

# *Read with the Best*

## *Student Workbook*

### *American Literature I*

*1500 - 1860*

Grades 8-12

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**THE PURPOSE AND GOAL OF *READ WITH THE BEST*:**

*Read With The Best of American Literature* is a two year high school literature, vocabulary, critical thinking and composition course designed to equip highschoolers with all the literary, thinking, vocabulary and writing skills needed for an adequate education. This course teaches extensive literary analysis and critical reading skills found on the new SAT, AP Literature exams, and in college level classes. In addition, it teaches SAT and ACT vocabulary words and expository writing, including the five paragraph essay required for college admittance.

Students who complete the two year American literature courses and the British literature course will be equipped to do the following:

- Take and pass the AP English Literature exam and receive college credit.
- Take and pass the AP English Language and Composition exam and receive college credit.
- Take and pass the CLEP American Literature exam for college credit.
- Take the SAT 25 minute timed essay with ease and confidence.
- Take the SAT Critical Reading and Vocabulary section with ease and confidence.

**REQUIRED MATERIALS FOR *READ WITH THE BEST OF AMERICAN LITERATURE I***

1. *The Norton Anthology of American Literature, Volume 1 – Shorter Seventh Edition only.* (Make sure you get the shorter 7<sup>th</sup> edition and Volume 1 only.)  
(Some parents may choose to find all of these works on line.)
2. *Write With the Best, Vol. 2* by Jill J. Dixon, B.S.Ed., M.Ed. This can be purchased at [www.edudps.com](http://www.edudps.com) (Will be used all 4 years of *Read With the Best Literature*)
3. *The New American Heritage Dictionary and Thesaurus.*
4. *Writing a Research Paper - A Step-By-Step Approach (3<sup>rd</sup> Edition) Grades 6-12* by Sadlier-Oxford Publishing ([www.sadlier-oxford.com](http://www.sadlier-oxford.com)) (Will be used all 4 years of *Read With the Best Literature*)
5. *Writing a Research Paper Teacher's Edition (3rd Edition) Grades 6-12* by Sadlier-Oxford Pub.
6. *The Scarlet Letter (The Kaplan SAT Version)* by Nathaniel Hawthorne (The Kaplan SAT Version has all SAT Vocabulary words and definitions outlined in the actual text.)

**WHY IS THE STUDY OF LITERATURE SO IMPORTANT?**

One major goal for our children is that their education will equip them to function in the twenty first century by being totally knowledgeable of their current surroundings and all that has come before to make our world and culture what it is now. The study of literature is the study of man, of human nature and of our world. An educated student is aware of all of these.

## HOW TO USE THIS CURRICULUM

This curriculum is divided into 34 weeks of critical reading. The 35<sup>th</sup> and 36<sup>th</sup> weeks (to make a total of 180 school days) are left open for testing and review, etc.

Students should attempt to complete all the course work in order to receive high school credit. It is suggested that high school students complete an American History course of the years 1500-1860 to accompany this literature course. It will make the reading material more meaningful and add depth and understanding.

I recommend *The History of US* by Joy Hakim – Volumes 2, 3, and 4. This is an excellent series with tests and workbooks that can be purchased separately. The series can also be purchased at [www.audible.com](http://www.audible.com) and listened to as a family or by an individual student. In addition to this course, I also recommend *Don't Know Much About American History* by Kenneth Davis as an accompaniment.

## GRAMMAR AND SAT PREP SUGGESTIONS

Some parents/teachers will see a need to add English grammar and additional SAT/ACT verbal preparation activities to this course.

The following are ones that I have used successfully with my high school students and highly recommend:

- *Easy Grammar Ultimate Series* (for high school) – Grades 9-12
- *Spark Notes SAT Prep* in English and Writing
- *Fifty Five SAT Prep Activities: English* (from Pathways Publishing)
- *English Grammar Workbook for Dummies*
- *Peterson's The New SAT Writing Workbook* (This is a great book for practicing the 25 minute SAT required essay.)
- *SAT Verbal Question of the day* at [www.collegeboard.com](http://www.collegeboard.com)
- *Daily Warm-ups – SAT Prep Reading and Writing* by Walch Publishing
- *Editor-in-Chief* (Upper Levels)

## CO-OPS AND CLASSES

*Read With the Best of American Literature* is ideal for co-ops and classes. It was actually written to be used in a homeschool class taught by the author. All activities except for Tests and the Culminating Activity at the end of each lesson can be completed by the student at home. Teachers can complete the Culminating Activity with their students when they meet once a week, and students can complete tests. They will also go over the answers to "Background Check", "Words to know", "Critical Reading", "Make It Real" and the "Writing Assignment" in class. Students can exchange writing papers and enhance proofreading skills. Classes and co-ops are ideal for literature discussion between students and the teacher. Classes are also a great place to practice the 25 minute SAT essay.

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**WEEKLY WORK EXPLAINED**

Students are required to complete work in five to six different areas each week.

**All answers can be found in the Teacher's guide.**

- **Background Check:** Most weeks students are asked to answer questions about the author they are reading. Unless noted, the answers to all of these questions can be found in the Norton Anthology at the beginning section of each new author's work.
- **Words to Know:** Each week, students are assigned words from the reading to define. These words should be defined before the passages are read in order to enhance comprehension. Many of the words are common SAT words. Specific vocabulary words are tested approximately every four weeks. These tests with the specific words are found in the Teacher's Guide.
- **Literary Analysis:** Important literary terms that relate to the literary passages are given each week. These terms are tested approximately every six weeks. Tests and test keys are found in the Teacher's Guide.
- **Critical Reading:** Students are required to answer questions about each reading passage. These questions require critical thinking and critical analysis, and students improve these skills as the weeks progress.
- **Make It Real:** Each week, students are given an opportunity to apply learned skills or relate learned skills to what they already know.
- **Culminating Activity:** An activity is given at the end of each week to solidify all that the student has learned. These activities usually appeal to all learning styles to help students retain information.
- **Writing Assignments:** Students work on writing each week, but usually complete one writing assignment every two weeks. Writing assignments always relate to the literary passages and authors. Students work on a research paper for twelve weeks during the last half of the year, during weeks 21-32. Grading checklists for all writing assignments are found in the back of *Write With the Best, Volume 2*.

**STUDENT OBJECTIVES**

Each student who completes this course will achieve the following objectives:

- Obtain 1 high school credit in literature, 1 high school credit in composition, and 1/4 credit in American history. (Additional credits can be obtained in American history by following the guidelines on the subsequent pages.)
- Learn to write a college level MLA style research paper on a literary topic.
- Master the five paragraph persuasive and expository essay as well as other expository writing such as note taking, writing outlines, summaries, literary critiques, book reviews, business letters, speeches, and newspaper articles.
- Master descriptive writing such as free verse poetry and dramatic monologues.
- Learn 173 SAT vocabulary words and understand 100's more.
- Master critical reading and thinking skills.
- Understand and analyze various genres of American literature such as short stories, autobiographies, historical accounts, rhyming and free verse poetry, novels, letters, and speeches.
- Understand and use 76 different literary terms necessary for literary analysis, interpretation, and optimal performance on the critical reading section of the SAT and AP Literature exams.
- Learn the backgrounds of and pertinent information regarding 27 authors of early American literature.
- Master editing and proofreading skills.

**SPECIAL NEEDS STUDENTS**

Students with special needs can use this curriculum successfully with specific adaptations such as:

- Reducing the reading requirements and amount of reading
- Referring to [www.librivox.org](http://www.librivox.org) for works read out loud
- Reducing some of the writing assignments
- Taking the tests orally

## TEST SCHEDULE

Teachers are to administer the following tests on these specific weeks. Students are notified in their literature guide of these tests approximately two weeks before the test is administered.

### Literary Terms Tests:

Test Covers:	Test Administered On:
Weeks 1-6	Week 8
Weeks 7-12	Week 13
Weeks 13-18	Week 20
Weeks 19-24	Week 26
Weeks 25-34	Week 35

### Vocabulary Tests:

Test Covers:	Test Administered On:
Weeks 1-4	Week 6
Weeks 5-8	Week 10
Weeks 9-12	Week 14
Weeks 13-16	Week 18
Weeks 17-20	Week 22
Weeks 21-24	Week 27
Weeks 25-34	Week 35

Vocabulary tests are administered approximately every 6 weeks, and tests on literary terms are given approximately every 8 weeks. Tests and answer keys are found in the teacher's manual.

**\*Please note that not all vocabulary words from each week are covered on the vocabulary tests. Teachers may choose to give students the list of vocabulary words from each test to study.**

**MOST FREQUENTLY ASKED ?'S**

- **What makes your highschool literature curriculum different from the others on the market?** *Read With the Best* is a thorough college-prep literature curriculum. I don't know of another high school curriculum marketed for homeschoolers that uses *The Norton Anthology*, a textbook that is used in most freshman college literature classes. I am also not aware of any curriculum that includes SAT vocabulary, activities that solidify learning for all learning styles, extensive literary analysis terms found on various tests, and a complete college-prep writing program as part of the literature program. *Read With the Best* also uses mainly whole works of literature (instead of excerpts) to ensure literary mastery.
- **How did you choose your literature for this program?** The literature in *Read With the Best of American Literature* was chosen for its literary, moral, analytic and didactic or inspirational quality. The works and authors that are included are also works and authors that any student who desires an adequate education should be familiar with. I chose works that teach students about various facets of life and encourage them to think critically and make moral decisions. Many of the readings in *Read With the Best of American Literature* inspire students and encourage them to take specific moral action. Most of these works were also picked from the AP English literature and CLEP American Literature guides.
- **Should only the college bound student take this course?** No. *Read With the Best of American Literature* is written for any highschool student who desires an adequate education. It teaches many skills such as vocabulary, critical reading, critical thinking, and writing – necessary life skills for any student.
- **Can my slow reader or poor writer complete this course?** Most definitely. Many of the works can be downloaded free on [www.librivox.org](http://www.librivox.org) so that students can listen to them auditorily. Several of them can also be purchased as books on audio CD. Slower readers are encouraged to listen to audio versions of the work as they read along. Writing assignments can be dictated by the student and typed or written by the teacher or fellow student. Writing assignments can also be reduced for those who truly struggle with getting their thoughts on paper.
- **Why is your American Literature course spread out over two years?** Highschoolers must have four years of literature to graduate, and these must include World Literature, British Literature and American Literature. In order for students to gain full understanding and appreciation for American Literature, it is crucial that it be divided into two years of study so that several important authors and works can be covered. American Literature is also a great tool for the introductory skills of critical and literary analysis.

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Notes:

- **Background Check** - Students will find the answers to the background check in **The Norton Anthology** under author information at the beginning of each new author.
- **Literary Terms Tests** will be given on weeks 8, 14, 20, 26, & 35.
- **Vocabulary Terms Tests** will be given on weeks 6, 10, 18, 22, 27, & 35.

Introduction ..... **i-vi**

Week 1 Christopher Columbus & John Smith..... **1-9**

\*Christopher Columbus - Letter to Santangel & Letter to Ferdinand and Isabella

- Background Check
- Words To Know
- Literary Analysis
- Critical Reading Questions

\*John Smith - From The General History

- Background Check
- Literary Analysis
- Words To Know
- Critical Reading Questions
- Make It Real
- Writing – **Descriptive Narrative**
- Culminating Activity

Week 2 John Smith & William Bradford..... **10-18**

\*John Smith - From "A Description of New England"

- Words To Know
- Literary Analysis
- Critical Reading Questions

\*William Bradford - From Of Plymouth Plantation

- Background Check
- Words To Know
- Literary Analysis
- Critical Reading Questions
- Make It Real
- Writing - **Expository Essay**
- Culminating Activity

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Week 3 John Winthrop.....19-24

\*John Winthrop - "A Model of Christian Charity"

- Background Check
- Words To Know
- Literary Analysis
- Critical Reading Questions
- Make It Real
- Writing - **Expository Essay**
- Culminating Activity

Week 4 Anne Bradstreet.....25-32

\*Anne Bradstreet - "The Prologue"

- Background Check
- Literary Analysis
- Words To Know
- Critical Reading Questions

\*Anne Bradstreet - "Before the Birth of One of Her Children"

- Words To Know
- Critical Reading Questions

\*Anne Bradstreet - "Here Follows Some Verses Upon the Burning of Our House"  
"To My Dear and Loving Husband"

- Words To Know
- Critical Reading Questions

\*Anne Bradstreet - "The Author to Her Book", "To My Dear Children"

- Words To Know
- Critical Reading Questions
- Make It Real
- Writing - **Iambic Couplets / Iambic Pentameter**
- Culminating Activity
- Study for a VOCABULARY TERMS TEST on Week 6 (covering Weeks 1-4)**

Week 5 Mary Rowlandson.....33-39

\*Mary Rowlandson - From "A Narrative of the Captivity and Restoration of Mrs. Mary Rowlandson"

- Background Check
- Words To Know
- Literary Analysis
- Critical Reading Questions
- Make It Real
- Writing - **Iambic Couplets**
- Culminating Activity

**Study for a VOCABULARY TERMS TEST on Week 6 (covering Weeks 1-4)**