Shukhov endures one more day in a Siberian prison camp and finds joy in survival.

Swift, Jonathan
Gulliver's Travels
Gulliver encounters dwarfs and giants and has other strange adventures when his ship is wrecked in distant lands.

Tolstoy, Leo
Anna Karenina
Anna forsakes her husband for the dashing Count Vronsky and brief happiness.

Weisel, Elie
Night
A searing account of the Holocaust as experienced by a 15-year-old boy.

Wells, H.G.
The Time Machine
A scientist invents a machine that transports him into the future.

Biography/History

Angelou, Maya
I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings
An African-American writer traces her coming of age.

Ashe, Arthur and Arnold Rampersad.
Days of Grace
Biography of a highly respected tennis star and citizen of the world who dies of AIDS.

Baker, Russell
Growing Up
A columnist with a sense of humor takes a gentle look at his childhood in Baltimore during the Depression.

Berenbaum, Michael
The World Must Know: The History of the Holocaust as told in the United States
Holocaust Memorial Museum.

Brown, Dee
Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee
A narrative of the white man's conquest of the American land as the Indian victims experienced it.

Cooke, Alistair
Alistair Cooke's America
A history of the continent, with anecdotes and insight into what makes America work.

Criddle, Jan. D. and Teeda Butt Mam
To Destroy You Is No Loss: The Odyssey of a Cambodian Family
After the 1975 Communist takeover of Cambodia, Teeda's upper-class life is reduced to surviving impossible conditions.

Crow Dog, Mary and Richard Erdoes
Lakota Woman
Mary Crow Dog stands with 2,000 other Native Americans at the site of the Wounded Knee massacre, demonstrating for Native American rights.

Curie, Eve
Madame Curie
In sharing personal papers and her own memories, a daughter pays tribute to her mother, a scientific genius.

Delany, Sara and A. Elizabeth with Amy Hill Hearth
Having Our Say: The Delany Sisters' First 100 Years
Two daughters of former slaves tell their stories of fighting racial and gender prejudice during the 20th century.

Epstein, Norrie
Gain a perspective on Shakespeare's works through these sidelights, interpretations, anecdotes, and historical insights.

Frank, Anne
The Diary of a Young Girl
The story of a Jewish family forced by encroaching Nazis to live in hiding.

Franklin, Benjamin
The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin
Considered one of the most interesting autobiographies in English.

Haley, Alex
Roots
Traces Haley's search for the history of his family, from Africa through the era of slavery to the 20th century.

Hersey, John
Hiroshima
Six Hiroshima survivors reflect on the aftermath of the first atomic bomb.

Karlsen, Carol
The Devil in the Shape of a Woman: Witchcraft in Colonial New England
The status of women in colonial society affects the Salem witch accusations.

Keller, Helen
The Story of My Life
The story of Helen Keller, who was both blind and deaf, and her relationship with her devoted teacher Anne Sullivan.
Profiles in Courage
A series of profiles of Americans who took courageous stands in public life.

King, Martin Luther, Jr.
A Testament of Hope: The Essential Writings of Martin Luther King, Jr.
King's most important writings are gathered together in one source.

Kovic, Ron
Born on the Fourth of July
Paralyzed in the Vietnam War, 21-year-old Ron Kovic received little support from his country and its government.

Machiavelli, Niccolo
The Prince
A treatise giving the absolute ruler practical advice on ways to maintain a strong central government.

Malcom X, with Alex Haley
The Autobiography of Malcom X
Traces the transformation of a controversial Black Muslim figure from street hustler to religious and national leader.

Marx, Karl
The Communist Manifesto
Expresses Marx's belief in the inevitability of conflict between social classes and calls on the workers of the world to unite and revolt.

Mathabane, Mark
Kaffir Boy: The True Story of a Black Youth's Coming of Age in Apartheid South Africa
A tennis player breaks down racial barriers and escape to a better life in America.

Maybury-Lewis, David
Millenium: Tribal Wisdom and the Modern World
Profiles members of several tribal cultures.

McPherson, James
Battle Cry of Freedom: The Civil War Era
From the Mexican War to Appomattox, aspects of the Civil War are examined.

Mills, Kay
This Little Light of Mine: The Life of Fannie Lou Hamer
Fannie Lou Hamer, a sharecropper's daughter, uses her considerable courage and singing talent to become a leader in the civil rights movement.

Plato
The Republic
Plato creates an ideal society where justice is equated with health and happiness in the state and the individual.

Rogosin, Donn
Invisible Men: Life in Baseball's Negro Leagues
Negro League players finally gain recognition for their contributions to baseball.

Thoreau, Henry David
Walden
In the mid-19th century, Thoreau spends 26 months alone in the woods to "front the essential facts of life."

Tocqueville, Alexis de
Democracy in America
This classic in political literature examines American society from the viewpoint of a leading French magistrate who visited the U.S. in 1831.

Tuchman, Barbara

A Distant Mirror: The Calamitous Fourteenth Century
Tuchman uses the example of a single feudal lord to trace the history of the 14th century.

Williams, Juan

Eyes on the Prize: America's Civil Rights Years, 1954-65
From Brown vs. the Board of Education to the Voting Rights Act, Williams outlines the social and political gains of African-Americans

Yolen, Jane

Favorite Folktales From Around the World
Yolen frames these powerful tales with explanations of historical and literary significance.

Science

Attenborough, David

The Living Planet: A Portrait of the Earth
Various habitats expand the vision of Planet Earth.

Bronowski, Jacob

The Ascent of Man
A scientist's history of the human mind and the human condition.

Carson, Rachel

Silent Spring
Carson's original clarion call to environmental action sets the stage for saving our planet.

Darwin, Charles

The Origin of Species
The classic exposition of the theory of evolution by natural selection.

Hawking, Stephen

A Brief History of Time: From the Big Bang to Black Holes
Cosmology becomes understandable as the author discusses the origin, evolution, and fate of our universe.

Leopold, Aldo

A Sand County Almanac: And Sketches Here and There
Leopold shares his present and future visions of a natural world.

Social Science

Campbell, Joseph

The Power of Myth
Explores themes and symbols from world religions and their relevance to humankind's spiritual journey today.

Hamilton, Edith

Mythology
Gods and heroes, their clashes and adventures, come alive in this splendid retelling of the Greek, Roman and Norse myths.

Kotlowitz, Alex
There Are No Children Here: The Story of Two Boys Growing Up in Urban America
Lafayette and Pharoah Rivers and their family struggle to survive in one of Chicago's worst housing projects.

Kozol, Jonathan
Savage Inequalities: Children in America's Schools
Kozol's indictment of the public school system advocates equalizing per pupil public school expenditures.

Terkel, Studs
Race: How Blacks and Whites Think and Feel About the American Obsession
This kaleidoscope covers the full range of America's views on racial issues.

Drama

Beckett, Samuel
Waiting for Godot
Powerful, symbolic portrayal of the human condition.

Brecht, Bertolt
Mother Courage and Her Children
A product of the Nazi era, Mother Courage is a feminine "Everyman" in a play on the futility of war.

Chekhov, Anton
The Cherry Orchard
The orchard evokes different meanings for the impoverished aristocrat and the merchant who buys it.

Ibsen, Henrik
A Doll's House
A woman leaves her family to pursue personal freedom.

Marlowe, Christopher
Doctor Faustus
First dramatization of the medieval legend of a man who sold his soul to the devil.

Miller, Arthur
Death of a Salesman
The tragedy of a typical American who, at age 63, is faced with what he cannot face: defeat and disillusionment.

O'Neill, Eugene
Long Day's Journey Into Night
A tragedy set in 1912 in the summer home of an isolated, theatrical family.

Sarte, Jean Paul
No Exit
A modern morality play in which three persons are condemned to hell because of crimes against humanity.

Shakespeare, William
Romeo and Juliet, Hamlet, Macbeth, Twelfth Night, others.

Shaw, Bernard
Man and Superman, Saint Joan, Pygmalion, others.

Sophocles
**Oedipus Rex**
Classical tragedy of Oedipus who unwittingly killed his father, married his mother and brought the plague to Thebes.

Wilde, Oscar
**The Importance of Being Earnest**
Comedy exposing quirks and foibles of Victorian society.

Wilder, Thornton
**Our Town**
The dead of a New Hamshire village of the early 1900s appreciate life more than the living.

Williams, Tennessee
**A Streetcar Named Desire**
Blanche Dubois' fantasies of refinement and grandeur are brutally destroyed by her brother-in-law.

Wilson, August
**The Piano Lesson**
Drama set in 1936 Pittsburgh chronicles black experience in America.

**Poetry**

Angelou, Maya
**And Still I Rise**
Poems reflecting themes from her autobiography.

Brooks, Gwendolyn
**Selected Poems**
Poetry focusing on the lives of African American residents of Northern urban ghettos, particularly women.

Cummings, E.E.
**Complete Poems, 1904-1962**
Prepared directly from the original manuscripts, preserving the original typography and format.

Dickinson, Emily
**The Complete Poems of Emily Dickinson**
A chronological arrangement of all known Dickinson poems and fragments.

Donne, John
**The Complete Poetry of John Donne**
Poems distinguished by wit, profundity of thought, passion and subtlety.

Eliot, T.S.
**The Waste Land**
A poem of despair by one of the most important modern poets in English.

Frost, Robert
**The Poetry of Robert Frost**
Collected works reflecting both flashing insight and practical wisdom.

Ginsberg, Allen
**Howl and Other Poems**
Works from the leading poet of the so-called "beat generation."

Giovanni, Nikki
My House
The poems in this collection deal with love, family, nature, friends, music, aloneness, blackness, and Africa.

Hughes, Langston
Selected Poems
Poems selected by Hughes shortly before his death in 1967, representing work from his entire career.

Keats, John
Complete Poems
Among the greatest odes in English, written by a genius who died young.

Longfellow, Henry Wadsworth
The Poetical Works of Longfellow
Includes "The Song of Hiawatha" and "The Courtship of Miles Standish."

Sandburg, Carl
Complete Poems
Sandburg celebrates industrial and agricultural America and the common people.

Thomas, Dylan
Poems of Dylan Thomas
Poetry by a "word magician" with a powerful imagination.

Williams, William Carlos
Selected Poems
Williams' poetry is firmly rooted in the commonplace details of American life.

Wordsworth, William
Poems
Poetry revealing the extraordinary beauty and significance of simple things.

Yeats, William Butler
The Poems
Leading poet of the Irish Renaissance.