

CHRONOLOGY

DATE	LITERARY WORKS AND AUTHORS	HISTORICAL CONTEXT
1607	—	Colony of Jamestown established in Virginia
1619	—	First slaves arrive in America
1620	—	The <i>Mayflower</i> , carrying Pilgrims from Plymouth, England, lands at New Plymouth, Mass.
1638	—	Anne Hutchinson banished from Massachusetts Bay Colony after Puritan clergy find her guilty of heresy
1649	—	Charles I deposed and executed
1650	Bradstreet, <i>The Tenth Muse Lately Sprung Up in America</i>	Oliver Cromwell comes to power
1657	d. William Bradford	—
1672	d. Anne Bradstreet	—
1675	—	Algonkian Indians destroyed after attacking English colonists in King Philip's War, 1675–1676
c. 1680	Taylor, <i>God's Determinations Touching His Elect</i>	—
1682	Mary Rowlandson, <i>The Captivity Narrative</i> Taylor, <i>Preparatory Meditations</i> begun (1682–1725)	—
1692	—	Witch trials in Salem, Mass., result in 20 executions
1693	Mather, <i>Wonders of the Invisible World</i>	—
1711	—	—
1724	—	Jewish settlers exiled from Louisiana colony
1728	d. Cotton Mather	—
1729	d. Edward Taylor	—
1734	—	—
1735	—	John Peter Zenger, editor of <i>New York Weekly</i> , acquitted of sedition and libel, establishing doctrine of freedom of the press
1739	—	War of Jenkins' Ear, between England and Spain over control of seaways, 1739–1748 The "Great Awakening," a religious revival movement spawned by Jonathan Edwards and others, spreads across American colonies
1741	Edwards, <i>Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God</i>	—
1745	—	King George's War, between England and France for control over North America, 1745–1748

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1754	—	French and Indian War, continued territorial struggle pitting France, its Canadian colonies, and its American Indian allies against Britain and its American colonies, 1754–1763
1758	d. Jonathan Edwards	—
1761	—	Slavery abolished in mainland Portugal
1765	—	Stamp Act, a tax imposed by Britain on American colonies, provokes movement against “taxation without representation”
1766	—	Daniel Boone explores Kentucky Territory
1768	Sampson Occom, <i>A Short Narrative of My Life</i>	—
1770	Freneau, <i>Father Bombo’s Pilgrimage to Mecca</i>	British soldiers fire into a crowd, killing five persons in the Boston Massacre
1772	Freneau, “A Poem on the Rising Glory of America”	—
1773	Wheatley, <i>Poems on Various Subjects, Religious and Moral</i>	Colonists destroy British tea at Boston Tea Party, signaling American opposition to the Tea Act of 1773
1775	—	Clashes between American troops and British army at Lexington and Concord, Mass. Begin Revolutionary War Second Continental Congress meets in Philadelphia British defeat Americans at Bunker Hill, near Boston
1776	—	Thomas Paine publishes <i>Common Sense</i> Second Continental Congress adopts the Declaration of Independence George Washington’s army defeats British at Trenton, N.J., First state constitutions written
1777	—	Articles of Confederation adopted
1780–1781	—	Americans defeat British in Battle of Cowpens, in South Carolina Articles of Confederation ratified
1782	Crèvecoeur, <i>Letters from an American Farmer</i>	—
1783	—	Treaty of Paris with Great Britain recognizes American independence
1784	d. Phillis Wheatley	—
1786	—	—
1787	—	Daniel Shays leads armed rebellion of debtor farmers against courts in western Mass., spurring drive for stronger national government Constitutional Convention, meeting in Philadelphia, adopts Constitution The <i>Federalist Papers</i> , a collection of essays supporting the United States Constitution and the idea of a strong federal government, written by Alexander Hamilton, James Madison, and John Jay under the pseudonym “Publius,” published in New York City newspapers, 1787–1788 States ratify Constitution, 1787–1788

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1789		First elections held under Constitution George Washington becomes first president Bill of Rights adopted by Congress French Revolution, abolishing the monarchy and establishing a republican form of government, 1789–1799
1790	d. Benjamin Franklin	First American cotton mill established in Pawtucket, R.I.
1791	Franklin, <i>The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin</i>	—
1794	—	Whiskey Rebellion, an uprising against the federal excise tax on corn liquor in western Pennsylvania, put down by federal troops
1796	—	Washington leaves presidency
1798	—	Alien and Sedition Acts, imposing far-reaching restrictions on freedom of speech and of the press, passed by Congress
1801	—	Thomas Jefferson becomes president
1802	—	The Library of Congress established
1803	—	Supreme Court rules in <i>Marbury v. Madison</i> that the court has the power to invalidate acts of Congress when they are determined to be unconstitutional Louisiana Purchase, the acquisition by the United States of more than 800,000 square miles of territory from France, extends U.S. holdings from Mississippi River to the Rocky Mountains Lewis and Clark begin expedition to investigate the territory added by the Louisiana Purchase (1803–1806)
1806	First edition of <i>Webster's Dictionary</i>	—
1807	—	Embargo Act bans all foreign trade
1812	—	U.S. declares war on Britain, beginning War of 1812,
1813	d. J. Hector St. John de Crevecoeur	British erect naval blockade
1814	—	British troops capture and burn Washington Treaty of Ghent ends war between U.S. and Britain
1819	Irving, <i>The Sketch Book of Geoffrey Crayon, Gent.</i> (1819–1820)	—
1821	—	Cherokee language captured in written form
1823	—	James Monroe issues Monroe Doctrine, declaring that any military incursions by European nations into the Americas would be considered a threat to U.S. sovereignty.
1825	—	Erie Canal opens, linking the Great Lakes to the Hudson River
1826	Cooper, <i>The Last of the Mohicans</i>	—
1827	Poe, <i>Tamerlane and Other Poems</i>	First railroad tracks laid on American soil

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1830	—	Indian Removal Act, giving the president power to negotiate the removal of Indian tribes from areas east of the Mississippi River, passed by Congress and signed by President Andrew Jackson
1831	Prince, <i>The History of Mary Prince, A West Indian Slave</i>	William Lloyd Garrison begins publishing abolitionist newspaper <i>The Liberator</i>
1832	d. Philip Freneau	—
1834	—	Slavery abolished in British Colonies
1835	Simms, <i>The Yemasee</i>	—
1836	Emerson, <i>Nature</i>	Transcendentalist movement (c. 1836–1882), promoting intuitive idealism, the divinity of humankind, and the importance of the individual’s own moral insight as opposed to the rule of the many, becomes major influence in American literature, theology, and social thought
1838	—	Cherokee Nation forced to move from Georgia to Indian Territory (Oklahoma) in Trail of Tears, 1838–1839
1839	Very, <i>Essays and Poems</i>	—
1840	Dana, <i>Two Years before the Mast</i> Poe, <i>Tales of the Grotesque and Arabesque</i> Tocqueville, Alexis de, <i>Democracy in America</i> (1835–1840)	—
1841	Cooper, <i>The Deerslayer</i> Emerson, <i>Essays</i>	—
1843	Poe, “The Tell-Tale Heart”	—
1844	—	—
1845	Douglass, <i>The Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass</i> Poe, <i>The Raven</i> Poe, <i>Tales</i>	—
1847	Longfellow, <i>Evangeline</i>	—
1848	—	Women’s rights convention at Seneca Falls, New York demands equal rights for women, including the right to vote John Humphrey Noyes founds Oneida Perfectionist colony, a Christian socialist society that becomes a leading example of the American Utopian movement, 1848–1900
1849	Thoreau, <i>Civil Disobedience</i> d. Edgar Allan Poe	Gold rush in California, 1849–1850
1850	Hawthorne, <i>The Scarlet Letter</i>	Fugitive Slave Act, part of the Compromise of 1850, denies right of escaped slaves to a trial by jury and authorizes government authorities to return escaped slaves to former owners
1851	Hawthorne, <i>The House of the Seven Gables</i> Melville, <i>Moby-Dick</i> d. James Fenimore Cooper	—

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1852	Hawthorne, <i>The Blithedale Romance</i> Stowe, <i>Uncle Tom's Cabin</i>	—
1853	Melville, "Bartleby the Scrivener"	—
1854	Thoreau, <i>Walden; or, Life in the Woods</i>	Republican Party formed
1855	Douglass, <i>My Bondage and My Freedom</i> Irving, <i>Life of George Washington</i> (five vols., 1855–1859) Longfellow, <i>The Song of Hiawatha</i> Whitman, <i>Leaves of Grass</i>	—
1856	Melville, <i>The Piazza Tales</i>	—
1857	—	Supreme Court issues decision in <i>Dred Scott v. Sandford</i> case, declaring that a black slave cannot become a citizen under the U.S. Constitution
1858	Longfellow, <i>The Courtship of Miles Standish</i>	—
1859	d. Washington Irving d. Alexis de Tocqueville	John Brown leads raid on U.S. arsenal at Harper's Ferry, Virginia, hoping to inspire slave uprising
1860	—	Abraham Lincoln elected president
1861		Confederate States of America formed Fort Sumter, S.C., falls to Confederate forces, beginning Civil War In first major armed conflict of Civil War, Confederates defeat Union army in (First) Battle of Bull Run in Virginia
1862	d. Henry David Thoreau	Both armies sustain enormous casualties in battles of Shiloh, (Second) Bull Run, Antietam, and Fredericksburg
1863	Thoreau, <i>The Maine Woods</i>	Lincoln issues Emancipation Proclamation, freeing the slaves
1864	d. Nathaniel Hawthorne	Antidraft riots break out in New York City; homes of wealthy looted and scores of African Americans lynched Union armies victorious at crucial battles of Vicksburg and Gettysburg General Sherman captures Atlanta, begins "March to the Sea" to destroy Confederacy Lincoln re-elected president
1865	Whitman, <i>Drum Taps</i>	General Lee of the Confederacy surrenders to General Grant of the Union Army at Appomattox Courthouse, Virginia, ending the Civil War President Lincoln assassinated; Andrew Johnson becomes president. Thirteenth Amendment outlaws slavery Freedmen's Bureau established to aid and assimilate freed slaves
1866	—	Congress approves Fourteenth Amendment, granting citizenship to "all persons born or naturalized in the United States" and prohibiting states from reducing the "privileges and immunities of citizens" Ku Klux Klan formed in South

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1868	Alcott, <i>Little Women</i> Alger, <i>Ragged Dick</i>	Military Reconstruction Act outlines plan of Reconstruction, placing the South under temporary military occupation, enfranchising African Americans and disenfranchising former Confederate leaders Andrew Johnson impeached but not convicted Fourteenth Amendment ratified Ulysses S. Grant elected president
1869	Twain, <i>The Innocents Abroad</i>	Congress passes Fifteenth Amendment Transcontinental railroad completed
1870	Harte, <i>The Luck of Roaring Camp and Other Sketches</i> d. William Gilmore Simms	John D. Rockefeller founds Standard Oil
1871	—	Great Chicago Fire destroys large portion of city's central district
1872	Twain, <i>Roughing It</i>	First national park, Yellowstone, established
1873	—	Andrew Carnegie founds Carnegie Steel
1874	—	Financial panic disrupts national economy
1876	Twain, <i>The Adventures of Tom Sawyer</i>	General George Custer dies in battle with Sioux at Little Big Horn (Montana) Alexander Graham Bell invents the telephone Baseball's National League founded
1877	—	Last federal troops withdrawn from South after "Compromise of 1877," an agreement between Southern Democrats and Republicans to end federal intervention in South
1878	James, <i>Daisy Miller</i>	—
1879	—	Edison invents the light bulb
1880	Harris, <i>Uncle Remus</i> d. Jones Very	—
1881	Alger, <i>From Canal Boy to President</i> James, <i>The Portrait of a Lady</i>	President Garfield assassinated
1882	Howells, <i>A Modern Instance</i> Lazarus, <i>Songs of a Semite</i> d. Richard Henry Dana d. Ralph Waldo Emerson d. Henry Wadsworth Longfellow	Congress passes Chinese Exclusion Act, outlawing immigration from China
1883	Twain, <i>Life on the Mississippi</i>	Brooklyn Bridge opens
1884	Twain, <i>Adventures of Huckleberry Finn</i>	First steel girder "skyscraper" built in Chicago
1885	Howells, <i>The Rise of Silas Lapham</i>	—
1886	d. Emily Dickinson	—
1887	d. Emma Lazarus	—
1888	Bellamy, <i>Looking Backward</i> d. Louisa May Alcott	—
1889	—	Jane Addams opens Hull House in Chicago to help assimilate immigrants

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1890	Dickinson, <i>Poems of Emily Dickinson</i>	Battle of Wounded Knee (S. Dakota), the last major clash between federal troops and American Indians, results in massacre of hundreds of Sioux Sherman Antitrust Act outlaws contracts, combinations, and conspiracies “in restraint of trade” “Jim Crow” laws establishing strict segregation passed throughout South (c. 1890s)
1891	d. Herman Melville	—
1892	Gilman, <i>The Yellow Wallpaper</i> d. Walt Whitman	People’s Party formed in Omaha on behalf of debtor farmers, launching “Populist” movement
1893	—	Depression begins Chicago World’s Fair Anti-Saloon League founded
1894	Garland, <i>Crumbling Idols</i> Twain, <i>The Tragedy of Pudd’nhead Wilson</i>	—
1895	Crane, <i>The Red Badge of Courage</i> d. Frederick Douglass	First Coney Island amusement park opens Insurrection against Spanish begins in Cuba
1896	Dunbar, <i>Lyrics of Lowly Life</i> Jewett, <i>The Country of the Pointed Firs</i> d. Harriet Beecher Stowe	William Jennings Bryan wins Democratic nomination after “Cross of Gold” speech denouncing gold standard William McKinley elected president Yukon Gold Rush <i>Plessy v. Ferguson</i> upholds racially segregated railroad cars; further discriminatory (Jim Crow) laws follow
1897	—	The advent of sensationalistic newspaper reporting known as “Yellow Journalism”
1898	Crane, <i>The Open Boat and Other Tales of Adventure</i> James, <i>The Turn of the Screw</i>	Spanish-American War, 1898–1899; Treaty of Paris cedes Puerto Rico, Philippines, and other Spanish possessions to U.S. and recognizes Cuban independence U.S. battleship <i>Maine</i> explodes in Havana harbor Revolt against American rule begins in Philippines (1898–1902)
1899	Chesnutt, <i>The Conjure Woman</i> Chopin, <i>The Awakening</i> Norris, <i>McTeague</i> d. Horatio Alger	—
1900	Baum, <i>The Wizard of Oz</i> Chesnutt, <i>The House behind the Cedars</i> Dreiser, <i>Sister Carrie</i> d. Stephen Crane	Eugene Debs runs for president as candidate of Socialist Party Hawaii becomes U.S. territory
1901	—	President McKinley assassinated; Theodore Roosevelt becomes president J. P. Morgan creates United States Steel Corporation Baseball’s American League founded

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1902	Hapgood, <i>The Spirit of the Ghetto</i> James, <i>The Wings of the Dove</i> Wister, <i>The Virginian</i> d. Bret Harte d. Frank Norris	—
1903	Du Bois, W. E. B., <i>The Souls of Black Folk</i> James, <i>The Ambassadors</i> London, <i>The Call of the Wild</i>	Ford Motor Company founded Wright brothers launch first airplane flight at Kitty Hawk, N. Carolina First motion picture debuts in America
1904	Henry, <i>Cabbages and Kings</i> James, <i>The Golden Bowl</i> d. Kate Chopin	Construction of Panama Canal begins
1905	Wharton, <i>The House of Mirth</i>	Roosevelt elected president
1906	London, <i>White Fang</i> Sinclair, <i>The Jungle</i> d. Paul Laurence Dunbar	San Francisco earthquake and fire destroy much of the city Meat Inspection Act, requiring government inspection of slaughterhouses, passed by Congress Pure Food and Drug Act, restricting sale of dangerous or ineffective medicines, passed by Congress Henry Ford produces his first automobiles
1907	Adams, <i>The Education of Henry Adams</i>	Sinn Fein, an Irish nationalist movement, founded
1909	d. Sarah Orne Jewett	National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) founded Admiral Peary reaches North Pole
1910	d. O. Henry d. Mark Twain	Boy Scouts of America founded
1911	Bierce, <i>The Devil's Dictionary</i> Wharton, <i>Ethan Frome</i>	Standard Oil Company declared a monopoly and broken up
1912	Lindsay, <i>Rhymes to Be Traded for Bread</i>	<i>Titanic</i> sinks Girl Guides (later Girl Scouts of America) founded Woodrow Wilson elected president
1913	Cather, <i>O Pioneers!</i> Frost, <i>A Boy's Will</i>	—
1914	Pound, <i>Des Imagistes</i> Stein, <i>Tender Buttons</i> Tarkington, <i>Penrod</i> d. Ambrose Bierce	Panama Canal opens Austria invades Serbia, beginning World War I First federal income tax established by Congress
1915	Lindsay, <i>The Art of the Moving Picture</i> Masters, <i>Spoon River Anthology</i>	D. W. Griffith's film <i>The Birth of a Nation</i> features stereotypical images of African Americans and negative portrayal of Reconstruction Great Migration of African Americans from the South to Northern cities begins
1916	Lardner, <i>You Know Me, Al</i> d. Henry James d. Jack London	The Easter Rebellion in Dublin, Ireland; Irish Republican Army is established Margaret Sanger opens first birth control clinic in Brooklyn Wilson reelected

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1917	Eliot, <i>Prufrock and Other Observations</i> Lowell, <i>Tendencies in Modern American Poetry</i> Millay, <i>Renascence and Other Poems</i> Sinclair, <i>King Coal</i>	Russian Revolution, 1917–1921 Soviet Union established U.S. enters World War I Puerto Ricans granted U.S. citizenship
1918	Cather, <i>My Ántonia</i> Tarkington, <i>The Magnificent Ambersons</i> d. Henry Adams	Spanish flu epidemic kills millions (1918–1919) Armistice ends war
1919	Algonquin Round Table begins meeting, 1919–1932 Anderson, <i>Winesburg, Ohio</i> Mencken, <i>The American Language</i>	Paris Peace Conference convenes Treaty of Versailles signed by Germany, Britain, France, Italy, and Japan, but not ratified by U.S. Senate Eighteenth Amendment (Prohibition) ratified Race riots break out in Chicago and other cities
1920	Lewis, <i>Main Street</i> Wharton, <i>The Age of Innocence</i> d. William Dean Howells	In “Red Scare” federal government reacts to radicalism and raids leftist organizations Prohibition goes into effect Women given the right to vote (Nineteenth Amendment) Partition of Ireland
1921	Dos Passos, <i>Three Soldiers</i> Robinson, <i>Collected Poems</i>	<i>Reader’s Digest</i> founded
1922	Cummings, <i>The Enormous Room</i> Eliot, <i>The Waste Land</i> <i>The Fugitive</i> magazine founded, 1922–1925 Garland, <i>A Daughter of the Middle Border</i> Lewis, <i>Babbitt</i>	Harlem Renaissance, 1922–1929 Motion Picture Association, under Will Hays, founded to regulate film industry
1923	Cummings, <i>Tulips and Chimneys</i> Frost, <i>New Hampshire</i> Loy, <i>Lunar Baedeker</i> Millay, <i>The Harp-Weaver and Other Poems</i> Stevens, <i>Harmonium</i>	Warren G. Harding dies; Calvin Coolidge becomes president <i>Time</i> magazine founded
1924	Lardner, <i>How to Write Short Stories [with Samples]</i> Melville, <i>Billy Budd, Foretopman</i> ●Au: Q1 H. L. Mencken cofounds ● <i>American Mercury</i> Robinson, <i>The Man Who Died Twice</i>	Stalin takes power in the Soviet Union after Lenin’s death National Origins Act severely restricts immigration from Asia and southern and eastern Europe The Ku Klux Klan reaches peak membership
1925	Dreiser, <i>An American Tragedy</i> Fitzgerald, <i>The Great Gatsby</i> Lowell, <i>What’s O’Clock?</i> d. Amy Lowell	Scopes trial in Dayton, Tennessee highlights attempts by religious fundamentalists to forbid the teaching of evolution <i>The New Yorker</i> begins publication
1926	Hemingway, <i>The Sun Also Rises</i> Hughes, <i>Weary Blues</i> Parker, <i>Enough Rope</i> Tate, <i>Ode to the Confederate Dead</i>	National Broadcasting Company (NBC) formed
1927	Wilder, <i>The Bridge of San Luis Rey</i> Lewis, <i>Elmer Gantry</i> Cather, <i>Death Comes for the Archbishop</i>	Sacco and Vanzetti, Italian immigrants and admitted anarchists, executed Charles Lindbergh’s solo flight across the Atlantic Columbia Broadcasting System (CBS) formed

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1928	Benét, <i>John Brown's Body</i> Jackson, <i>Anarchism Is Not Enough</i> Sandburg, <i>Good Morning, America</i>	Herbert Hoover elected president Alexander Fleming discovers penicillin
1929	Aiken, <i>Selected Poems</i> Faulkner, <i>The Sound and the Fury</i> Hemingway, <i>A Farewell to Arms</i> Wolfe, <i>Look Homeward, Angel</i>	Stock market crash Great Depression begins, 1929–1939
1930	Auden, <i>Poems</i> Crane, <i>The Bridge</i> Eliot, <i>Ash Wednesday</i> Faulkner, <i>As I Lay Dying</i> The Fugitives publish <i>I'll Take My Stand: The South and the Agrarian Tradition</i>	The Dust Bowl, decade of severe drought and dust storms in U.S. Plains, begins
1931	Buck, <i>The Good Earth</i> Wilson, <i>Axel's Castle</i> Louis Zukofsky edits objectivist issue of <i>Poetry</i> magazine d. Vachel Lindsay	Scottsboro case attracts national attention when a group of black teenagers are convicted and sentenced to death for the rape of two white women on a train near Scottsboro, Ala.
1932	Faulkner, <i>Light in August</i> Caldwell, <i>Tobacco Road</i> d. Charles W. Chesnutt d. Hart Crane	Franklin Delano Roosevelt elected president Tuskegee syphilis project begins
1933	Stein, <i>The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas</i> West, <i>Miss Lonelyhearts</i> d. Ring Lardner	New Deal begins Adolf Hitler becomes chancellor of Germany Twenty-first Amendment ends prohibition U.S. recognizes USSR Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) created to revitalize the region
1934	Fitzgerald, <i>Tender Is the Night</i> Miller, <i>Tropic of Cancer</i> Pound, <i>Make It New</i> Roth, <i>Call It Sleep</i>	Revised Production Code mandates self-censorship among Hollywood studios
1935	Moore, <i>Selected Poems</i> O'Hara, <i>Butterfield 8</i> Wolfe, <i>Of Time and the River</i> d. Charlotte Perkins Gilman d. Edwin Arlington Robinson	Works Progress Administration and other relief agencies, including Federal Writers Project and Federal Arts Project, created to keep millions of people employed Social Security Act creates pension system for working Americans and provides government assistance to the poor and elderly National Labor Relations Act (Wagner Act) encourages collective bargaining between employers and employees, fostering union growth
1936	Barnes, <i>Nightwood</i> Mitchell, <i>Gone with the Wind</i> Sandburg, <i>The People, Yes!</i>	Roosevelt reelected president Spanish civil war, 1936–1939 Jesse Owens wins four gold medals in Berlin Olympics <i>Life</i> begins publication
1937	Hurston, <i>Their Eyes Were Watching God</i> Steinbeck, <i>Of Mice and Men</i> d. Edith Wharton	The <i>Hindenburg</i> hydrogen airship explodes in Lakehurst, New Jersey

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1938	Dos Passos, <i>U.S.A.</i> trilogy (collected) Wilder, <i>Our Town</i> Wright, <i>Uncle Tom's Children</i> d. Thomas Wolfe	Germany annexes Austria and Czech Sudetenland Munich Conference
1939	Hellman, <i>The Little Foxes</i> Miller, <i>Tropic of Capricorn</i> Steinbeck, <i>The Grapes of Wrath</i> Thurber, "The Secret Life of Walter Mitty" West, Nathanael, <i>The Day of the Locust</i>	Germany invades Poland World War II begins, 1939–1945 New York World's Fair
1940	Hemingway, <i>For Whom the Bell Tolls</i> McCullers, <i>The Heart Is a Lonely Hunter</i> O'Hara, <i>Pal Joey</i> O'Neill, <i>The Iceman Cometh</i> Wright, <i>Native Son</i> d. Hamlin Garland d. F. Scott Fitzgerald d. Nathanael West	Roosevelt reelected president
1941	Agee, <i>Let Us Now Praise Famous Men</i> Glasgow, <i>In This Our Life</i> Ransom, <i>The New Criticism</i> d. Sherwood Anderson	Japan attacks Pearl Harbor U.S. enters World War II
1942	Frost, <i>A Witness Tree</i> Kazin, <i>On Native Grounds</i> Stevens, <i>Notes toward a Supreme Fiction</i> White, <i>One Man's Meat</i>	News of the Holocaust reaches U.S. Japanese Americans interned Manhattan Project, government-sponsored research that produced atomic bomb, begins
1943	Eliot, <i>Four Quartets</i> d. Stephen Vincent Benét	Zoot-suit riots break out in Los Angeles when white sailors attack Mexican-American youth
1944	Williams, <i>The Glass Menagerie</i> d. Hutchins Hapgood	Roosevelt reelected president Allied forces storm the beaches at Normandy (D-day) GI Bill of Rights provides financial and educational support to U.S. WWII veterans
1945	White, <i>Stuart Little</i> Wright, <i>Black Boy</i> d. Theodore Dreiser d. Ellen Glasgow	America drops atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Japan. Mussolini killed by rioters Hitler commits suicide Franklin D. Roosevelt dies, Harry S. Truman becomes president Germany surrenders, ending WWII Japan surrenders United Nations founded
1946	Lowell, <i>Lord Weary's Castle</i> Warren, <i>All the King's Men</i> Welty, <i>Delta Wedding</i> d. Gertrude Stein d. Booth Tarkington	Literary figures develop New Criticism, which focuses on text and language in literary analysis Benjamin Spock, pediatrician and pacifist, publishes <i>Baby and Child Care</i>

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1947	Kees, <i>The Fall of Magicians</i> Stafford, <i>The Mountain Lion</i> Williams, <i>A Streetcar Named Desire</i> d. Willa Cather	Jackie Robinson plays with Brooklyn Dodgers, breaking baseball's color line House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC) begins its investigation of Communists in the Hollywood Motion Picture Industry Construction begins on Levittown, New York, symbolizing suburban growth
1948	Jackson, "The Lottery" Jarrell, <i>Losses</i> Mailer, <i>The Naked and the Dead</i> Pound, <i>The Pisan Cantos</i> Roethke, <i>The Lost Son and Other Poems</i> Vidal, <i>The City and the Pillar</i>	Truman signs Economic Cooperation Act (the Marshall Plan), sending financial aid to European countries suffering the effects of WWII State of Israel established
1949	Algren, <i>The Man with the Golden Arm</i> Brooks, <i>Annie Allen</i> Miller, <i>Death of a Salesman</i> d. Margaret Mitchell	North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) established Mao Zedong declares People's Republic of China a communist state
1950	Sandburg, <i>Complete Poems</i> Trilling, <i>The Liberal Imagination</i> d. Edgar Lee Masters d. Edna St. Vincent Millay	North Korea invades South Korea, beginning Korean War (1950–1953) UN troops, led by U.S. General Douglas MacArthur, launch counterattack against North Korea China enters Korean War Senator Joseph McCarthy alleges that certain State Department members hold Communist loyalties
1951	Hughes, <i>Montage of a Dream Deferred</i> McCullers, <i>The Ballad of the Sad Café</i> Salinger, <i>The Catcher in the Rye</i> Styron, <i>Lie Down in Darkness</i> d. Sinclair Lewis	Julius and Ethel Rosenberg convicted as Soviet spies (executed 1953)
1952	Ellison, <i>Invisible Man</i> Hemingway, <i>The Old Man and the Sea</i> Malamud, <i>The Natural</i> O'Connor, <i>Wise Blood</i> Steinbeck, <i>East of Eden</i> White, <i>Charlotte's Web</i>	U.S. tests hydrogen bomb Dwight D. Eisenhower elected president
1953	Baldwin, <i>Go Tell It on the Mountain</i> Bellow, <i>The Adventures of Augie March</i> Jarrell, <i>Poetry and the Age</i> Miller, <i>The Crucible</i> Roethke, <i>The Waking: Poems 1933–53</i> d. Eugene O'Neill	Watson and Crick document DNA Korean war ends in stalemate
1954	Stevens, <i>Collected Poems</i> Swenson, <i>Another Animal</i> Robert Creeley founds <i>The Black Mountain Review</i>	Supreme Court decides <i>Brown v. Board of Education</i> case, ruling against racial segregation in public schools and declaring separate education facilities unequal North and South Vietnam divided after communists under Ho Chi Minh defeat French colonials Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO) established

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1955	Baldwin, <i>Notes of a Native Son</i> Bishop, <i>Poems: North and South—A Cold Spring</i> Miller, <i>A View from the Bridge</i> Nabokov, <i>Lolita</i> O'Connor, <i>A Good Man Is Hard to Find</i> O'Neill, <i>Long Day's Journey into Night</i> Williams, <i>Cat on a Hot Tin Roof</i> d. James Agee d. Weldon Kees d. Wallace Stevens	Montgomery, Alabama, bus boycott sparked by Rosa Parks refusing to give up her seat American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations merge to become the AFL-CIO
1956	Barth, <i>The Floating Opera</i> Ginsberg, <i>Howl</i> Wilbur, <i>Things of This World</i> d. H. L. Mencken	Eisenhower reelected president
1957	Agee, <i>A Death in the Family</i> Cheever, <i>The Wapshot Chronicle</i> Kerouac, <i>On the Road</i> McCarthy, <i>Memories of a Catholic Girlhood</i> Singer, <i>Gimpel the Fool and Other Stories</i>	Soviet Union launches satellite <i>Sputnik</i> European Economic Community (Common Market) established Federal courts order desegregation of Central High School in Little Rock, Ark. Martin Luther King, Jr. establishes the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) in Atlanta, Ga.
1958	Capote, <i>Breakfast at Tiffany's</i> Kerouac, <i>Dharma Bums</i> Kunitz, <i>Collected Poems: 1928–58</i> Williams, <i>Paterson</i> (five volumes, 1946–1958)	National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) established
1959	Albee, <i>The Zoo Story</i> Burroughs, <i>Naked Lunch</i> Hansberry, <i>A Raisin in the Sun</i> Lowell, <i>Life Studies</i> Paley, <i>The Little Disturbances of Man</i> Roth, <i>Goodbye, Columbus</i> Schwartz, <i>Summer Knowledge</i> Thurber, <i>The Years with Ross</i> White, <i>The Elements of Style</i>	Revolutionaries led by Fidel Castro overthrow Fulgencio Batista in Cuba Alaska and Hawaii become states
1960	Barth, <i>The Sot-Weed Factor</i> Kinnell, <i>What a Kingdom It Was</i> Knowles, <i>A Separate Peace</i> Lee, <i>To Kill a Mockingbird</i> Plath, <i>The Colossus and Other Poems</i> Sexton, <i>To Bedlam and Part Way Back</i> Updike, <i>Rabbit, Run</i> d. Zora Neale Hurston d. Richard Wright	John F. Kennedy elected president U.S. Food and Drug Administration approves the birth control pill

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1961	Ginsberg, <i>Kaddish and Other Poems</i> Gunn, <i>My Sad Captains</i> Heller, <i>Catch-22</i> Salinger, <i>Franny and Zooey</i> d. H.D. d. Ernest Hemingway d. James Thurber	Attempted invasion of Cuba at the Bay of Pigs ends in defeat of U.S.-led forces Construction of Berlin Wall begins Peace Corps established
1962	Albee, <i>Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?</i> Ashbery, <i>The Tennis Court Oath</i> Auden, <i>The Dyer's Hand</i> Baldwin, <i>Another Country</i> Nabokov, <i>Pale Fire</i> Stafford, <i>Traveling through the Dark</i> d. E. E. Cummings d. William Faulkner d. Robinson Jeffers	Soviet Union removes missile sites from Cuba after U.S. threatens military attack Socialist writer Michael Harrington publishes <i>The Other America</i> , documenting poverty in America
1963	McCarthy, <i>The Group</i> Plath, <i>The Bell Jar</i> d. W. E. B. Du Bois d. Robert Frost d. Sylvia Plath d. Theodore Roethke d. William Carlos Williams	Martin Luther King, Jr. delivers "I Have a Dream" speech at March on Washington President Kennedy assassinated; Lyndon B. Johnson becomes president Betty Friedan publishes <i>The Feminine Mystique</i> , helping to launch "second-wave" feminism
1964	Berryman, <i>77 Dream Songs</i> Lowell, <i>For the Union Dead</i> d. Flannery O'Connor	Civil Rights Act legislates against discrimination The Beatles come to the U.S. Free Speech Movement begins at University of California at Berkeley Gulf of Tonkin resolution gives president power to "take all necessary measures" against Communist insurgents in Vietnam Johnson elected president
1965	Haley, <i>The Autobiography of Malcolm X</i> Matthiessen, <i>At Play in the Fields of the Lord</i> Plath, <i>Ariel</i> d. T. S. Eliot d. Lorraine Hansberry d. Randall Jarrell d. Shirley Jackson	U.S. sends combat troops to Vietnam, beginning Vietnam War (1965–1973) Malcolm X assassinated National Endowment for the Arts established Race riot breaks out in Watts, Los Angeles Voting Rights Act (Civil Rights Act of 1965) passed, providing federal protection to African Americans exercising their right to vote
1966	Capote, <i>In Cold Blood</i> Hayden, <i>A Ballad of Remembrance</i> Malamud, <i>The Fixer</i> Pynchon, <i>The Crying of Lot 49</i> Sexton, <i>Live or Die</i> d. Mina Loy d. Delmore Schwartz	National Organization for Women established

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1967	Hecht, <i>The Hard Hours</i> Levertov, <i>The Sorrow Dance</i> McPhee, <i>Oranges</i> Reed, <i>The Free-lance Pallbearers</i> Stone, <i>A Hall of Mirrors</i> Styron, <i>The Confessions of Nat Turner</i> Tate, <i>The Lost Pilot</i> d. Langston Hughes d. Carson McCullers d. Dorothy Parker d. Carl Sandburg	Israel and Arabs clash over territory in Six-Day War Thurgood Marshall becomes first African-American Supreme Court Justice Race riots break out in Detroit and Newark
1968	Didion, <i>Slouching towards Bethlehem</i> Momaday, <i>House Made of Dawn</i> d. Upton Sinclair d. John Steinbeck	Martin Luther King, Jr. assassinated Robert Kennedy assassinated Viet Cong launch Tet offensive, intensifying war with U.S. Richard Nixon elected president
1969	Bukowski, <i>Notes of a Dirty Old Man</i> Howard, <i>Untitled Subjects</i> Oates, <i>them</i> Roth, <i>Portnoy's Complaint</i> Stafford, <i>Collected Stories</i> Vonnegut, <i>Slaughterhouse-Five</i> d. Jack Kerouac	Stonewall Riot in New York City launches gay rights movement Americans land on the moon Woodstock music festival
1970	Angelou, <i>I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings</i> Dickey, <i>Deliverance</i> Didion, <i>Play It As It Lays</i> Merwin, <i>The Carrier of Ladders</i> Morrison, <i>The Bluest Eye</i> d. John Dos Passos d. John O'Hara	National Guard soldiers shoot antiwar protesters at Kent State University in Ohio, killing four
1971	Bukowski, <i>Post Office</i> Gardner, <i>Grendel</i> Stegner, <i>Angle of Repose</i> Wright, <i>Collected Poems</i>	—
1972	Welty, <i>Optimist's Daughter</i> d. John Berryman d. Marianne Moore d. Ezra Pound d. Edmund Wilson	Nixon reelected president Watergate break-in Israeli athletes killed at Munich Olympics Congress approves Equal Rights Amendment, supporting the women's movement Antiballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty (SALT I agreement) between U.S. and Soviet Union Bloody Sunday sets off civil unrest in Ireland
1973	Jong, <i>Fear of Flying</i> Pynchon, <i>Gravity's Rainbow</i> Rich, <i>Diving into the Wreck</i> Vidal, <i>Burr</i> Vonnegut, <i>Breakfast of Champions</i> d. Conrad Aiken d. W. H. Auden d. Pearl S. Buck	<i>Roe v. Wade</i> case invalidates anti-abortion laws Paris Peace Accords produce cease-fire in Vietnam U.S. withdraws from Vietnam Members of the American Indian Movement (AIM) occupy town of Wounded Knee Arab oil embargo and OPEC price increase creates spurring energy crisis

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1974	Ammons, <i>Sphere: The Form of a Motion</i> Dillard, <i>Pilgrim at Tinker Creek</i> Snyder, <i>Turtle Island</i> d. John Crowe Ransom d. Anne Sexton	Impeachment proceedings begin against Nixon Nixon resigns; Gerald Ford becomes president OPEC raises oil prices “Stagflation” (recession and inflation together) begins
1975	Ashbery, <i>Self-Portrait in a Convex Mirror</i> Bellow, <i>Humboldt’s Gift</i> Doctorow, <i>Ragtime</i> Levertov, <i>The Freeing of the Dust</i> Mamet, <i>American Buffalo</i> Pinsky, <i>Sadness and Happiness</i> d. Lionel Trilling d. Thornton Wilder	South Vietnam falls to Communists
1976	Beattie, <i>Distortions</i> Carver, <i>Will You Please Be Quiet, Please?</i> Kingston, <i>The Woman Warrior</i> Stegner, <i>The Spectator Bird</i>	Jimmy Carter elected president Viking II space probe lands on Mars
1977	Hugo, <i>31 Letters and 13 Dreams</i> Jordan, <i>Things That I Do in the Dark</i> King, <i>The Shining</i> Shepard, <i>Curse of the Starving Class</i> d. Vladimir Nabokov d. Robert Lowell	—
1978	Angelou, <i>And Still I Rise</i> Gardner, <i>On Moral Fiction</i> Hayden, <i>American Journal</i> Irving, <i>The World According to Garp</i> Lopez, <i>Of Wolves and Men</i> Matthiessen, <i>The Snow Leopard</i> Rich, <i>The Dream of a Common Language</i>	First test-tube baby born
1979	Justice, <i>Selected Poems</i> Levine, <i>Ashes</i> Mailer, <i>The Executioner’s Song</i> Styron, <i>Sophie’s Choice</i> d. Elizabeth Bishop d. Jean Stafford d. Allen Tate	Ayatollah Khomeini leads revolution in Iran against Shah Reza Pahlavi American diplomats taken hostage in Iran SALT II agreement between U.S. and Soviet Union further attempts to control nuclear armaments Soviet troops invade Afghanistan; U.S. backs Muslim guerrilla fighters Partial meltdown at Three Mile Island nuclear plant
1980	Kingston, <i>China Men</i> Shepard, <i>True West</i> d. Robert Hayden d. Henry Miller d. Katherine Anne Porter d. Muriel Rukeyser d. James Wright	Ronald Reagan elected president U.S. boycotts Moscow Olympics
1981	Prose, <i>Household Saints</i> Silko, <i>Storyteller</i> d. Nelson Algren	Sandra Day O’Connor becomes first female Supreme Court justice John Hinckley, Jr. shoots President Reagan

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1982	Kinnell, <i>Selected Poems</i> Merrill, <i>The Changing Light at Sandover</i> Naylor, <i>The Women of Brewster Place</i> Walker, <i>The Color Purple</i> White, <i>A Boy's Own Story</i> d. Djuna Barnes d. John Cheever d. John Gardner d. Richard Hugo	First case of AIDS confirmed in America Equal Rights Amendment fails to obtain necessary 38 state ratifications by deadline U.S. invades Grenada
1983	Barthelme, <i>Overnight to Many Distant Cities</i> Carver, <i>Cathedral</i> Sandra Cisneros, <i>The House on Mango Street</i> Kennedy, <i>Ironweed</i> d. Tennessee Williams	—
1984	Erdrich, <i>Love Medicine</i> Mamet, <i>Glengarry Glen Ross</i> Olds, <i>The Dead and the Living</i> Wolff, <i>The Barracks Thief</i> d. Truman Capote d. Lillian Hellman	Reagan reelected president Apple Computer introduces the Macintosh, the first personal computer with graphic user interface
1985	Banks, <i>Continental Drift</i> DeLillo, <i>White Noise</i> Irving, <i>The Cider House Rules</i> Kincaid, <i>Annie John</i> Wilson, <i>Fences</i> d. E. B. White	Mikhail Gorbachev becomes leader of Soviet Union
1986	Erdrich, <i>The Beet Queen</i> Lopez, <i>Arctic Dreams</i> Ostriker, <i>The Imaginary Lover</i> Taylor, <i>Summons to Memphis</i> d. Bernard Malamud	Space shuttle <i>Challenger</i> explodes Iran-Contra affair exposed; U.S. concedes selling weapons to Iran and illegally funding “contra” rebels in Nicaragua Chernobyl nuclear power accident
1987	Morrison, <i>Beloved</i> McNally, <i>Frankie and Johnny at the Claire de Lune</i> Stevenson, <i>Selected Poems</i> d. James Baldwin	U.S. stock market crashes
1988	White, <i>The Beautiful Room Is Empty</i> d. Raymond Carver	George H. W. Bush elected president Soviet troops withdraw from Afghanistan
1989	Banks, <i>Affliction</i> Irving, <i>A Prayer for Owen Meany</i> Kingston, <i>Tripmaster Monkey: His Fake Book</i> Ozick, <i>The Shawl</i> Wolff, <i>This Boy's Life</i> d. Donald Barthelme d. Mary McCarthy d. May Swenson d. Robert Penn Warren	Berlin Wall falls; end of the Cold War Exxon <i>Valdez</i> runs aground in Alaska Chinese military massacres pro-democracy demonstrators in Tiananmen Square, Beijing U.S. invades Panama

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1990	O'Brien, <i>The Things They Carried</i> Simic, <i>The World Doesn't End</i> Styron, <i>Darkness Visible</i> Walcott, <i>Omeros</i> Wideman, <i>Philadelphia Fire</i> Wilson, <i>The Piano Lesson</i>	Nelson Mandela released after 27 years in South African prison
1991	Alvarez, <i>How the Garcia Girls Lost Their Accents</i> Berry, <i>Standing on Earth</i> Elkin, <i>The MacGuffin</i> McNally, <i>Lips Together, Teeth Apart</i> d. Laura Riding Jackson d. Isaac Bashevis Singer	U.S. and allies force Iraq out of Kuwait in (first) Persian Gulf War START I agreement between U.S. and Soviet Union calls for reduction and eventual dismantling of each country's nuclear weapons Soviet Union collapses Launch of the World Wide Web Official end of Apartheid in South Africa
1992	Gioia, <i>Can Poetry Matter?</i> Glück, <i>The Wild Iris</i> Kushner, <i>Angels in America (1992–1995)</i> McCarthy, <i>All the Pretty Horses</i>	Los Angeles race riot sparked by acquittal of police officers accused in the Rodney King beating War breaks out in Yugoslavia as a result of ethnic tensions Bill Clinton elected president
1993	Ammons, <i>Garbage</i> Proulx, <i>The Shipping News</i> d. Wallace Stegner d. William Stafford	First bombing of New York's World Trade Center by Islamic terrorists START II agreement between U.S. and Russia Federal agents besiege and later burn Waco, Texas, compound of the Branch Davidians● religious cult after a 51-day standoff
1994	Hacker, <i>Winter Numbers</i> Levine, <i>Simple Truth</i> d. Charles Bukowski d. Ralph Ellison d. Peter Taylor	Proposition 187 denies social services to illegal immigrants in California Russian military begins suppression of Chechnyan secessionists Genocide in Rwanda leaves 800,000 dead North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) eliminates trade barriers between U.S., Canada and Mexico
1995	Carruth, <i>Scrambled Eggs and Whiskey: 1991–1995</i> Ford, <i>Independence Day</i> Kunitz, <i>Passing Through: The Later Poems</i> Soto, <i>New and Selected Poems</i> d. Stanley Elkin d. James Merrill d. Henry Roth	Oklahoma City bombing kills 169 O. J. Simpson criminal trial ends in acquittal Bosnia, Serbia, and Croatia sign peace treaty Israeli prime minister Yitzhak Rabin assassinated Partial shutdown of U.S. government over budget disputes
1996	Brodkey, <i>This Wild Darkness</i> Kincaid, <i>Autobiography of My Mother</i> Matthews, <i>Time & Money</i> Ostriker, <i>The Crack in Everything</i> Pinsky, <i>The Figured Wheel</i> Snyder, <i>Mountains and Rivers without End</i> d. Harold Brodkey	Montana militia members (freemen) surrender to FBI after 81-day standoff U.S. missile strike against Iraq

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DATE	LITERARY WORKS AND AUTHORS	HISTORICAL CONTEXT
1997	Beattie, <i>My Life, Starring Dara Falcon</i> DeLillo, <i>Underworld</i> Wright, <i>Black Zodiac</i> d. William S. Burroughs d. James Dickey d. Allen Ginsberg d. Denise Levertov d. William Matthews	Diana, Princess of Wales, dies in car accident Kyoto conference addresses global warming
1998	McPhee, <i>Annals of the Former World</i> Ponsot, <i>The Bird Catcher</i> Stern, <i>This Time: New and Selected Poems</i> Strand, <i>Blizzard of One</i> d. Alfred Kazin	Lewinsky scandal and the Starr Report lead to impeachment of Bill Clinton India and Pakistan begin nuclear testing
1999 Q4	Ellison, <i>Juneteenth</i> d. Joseph Heller	Columbine High School shootings The Euro is officially launched in 11 countries
2000	Oates, <i>Blonde</i> Williams, <i>Leap</i> d. Gwendolyn Brooks	2000 Census indicates Hispanic Americans become largest minority group in the U.S. Controversy over U.S. presidential election ends in victory for George W. Bush Class-action suit against tobacco industry Microsoft charged in violation of antitrust laws Dot-com crash
2001	Collins, <i>Sailing Alone around the Room</i> d. A. R. Ammons d. Eudora Welty	Enron scandal disclosed Terrorists destroy twin towers of New York's World Trade Center, damage Pentagon, and kill thousands in September 11 attacks Anthrax powder mailed to media and political targets China joins World Trade Organization
2002	McClatchy, <i>Hazmat</i> d. June Jordan	Sniper attacks in Maryland, Virginia, and Washington, D.C.
2003		U.S.-led troops invade Iraq; Saddam Hussein regime falls SARS epidemic strikes Asia and other regions Space shuttle <i>Columbia</i> breaks apart North Korea reactivates nuclear program