

Unit 07: Modern American Writing 1960s - Present

Content Area: **English**
Course(s): **English 3**
Time Period: **Semester 2**
Length: **3-4 weeks**
Status: **Published**

Unit Introduction

This unit exposes students to the wide variety of contemporary American voices in both short fiction and poetry. The selected works draw from the 1960s to the the present.

"In the postwar period, the art of the short story again flourished. Among its most respected practitioners was [Flannery O'Connor](#) (b. March 25, 1925 in Georgia – d. August 3, 1964 in Georgia), who renewed the fascination of such giants as Faulkner and Twain with the American south, developing a distinctive [Southern gothic](#) esthetic wherein characters acted at one level as people and at another as symbols. A devout Catholic, O'Connor often imbued her stories, among them the widely studied "[A Good Man is Hard to Find](#)" and "[Everything That Rises Must Converge](#)", and two novels, *Wise Blood* (1952); *The Violent Bear It Away* (1960), with deeply religious themes, focusing particularly on the search for truth and religious skepticism against the backdrop of the nuclear age. Other important practitioners of the form include [Katherine Anne Porter](#), [Eudora Welty](#), [John Cheever](#), [Raymond Carver](#), [Tobias Wolff](#), and the more experimental [Donald Barthelme](#).

Among the most respected of the postwar American poets are [John Ashbery](#), the key figure of the surrealistic [New York School](#) of poetry, and his celebrated *Self-portrait in a Convex Mirror* (Pulitzer Prize for Poetry, 1976); [Elizabeth Bishop](#) and her *North & South* (Pulitzer Prize for Poetry, 1956) and "Geography III" (National Book Award, 1970); [Richard Wilbur](#) and his *Things of This World*, winner of both the Pulitzer Prize and the National Book Award for Poetry in 1957; [John Berryman](#) and his *The Dream Songs*, (Pulitzer Prize for Poetry, 1964, National Book Award, 1968); [A.R. Ammons](#), whose *Collected Poems 1951-1971* won a National Book Award in 1973 and whose long poem *Garbage* earned him another in 1993; [Theodore Roethke](#) and his *The Waking* (Pulitzer Prize for Poetry, 1954); [James Merrill](#) and his epic poem of communication with the dead, *The Changing Light at Sandover* (Pulitzer Prize for Poetry, 1977); [Louise Glück](#) for her *The Wild Iris* (Pulitzer Prize for Poetry, 1993); [W.S. Merwin](#) for his *The Carrier of Ladders* (Pulitzer Prize for Poetry, 1971) and *The Shadow of Sirius* (Pulitzer Prize for Poetry, 2009); [Mark Strand](#) for *Blizzard of One* (Pulitzer Prize for Poetry, 1999); [Robert Hass](#) for his *Time and Materials*, which won both the Pulitzer Prize and National Book Award for Poetry in 2008 and 2007 respectively; and [Rita Dove](#) for her *Thomas and Beulah* (Pulitzer Prize for Poetry, 1987).

In addition, in this same period the [confessional](#), whose origin is often traced to the publication in 1959 of [Robert Lowell](#)'s *Life Studies*,^[13] and [beat](#) schools of poetry enjoyed popular and academic success, producing such widely anthologized voices as [Allen Ginsberg](#), [Charles Bukowski](#), [Gary Snyder](#), [Anne Sexton](#), and [Sylvia Plath](#), among many others.

Wikipedia

Progress Indicators for Reading Literature

LA.RL.11-12.1	Cite strong and thorough textual evidence and make relevant connections to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain.
LA.RL.11-12.3	Analyze the impact of the author's choices regarding how to develop and relate elements of a story or drama (e.g., where a story is set, how the action is ordered, how the characters are introduced and developed).
LA.RL.11-12.5	Analyze how an author's choices concerning how to structure specific parts of a text (e.g., the choice of where to begin or end a story, the choice to provide a comedic or tragic resolution) contribute to its overall structure and meaning as well as its aesthetic impact.
LA.RL.11-12.6	Analyze a case in which grasping a point of view requires distinguishing what is directly stated in a text from what is really meant (e.g., satire, sarcasm, irony, or understatement).
LA.RL.11-12.7	Analyze multiple interpretations of a story, drama, or poem (e.g., recorded or live production of a play or recorded novel or poetry), evaluating how each version interprets the source text. (e.g., Shakespeare and other authors.)
LA.RL.11-12.9	Demonstrate knowledge of and reflect on (e.g., practical knowledge, historical/cultural context, and background knowledge) eighteenth-, nineteenth- and early twentieth-century foundational works of literature, including how two or more texts from the same period treat similar themes or topics.
LA.RL.11-12.10a	By the end of grade 11, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems at grade level text-complexity or above with scaffolding as needed.

Progress Indicators for Reading Informational Text

LA.RI.11-12.3	Analyze a complex set of ideas or sequence of events and explain how specific individuals, ideas, or events interact and develop over the course of the text.
LA.RI.11-12.5	Analyze and evaluate the effectiveness of the structure an author uses in his or her exposition or argument, including whether the structure makes points clear, convincing, and engaging.
LA.RI.11-12.7	Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in different media or formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively) as well as in words in order to address a question or solve a problem.
LA.RI.11-12.9	Analyze and reflect on (e.g., practical knowledge, historical/cultural context, and background knowledge) documents of historical and literary significance for their themes, purposes and rhetorical features, including primary source documents relevant to U.S. and/or global history.
LA.RI.11-12.10a	By the end of grade 11, read and comprehend literary nonfiction at grade level text-complexity or above with scaffolding as needed.

Progress Indicators for Writing

LA.W.11-12.2.B	Develop the topic thoroughly by selecting the most significant and relevant facts, extended definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples
----------------	--

	appropriate to the audience’s knowledge of the topic.
LA.W.11-12.2.D	Use precise language, domain-specific vocabulary, and techniques such as metaphor, simile, and analogy to manage the complexity of the topic.
LA.W.11-12.3.A	Engage and orient the reader by setting out a problem, situation, or observation and its significance, establishing one or multiple point(s) of view, and introducing a narrator and/or characters; create a smooth progression of experiences or events.
LA.W.11-12.3.C	Use a variety of techniques to sequence events so that they build on one another to create a coherent whole and build toward a particular tone and outcome (e.g., a sense of mystery, suspense, growth, or resolution).
LA.W.11-12.4	Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. (Grade-specific expectations for writing types are defined in standards 1–3 above.)
LA.W.11-12.5	Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, trying a new approach, or consulting a style manual (such as MLA or APA Style), focusing on addressing what is most significant for a specific purpose and audience.
LA.W.11-12.6	Use technology, including the Internet, to produce, share, and update individual or shared writing products in response to ongoing feedback, including new arguments or information.
LA.W.11-12.9.A	Apply grades 11–12 Reading standards to literature (e.g., “Demonstrate knowledge of eighteenth-, nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century foundational works, including how two or more texts from the same period treat similar themes or topics”).
LA.W.11-12.9.B	Apply grades 11–12 Reading standards to literary nonfiction (e.g., “Delineate and evaluate the reasoning in seminal texts, including the application of constitutional principles and use of legal reasoning [e.g., in U.S. Supreme Court Case majority opinions and dissents] and the premises, purposes, and arguments in works of public advocacy [e.g., The Federalist, presidential addresses]”).
LA.W.11-12.10	Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes.

Progress Indicators for Speaking and Listening

LA.SL.11-12.1.C	Propel conversations by posing and responding to questions that probe reasoning and evidence; ensure a hearing for a full range of positions on a topic or issue; clarify, verify, or challenge ideas and conclusions; and promote divergent and creative perspectives.
LA.SL.11-12.1.D	Respond thoughtfully to diverse perspectives; synthesize comments, claims, and evidence made on all sides of an issue; resolve contradictions when possible; and determine what additional information or research is required to deepen the investigation or complete the task.
LA.SL.11-12.5	Make strategic use of digital media (e.g., textual, graphical, audio, visual, and interactive elements) in presentations to enhance understanding of findings, reasoning, and evidence and to add interest.
LA.SL.11-12.6	Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and tasks, demonstrating a command of formal English when indicated or appropriate.
LA.11-12.SL.11-12.2	Integrate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) in order to make informed decisions and solve problems, evaluating the credibility and accuracy of each source and noting any discrepancies among the data.

Progress Indicators for Language

LA.L.11-12.1.A	Apply the understanding that usage is a matter of convention, can change over time, and is sometimes contested.
LA.L.11-12.3.A	Vary syntax for effect, apply an understanding of syntax to the study of complex texts.
LA.L.11-12.4	Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on grades 11–12 reading and content, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.
LA.L.11-12.5.B	Analyze nuances in the meaning of words with similar denotations.
LA.L.11-12.6	Acquire and use accurately general academic and domain-specific words and phrases, sufficient for reading, writing, speaking, and listening at the college and career readiness level; demonstrate independence in gathering vocabulary knowledge when considering a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression.

Essential Questions

Which poets have influenced the development and the message of American literature?

How does modern American poetry reflect the multicultural nature of our society?

Does poetry still matter in the technological age?

Content/Skills

The Literature Selections include, but are not limited to:

Poets: Sylvia Plath, Anne Sexton, Theodore Roethke, Elizabeth Bishop, Robert Frost, AR Ammons, John Ashberry

Short Story Writers: William Faulkner, Shirley Jackson, Katherine Ann Porter, Richard Wilbur, Raymond Carver, Flannery O'Connor, John Updike, Rick Moody, Eudory Welty, Toni Morrison, Stephen King, Alice Walker

Supplementary Materials include, but are not limited to:

Vocabulary Applications include, but are not limited to:

Honors/Accelerated:

Drama Words in Context

Literary terms and related words in context to reading selections

College Prep:

Advanced Vocabulary Skills, Fourth Edition

Literary terms and related words in context to reading selections

Independent Reading Selections tied to Themes or Time Period: