

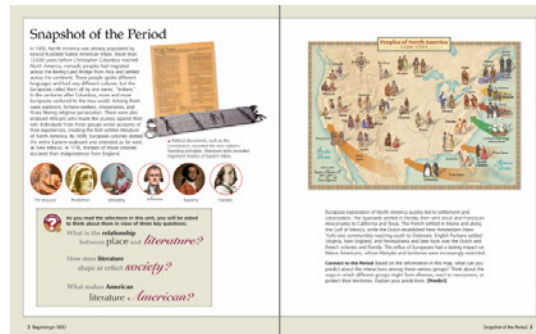
Introducing a Unit

Introduction This guide discusses how to introduce a Prentice Hall Literature unit for the American Experience and British Tradition. It talks about both textbook and PH Lit Online activities.

Unit Introduction Page The first page of any unit is the unit introduction. Consider beginning with a class discussion about the historical time period and the artwork displayed on the page. Encourage students to speculate about the literature and how authors might have been influenced during this time.

This unit opener page also contains a list of unit objectives and a summary of activities on PH Lit Online. There is also a preview of unit features and teaching resources.

Snapshot of the Period A few pages after the unit introduction is the Snapshot of the Period.



Have students preview the graphical representation of the time period and read about key information, influential people, places, and innovations. Students answer questions or make predictions after reading to help them make connections.

For example, in Unit 1, students look at the map and make predictions about how the various groups might have interacted. They think about how groups might form alliances, react to newcomers, and protect their territories. Discussing the period helps students build background information so they have more insight about how history influenced literature.

At this point, it is important to introduce the Essential Questions and have students relate to them on a personal level. For example, ask students to choose an item from home that they believe represents America. Explaining what their item says about America helps them think about the question *What makes American literature American?* Explain that their ideas apply to the time period and encourage them to make these connections as they read the literature.

Historical Background

The next page shows the Historical Background, which describes the era and explains significant historical events. At the end of this section, the key historical themes are summarized.

Historical Background
Early America (Beginnings to 1800)

The First Americans
The first people to live in North America arrived about 15,000 years ago. They were hunter-gatherers who lived in small groups. They used tools made of stone, wood, and bone. They lived in temporary shelters and moved from place to place in search of food.

Agriculture, Religion, and Politics
After a long time, some of the first Americans began to farm. They grew crops like corn, beans, and squash. They also raised animals like turkeys and deer. They began to live in permanent villages. They developed different religions and political systems. Some people lived in small groups, while others lived in large, organized societies.

The Age of Reason
The Enlightenment was a time when people began to think for themselves. They questioned traditional beliefs and authority. They believed in reason and science. This led to new ideas about government, society, and education.

The Birth of the Nation
The American Revolution was a war for independence from Great Britain. It began in 1775 and ended in 1783. The colonists wanted to be free to govern themselves. They wrote the Declaration of Independence in 1776. They fought the Revolutionary War and won. In 1787, they wrote the Constitution, which is the foundation of the United States government.

Key Historical Themes: Creating a Nation

- People were drawn to America by the promise of a better life.
- Colonists were inspired by the ideas of the Enlightenment.
- The American Revolution was a struggle for independence.
- The Constitution was a key document in the creation of the nation.
- The American people were united in their desire for a better future.

Timeline:
1490: Christopher Columbus discovers the Americas.
1555: The Pilgrims arrive in North America.

In this example, students consider the culture of the first Americans and how it influenced colonists as they created their model community. Students think about the transformation of belief systems and establishment of a new government.

Discussion about these events deepens understanding about the time period so students can connect these facts and ideas to the literature as they read.

Essential Questions

After the Historical Background is a page with the Essential Questions of the Literary Period.

Essential Questions of the Literary Period
Early America (Beginnings to 1800)

What is the relationship between place and literature?

What was the New World's natural environment?
The New World was a vast, unexplored land. It had a diverse climate and a rich variety of plants and animals. The environment was both beautiful and dangerous. The colonists had to learn to survive in a new and unfamiliar world.

How did the New World's natural environment influence the colonists' attitudes toward this environment, and how these attitudes showed up in literature?
The colonists often wrote about the beauty and grandeur of the New World. They described the vast landscapes, the exotic plants and animals, and the freedom of the wilderness. Their writings reflected their sense of wonder and discovery.

What was the relationship between place and literature?
The New World's natural environment was a major influence on the colonists' attitudes. Their writings often reflected their sense of wonder and discovery. They described the vast landscapes, the exotic plants and animals, and the freedom of the wilderness. Their writings reflected their sense of wonder and discovery.

Timeline:
1555: The Pilgrims arrive in North America.
1620: The first English colony is established in North America.

The Essential Questions are tools for creating meaning from the history and literature. Notice that each Essential Question is displayed with additional stepping-stone questions underneath. These stepping-stone questions provide a framework of information to help students reflect on and answer each Essential Question as it pertains to the time period.

An example of an Essential Question is *What is the relationship between place and literature?* The stepping-stone questions have students read about and explore the New Worlds' environment, colonist's attitudes toward this environment, and how these attitudes showed up in literature. Students now consider if contemporary attitudes are more like the colonists or the Native Americans.

The Essential Questions and stepping-stone questions help students understand the historical influence on literature while also reflecting about contemporary ideas and attitudes.

Following Through

Ask students to complete the Following Through activities that provide a check for understanding of the historical and literary concepts presented so far. For example, students may complete a graphic organizer listing two key concepts that relate to each Essential Question.

FOLLOWING THROUGH
Essential Questions of the Literature of Early America

Check Your Comprehension
Complete a graphic organizer like the one shown by filling in two key concepts related to each Essential Question. The concepts may be important to only one of the groups whose voices contributed to early America. One concept and one example has been done for you.

Essential Question	Key Concept	Group
Place and Literature		
American Literature	Self-determination	Revolutionaries like Thomas Jefferson
Literature and Society		

Connect to the World
Contact a small group discussion about the concepts you identified and decide which one you think is most relevant today. Clearly illustrate or explain your thoughts when asked to do so and ask your members to do the same. As a group, come to an agreement and list three examples that support your opinion. Then present your thoughts to the whole class.

Connect to the Reading
As you read the literature in this unit, pay attention to specific passages that illustrate each key concept you listed in your chart. Your observations will help you complete projects at the end of the unit.

Extend Your Learning: Oral Presentation
The spoken word had great power in early America. With a small group, research one of these early American genres below.

- Native American oral histories
- Early American speeches
- Puritan hymns
- Revolutionary War songs
- Puritan sermons

Make a research plan to answer these questions: What was the speaker's purpose? What form did the performance take? How do we know what the performance sounded and looked like? What topics or language did the original speaker use? Develop an oral presentation in which you perform an example of one of these forms. Research, conduct an organized explanation of the research you used to justify your choices for genre, movement, vocalization, and use of language.

Essential Question Vocabulary
Use these words in your discussion.

Place and Literature
genre

American Literature
self-determination
community

Literature and Society
genre
sermon
hymn
song
For definitions and pronunciation, see *The Glossary*, pp. 91–92.

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Students then connect what they have learned to the world today. Relating to the previous example, small groups can discuss which concept on the graphic organizer is most relevant today. They list examples that support their opinion.

The Essential Question vocabulary words help enrich class discussions and student writing. Activities are suggested to extend learning and help students develop research, technology, and presentation skills.

Contemporary Commentary

In the Contemporary Commentary section, students meet an award-winning author who introduces key literary and writing concepts.

Contemporary Commentary

The Oral Tradition Links the Past with the Present
Susan Power
I was raised in the oral tradition and from earliest memory was drawn to the oral tradition in its various forms of literature—spoken aloud rather than committed to paper in my middle American community of Chicago, consisting of members of at least a dozen tribes, history experts based in books, but we also had storytellers who kept us up late at night with ghost stories or tales of haunted castles, comic tales involving tricksters, the wicker-woman who were part animal or insect, part human, who were always getting into trouble.

For most of us, we practiced a home spirituality other than Christianity, Judaism, or Islam. There were no religious texts like the Bible, the Quran, or many children's books based on stone tablets or paper. Instead, we had sacred stories shared on sacred lands, embroidered with tradition, spelled out in complicated designs woven into regalia or warpaint body.

Meet the Author
Born in Chicago in 1961, Susan Power is the product of two distinct cultures. On her mother's side, she is a descendant of Sioux Chief Mato Mato (Two Head). On her father's side, she is a descendant of the New England generation during the Civil War. Power was greatly influenced by her parents, both of whom studied in her love of literature and a deep social conscience. She graduated from Rockville College and Harvard Law School and later attended the Iowa Writers Workshop. In 1996, Power received the PEN/Hemingway Award for Best First Fiction for her novel *The Good Dancer*.

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As an example, students meet Susan Power, who talks about the oral tradition being the earliest form of American literature. She explains how this tradition continues today in the electronic age.

PH Lit Online

There are various online activities available for introducing the unit. From the Teacher Center home page, click the grade level tab. Next, click any unit title to drop open the table of contents. Click **Introduction** and select **View** from the pop-up menu.

These activities parallel the textbook activities in content and purpose and can be used to enrich instruction or assigned for independent study.

Notice the colored arrows that indicate the flow of the lesson content. There are several online activities to help cover the Historical Background information and Essential Questions for this unit on early America.

Review

This guide explained how to introduce a Prentice Hall Literature unit for the American Experience and British Tradition. Each unit begins with a discussion about a historical time period and how art and literature were influenced. The Snapshot of the Period graphically represents key information about the time period, people, places, and innovations.

The Historical Background describes the era and significant historical events. Students discuss the Essential Questions, which are tools for creating meaning from the literature. Following Through activities include checking for understanding, connecting concepts to the world, and extending learning. In Contemporary Commentary, authors connect literary concepts to modern time.

Finally, PH Lit Online provides the same lesson content in an interactive format.