

Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury*.

- Compare Boccaccio's tales from *The Decameron* and Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*.

- ▲ The popularity of William Faulkner in Europe during the early stages of his career
- Novelistic elements in *Pilgrim's Progress*
- Common themes in the short stories of James Joyce
- Methodism as reflected in Adam Bede (George Eliot)
- Samuel Butler's revolt against authority, the establishment, and his parents as depicted in *The Way of All Flesh*
- The use of irony in Jonathan Swift's *A Modest Proposal*
- Didacticism in the poetry of John Dryden
- Kurt Vonnegut's war experiences as reflected in *Slaughterhouse-Five* and other fiction
- ★ Tone, style, and narrative effects in "The Lottery" by Shirley Jackson
- William Golding's *Lord of the Flies* as allegory
- ★ The "upper class" as portrayed in *The Great Gatsby* (F. Scott Fitzgerald)
- Important retellings in English of the Arthurian legends after Malory's *Morte D'Arthur*
- Flower imagery in the fiction of D.H. Lawrence
- The devil and witchcraft in the

fiction of Isaac Bashevis Singer

- Compare and contrast the mystery fiction of Agatha Christie, Margery Allingham, and Dorothy L. Sayers
- The elements of haiku poetry
- ★ The stream of consciousness style in *Ulysses* (James Joyce)
- Existential influences in the novels of Ernest Hemingway
- War and death in *The Red Badge of Courage* (Stephen Crane)
- Contemporary Russian poetry. Concentrate on several outstanding poets.
- ▲ The influence of Henry Miller on the "beat generation" writers
- × Characterize the Byronic hero and give examples from various literary works.
- The connection of *Book of the Dead* to the religion of ancient Egypt
- The common theme of motherhood in the works of Doris Lessing, Toni Morrison, and Margaret Drabble
- ★ The Agatha Christie mystery: plot, style, character, and structure
- Norman Mailer and the female image
- American family life in the novels of John Updike
- Critical evaluations of recent novels by Kurt Vonnegut. Compare and contrast the differing critical receptions they received

Literature

See also: Humanities; Language; Libraries, Books, and Publishing

- ▲ Levels of meaning in Dante's *Inferno*
- The role of the clergy in Stendahl's *The Red and the Black*
- Compare and contrast T.S. Eliot's *Murder in the Cathedral* and Jean Anouilh's *Becket*.
- ★ Franz Kafka's world of isolation, guilt, alienation, and punishment
- Mark Twain has been accused of racism in his novel *Huckleberry Finn*. Analyze these charges and consider the advisability of its inclusion for study in a high school literature class.
- ★ Central themes in *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* (Ken Kesey). Explain how irony, humor, and paradox illuminate these themes.
- Compare and contrast the "heroes" in a selection of detective fiction (Agatha Christie, Georges Simenon, Dorothy Sayers, Ross Macdonald, etc.).
- What are the common themes in the novels of Joseph Heller, Kurt Vonnegut, Jr., John Barth, and Thomas Pynchon?
- Through the writings that appeared in the first half of the nineteenth-century, trace the gradual emergence of a distinctively American literature.
- A character analysis of Pangloss in Voltaire's *Candide*
- ➔ Analyze the main character in any of the following novels by Thomas Wolfe: *You Can't Go Home Again*; *Of Time and the River*; *Look Homeward, Angel*; and *The Web and the Rock*.
- The role of guilt in *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* (Samuel Taylor Coleridge)
- § The function of setting in the novels of Charles Dickens
- § Stylistic devices of Kurt Vonnegut
- § Narrative techniques of Edgar Allan Poe
- Blues as literature
- The Oedipus theme in literature
- How Thackeray uses the novel for social criticism
- ★ Trace the interrelationship of the Glass family as depicted in the fiction of J.D. Salinger.
- Analyze the structure of

- to those of some of his earlier works.
- ★ Jack Kerouac's *On the Road* as a forerunner of the hippie movement
- § Autobiographical elements in the novels of F. Scott Fitzgerald
- Central themes in the novels of William Faulkner
- ★ *Animal Farm* (George Orwell) as an allegory of modern Russia
- ★ *The Great Gatsby* (F. Scott Fitzgerald) as a symbol of the "American Dream"
- ★ Compare the novel 1984 (George Orwell) to contemporary culture.
- The journalistic techniques of Stendhal (Marie Henri Beyle)
- A character analysis of Aschenbach in *Death in Venice* (Thomas Mann)
- The gothic in the short fiction of Flannery O'Connor
- Joan Didion's alienated heroines
- Career or motherhood: role conflict in the poetry of Adrienne Rich
- Satire of the academic world in Bernard Malamud's novel *A New Life*
- The portrayal of poor whites in the fiction of William Faulkner
- ▲ The literary reputation of Sinclair Lewis, past and present. How has it changed?

- Satire and irony in John Irving's *The World According to Garp*
- × Black humor in contemporary literature
- ★ Sylvia Plath: the last year
- American naturalism in the novels of Frank Norris. What was the extent of his debt to Emile Zola?
- Compare and contrast the early writings of Truman Capote with those he has recently published. Include style, tone, content, characterization, etc.
- § The literary style of Ernest Hemingway
- ▲ The contribution of Thomas Wolfe's editor Maxwell Perkins to Wolfe's novels
- Color imagery in Dylan Thomas's poetry
- × The catholicism of Graham Greene. Use examples from his fiction.
- ★ The novel *Cry, the Beloved Country* (Alan Paton) as political propaganda
- The Oedipus myth in modern literature
- Nathanael West's grim view of the world in *The Day of the Locust*
- ★ Joseph Heller's use of paradox in *Catch 22*
- Existentialism as expressed in *The Stranger* (Albert Camus)

- Henry Fielding
- ★ How to evaluate a novel
- The Irish nationalism of William Butler Yeats
- The personalized religion and mythology of William Blake
- Compare the use of stream of consciousness techniques in the works of James Joyce, Virginia Woolf, and John Dos Passos.
- Sinclair Lewis as critic of American values
- ★ The code of Hemingway's heroes
- The Vietnam War as reflected in contemporary fiction. Select several novels published since the end of the war.
- Compare and contrast the poetry of Carl Sandburg and Robert Frost.
- The effects of the Spanish Civil War on the literary works of Ernest Hemingway
- Varying interpretations of *Don Quixote* (Miguel Cervantes).
- Choose literary analyses by several critics and compare their evaluations.
- Guilt and damnation in the stories of Kafka
- Common elements in the poetry of Coleridge and Wordsworth
- × Techniques of characterization in the novels of Charles Dickens. For example, detail the unique mannerisms of his characters.
- Compare the final episodes of Sir Thomas Malory's *Morte*

- § Critical appraisals of the poetry of James Dickey
- Loneliness as a major theme in the writings of Carson McCullers
- ★ The black experience in America as viewed in the following: *Native Son* (Richard Wright), *Bloods for Mr. Charlie* (James Baldwin), and *The Invisible Man* (Ralph Ellison).
- Discuss metaphor and symbol in the poem "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening" by Robert Frost
- *The Grapes of Wrath* (John Steinbeck) as a quest novel
- Novels of political protest in America. Select several from the same general time period.
- Religious themes in Dostoevski's fiction
- ▲ The meaning of catharsis in Aristotle's *Poetics*
- *Dr. Zhivago* (Boris Pasternak) as social commentary
- ▲ Alexander Pope's concept of nature
- Social commentary in *The Grapes of Wrath* (John Steinbeck). Is it still relevant today?
- Elements of the Greek epic tradition
- Compare the sonnet structure and common themes of Petrarch, Shakespeare, John Donne, and John Milton.
- § Social criticism in the works of

D'Arthur and Alfred, Lord Tennyson's "Morte D'Arthur" (from *Lays of the King*).

- The satiric thrust of Voltaire's *Candide*. Include a discussion of the work's historical connotations.
- How is aristocratic society portrayed in *The Americans* (Henry James)?
- Sentimentalism and sentiment in the short stories of Bret Harte
- Social and political propaganda in Upton Sinclair's *The Jungle*
- New York society as portrayed in Edith Wharton's *The Age of Innocence*
- Different views of the nature of evil as expressed in the Book of Job (Bible)
- ▲ Aspects of feminism in the novels of Charlotte Brontë. Were these attitudes a reflection of the times? What was the critical reception upon publication?
- × The pessimism of Mark Twain's later works
- The visionary hero: William Blake
- Compare and contrast the attitudes towards nature and society in Henry David Thoreau's *Walden* and Walt Whitman's *Leaves of Grass*.
- ★ Detail the use of symbol and metaphor in Herman Melville's *Moby Dick*.
- The allegorical nature of good and evil in Herman Melville's

Literature

- Moby Dick*
- ★ Discuss the nature and forms of sin in *The Scarlet Letter* (Nathaniel Hawthorne). How is this a reflection of Puritan society?
 - The character of Pip in *Great Expectations* (Charles Dickens)
 - American mores and values as reflected in the novel *Sister Carrie* (Theodore Dreiser)
 - Nature and country life in the short stories of Colette
 - The Mississippi River as a symbol in *Huckleberry Finn* (Mark Twain)
 - × The Jew as portrayed in the modern novel: an overview
 - ★ Allegory and symbolism in Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland*
 - Herman Melville's religious doubts as revealed in *Moby Dick*
 - The role of chance in Thomas Hardy's *Return of the Native*
 - Southern attitudes towards blacks in the fiction of William Faulkner
 - × Civil War fiction: common themes
 - Stylistic devices in the fiction of James Joyce
 - ★ *The World According to Garp* (John Irving) as a portrait of the individual in an alien world
 - § Metaphor and symbol in the poetry of Wallace Stevens
 - Themes and values of Beat writers: Allen Ginsberg, Lawrence

Literature

- Ferlinghetti, Michael McClure, Jack Kerouac, and Gregory Corso
- Honoré de Balzac's portrait of French society as depicted in *Le Père Goriot*
 - ★ The satiric wit and common sense of Dorothy Parker's poetry
 - ▲ The reactions of clergymen to Sinclair Lewis's novel, *Elmer Gantry*, a satire on corruption among the clergy
 - The nature of man as expressed in the poetry of Robinson Jeffers
 - Compare the heroines in Willa Cather's *O Pioneers!* and Thomas Hardy's *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*.
 - The black humor of William Burroughs
 - T.S. Eliot's *The Waste Land: Masterpiece or hoax?*
 - Compare and contrast themes of death in the poetry of Emily Dickinson and A.E. Housman.
 - Hemingway's conception of the nature of love as evidenced in *To Have and Have Not*
 - Russian literature since 1917
 - Alienation in the novels of Saul Bellow
 - Views of nature: Thoreau's *Walden* and Annie Dillard's *Pilgrim at Tinker Creek*
 - ★ Differing views of morality in Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*
 - ★ The satire of Gulliver's Travels

- (Jonathan Swift)
- The theme of death in the works of Edgar Allan Poe
 - A character analysis of Hender-son in *Henderson, the Rain King* (Saul Bellow)
 - The character Meursault's philosophy of life in Camus's *The Stranger*
 - ★ The fate of Oscar Wilde
 - × The rise of the anti-hero in modern fiction
 - ▲ The influence of Edgar Allan Poe on European writers
 - Compare the differing types of early science fiction.
 - The origin and development of the detective story
 - Religious argument in Victorian literature
 - ★ Good and evil as depicted in *Heart of Darkness* (Joseph Conrad)
 - Themes in the acceptance speeches of Nobel Prize winners of literature
 - ▲ The disillusionment of war as reflected in the poetry and fiction of World War I
 - Mark Twain's attitude toward Christianity
 - The beginnings of the Russian Revolution as depicted in *Mother* (Maxim Gorky)
 - Elements of Mark Twain's humor
 - × Gold as a symbol in literature
 - ★ The element of horror in Poe's short stories
 - ★ Compare and contrast plot,

- structure, or point of view in *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* and *Huckleberry Finn* (Mark Twain).
- The analysis of a character in Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*
- × The characterization of Indians in American fiction
- The satire of Ambrose Bierce
- The depiction of women in the novels of Emily Brontë and Jane Austen
- ▲ Short stories from Egypt's Middle Kingdom papyrus manuscripts
- Compare and contrast Zeus, as presented in Homer's *Iliad*, to the god of John Milton's *Paradise Lost*.
- Boswell's *Life of Johnson* remains significant because of Boswell. What is the basis for this statement?
- The poetry of the blues
- Compare and contrast Robert Penn Warren's *The Cave* to Plato's *Allegory of the Cave* in *Plato's Republic*.
- Central themes in Sherwood Anderson's *Winesburg, Ohio*
- Dostoevski's concept of freedom
- Felix Krull's approach to life and love in *Confessions of Felix Krull* (Thomas Mann)
- Compare the Louisiana politician Huey Long and the central character Willie Stark of *All the King's Men* (Robert Penn Warren).

- Two views of mental illness: *The Bell Jar* (Sylvia Plath) and *I Never Promised You a Rose Garden* (Hannah Green)
- ★ Themes and symbols of Ernest Hemingway's *The Old Man and the Sea*
- The somber world of Joyce Carol Oates. How does the tone of several of her major works reflect this outlook on life?
- ★ Analyze the character of Holden Caulfield in J.D. Salinger's *Catcher in the Rye*.
- Racial tragedy in William Faulkner's *Light in August*
- Existential elements in the stories of Franz Kafka
- Formula fiction and how it works (choose from science fiction, gothic, romance, western, mystery, detective, etc.)
- Why F. Scott Fitzgerald became a "spokesman for the jazz age"
- Read several of William Faulkner's works (*Absalom, Absalom!*, *The Hamlet*, etc.) and discuss Faulkner's attitudes and feelings about the South.
- William Faulkner's Snopes family as a symbol of social change
- The moral convictions of Leo Tolstoy. How are they reflected in his fiction?
- Portraits of hell in the works of both Dante and Milton
- Émile Zola as the principal

- spokesman for naturalism
- Realistic elements in Gustav Flaubert's *Madame Bovary*
- The dark side of the human spirit as depicted in *Crime and Punishment* or other works by Dostoevski
- ▲ Aleksandr Pushkin's indebtedness to Lord Byron
- Keats's view of poetry as explained in his letters
- Explain the reasons for using fantasy. Use as examples *Gulliver's Travels*, *Alice in Wonderland*, and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* among others.
- The use of the triangle in D.H. Lawrence's fiction (two females and one male)
- ▲ Yeats's use of Byzantium as the final resting place
- Unconventional use of religious symbolism in Dylan Thomas's poetry
- Attitudes toward death in *The Iliad* compared to those expressed in *The Odyssey*
- × Contemporary literary genres in America: a survey

- Love and death in the poetry of Edna St. Vincent Millay
- American idiom in the poetry of William Carlos Williams
- Robert Browning as champion of the dramatic monologue
- How are the ideas in the fiction of Henry James reflected in his style?
- ★ Trace the roots of the American transcendental movement.
- The importance of locality in the fiction of Jane Austen
- Samuel Johnson as a literary critic
- Gothic elements in the fiction of Washington Irving
- The use of time by John Fowles in *The French Lieutenant's Woman*
- The journalistic techniques of Daniel Defoe in either *Moll Flanders* or *Robinson Crusoe*
- ▲ Was *Pamela* (Samuel Richardson) the first novel?
- Calvinistic attitudes in early American literature, such as those of Jonathan Edwards, Cotton Mather, etc.

the Greek tragedies of Euripides, focusing on *Electra*.
 § Explore the autobiographical elements of a drama by Eugene O'Neill.

- Shakespeare's strong women
- Shakespeare's use of comic relief in his tragedies
- ★ The motives and character of Shakespeare's *Hamlet* have been analyzed by many critics. Present a selection of these views. Try to account for the varying opinions.
- Refute or support: The play *Death of a Salesman* (Arthur Miller) is a tragedy in the classic sense.
- Compare and contrast the use of asides and soliloquies in two of Shakespeare's plays.
- Brecht's *Mother Courage and Her Children* as a statement against the capitalistic aspects of war
- Homosexual themes in the dramatic works of Tennessee Williams
- How *Everyman*, the best known of the fifteenth-century morality plays, universalizes man's life. Discuss this concept in terms of its contemporary relevancy, as well as its historical context.
- ★ Shakespeare's use of more than one plot in a single drama
- ▲ The origins of naturalism in European drama
- Investigate the wide variety of

sources used by Shakespeare, such as history, mythology, and legend, and other literary works.

- What and who were the targets of George Bernard Shaw's satire?
- How the content of drama changed from religious in the Middle Ages to secular in the Renaissance
- Compare the commonalities found in the classical Greek dramas of Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides.
- ★ Oedipus, a tragic hero
- Social criticism in *The Crucible* (Arthur Miller)
- Father and son relationships in the dramas of Arthur Miller
- Compare and contrast the satire of Moliere and Congreve.
- ▲ Biblical allusion in *Waiting for Godot* (Samuel Beckett)
- British middle-class life as represented in John Osborne's *Look Back in Anger*
- ★ The issues involved in the controversy surrounding Rolf Hochhuth's play, *The Deputy*
- Discuss free will versus determinism in classical Greek tragedy.
- A review of the Orestes theme throughout the history of drama: Aeschylus, *The Orestes*; Sophocles, *Electra*; Euripides, *Electra*; Sartre, *The Flies*; O'Neill, *Mourning Becomes Electra*; and Ronconi,

Literature — Drama

See also: Film; Humanities; Theater

- How not to write a play
- × The classical conventions of tragedy
- Select several works by the same playwright and discuss the uses of parody, irony, didacticism, imagery, and other literary and dramatic techniques.
- Choose a major character in a well-known play and trace his or her development in four ways: appearance, speech, external actions, what others say about the character.
- Discuss the use and function of symbolism in a play of your choice.
- Contrast and compare two characters' motivations in a play. Choose one of the following motivations: hope for reward, love, fear of failure, religious aspirations, revenge, greed, jealousy, hate.
- Choose a particular type of play (tragedy, comedy, tragicomedy). How does the play conform to the traditional genre? How does it deviate?
- Discuss the conflict of a play. How do the characters relate to the conflict? How is it resolved? Is it resolvable?
- ▲ Why was Euripides adversely criticized by his contemporaries? In light of current knowledge, was this criticism justified?
- Describe the structure of a selected play in relation to traditional plot development: exposition, rising action, climax, dénouement, conclusion.
- × The isolation of the individual as a theme in contemporary drama
- King Lear as a tragic hero
- ★ Restoration comedy as typified by William Congreve's *The Way of the World*
- Characteristics of the Theater of the Absurd. Use as examples Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* and Eugène Ionesco's *The Rhinoceros* among others.
- Varying interpretations of theme and meaning in the plays of Samuel Beckett
- Compare Eugene O'Neill's *Mourning Becomes Electra* with

- Oresteia
- x The women of Greek tragedy
- Chance as portrayed in Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*
- Ibsen's view on love and marriage as dramatized in *A Doll's House and Ghosts*
- Satire in Sheridan's *School for Scandal*
- Compare and contrast the Antigone of Sophocles with that of Jean Anouilh's *Antigone*.
- ★ Evidences of hubris in the plays of Sophocles
- Compare and contrast Shaw's play *Pygmalion* to Lerner and Loewe's musical version, *My Fair Lady*.
- Analyze Pirandello's views of reality and illusion.
- x Common themes of modern black playwrights
- ▲ The impact of the unities on French drama
- Was Hamlet insane?
- Compare and contrast the behavior of the characters in Samuel Beckett's *Endgame* and John Webster's *The White Devil*.
- Word play in Shakespearean drama
- Elements of humor in George Bernard Shaw's *Caesar and Cleopatra*
- The characters in the medieval farce
- Analyze the concept of justice as presented in Aeschylus's trilogy *Oresteia*.

- use by Sophocles
- Archibald MacLeish's *J.B.*, compared to its source, *The Book of Job* from the Bible
- Eugene O'Neill's experimentation with theatrical devices and dramatic techniques (i.e., *The*

- Great God Brown*, *Lazarus Laughed*, and *Days without End*)
- The documentary dramas of Peter Weiss
- Molière's *Tartuffe* (or, don't criticize religion)
- How to read a play

Key to Symbols

- average difficulty
- § substitutes possible
- ★ ample information in most libraries
- specialized knowledge required
- narrow down topic
- ▲ large public or college library required
- ✓ local option topic
- x examples and supporting evidence needed