

STANDARD REVIEW CRITERIA FOR READING SELECTION CONTENT IN HIGH SCHOOL AMERICAN LITERATURE TEXTBOOKS

Reading selection content should present:

- A universe that rewards virtue and punishes vice and where good and evil are not moral equivalents, with solutions to problems.
- Constructive plotlines that do not dwell on pessimism, despair, death, dying, or suicide.
- Behavioral role-models that demonstrate civility, sensitivity, humaneness, and non-destructiveness to self or others.
- Generally positive attitudes toward, and relationships among, children, parents, and other adults.
- Sensitive treatment of benefits to children of strong, stable, two-parent families of married male and female.
- Greater stress on America's European literary, religious, and cultural heritage compared to that from other regions.
- Equal criticism, if any, of white and non-white cultures, and of Christian and non-Christian civilizations.
- Equal respect for the *ethical* concerns of *religious* groups (e.g., no swearing) as to the *ethnic* concerns of *racial* groups (e.g., no disrespecting epithets).
- As much note of *intra*-group conflict as of *inter*-group strife.
- Diverse views on current controversial issues, if and when raised (e.g., "global warming," feminism, naturalistic origins myths like evolution).
- No sensational violence, offensive language or illustrations, occultism, or LGBTQ deviance (e.g., self-styled polymorphs or subjective transgenders).
- No pattern of pejoratives demonizing one group and superlatives lionizing another.
- No politically-correct stereotypes of oppressors and/or victims by race, class, religion, party, or gender.
- Standard spelling, correct grammar, and grade-level appropriate English vocabulary.

Anthologize proportional representative selections from pre-1865 figures, sources, eras, and genres, for perspective and balance in American literary history with a course content mid-point no later than 1865:

John Smith	Thomas Jefferson
William Bradford	<i>The Federalist</i>
John Winthrop	Philip Freneau
Edward Taylor	Washington Irving
Cotton Mather	James Fenimore Cooper
Samuel Sewall	Edgar Allen Poe
Mary Rowlandson	William Cullen Bryant
William Byrd	Henry W. Longfellow
Jonathan Edwards	John Greenleaf Whittier
Benjamin Franklin	Oliver Wendell Holmes
Thomas Paine	James Russell Lowell

Base coverage on contemporaries' relative esteem of various authors' works, as well as on modern editors' and critics' opinions (9 pages on Olaudah Equiano but nothing from *The Federalist*, or 8 pages of Emily Dickinson and half a page of Longfellow, anti-intellectually panders to special-interest pressure groups).

Present contrasting primary-source views on major literary movements and figures (e.g., Hawthorne on transcendentalism; Emerson and Lowell on Thoreau).

Support "the free enterprise system ... patriotism and ... the basic democratic values of our state and national heritage" (*Texas Education Code* Section 28.002[h]).

Texas rules for this course detail student skills to develop, but give no guidance on content of reading selections. From our 58 years of experience reviewing such texts, this checklist powers fair rankings. No unaccountable authors/editors.