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1. Terms of a tradition
   Discovery and settlement; A new Eden and the American Dream; Huckleberry Finn and his kind; The Dream and the past; The frontier.

2. The colonies
   Pilgrims and Puritans; Voices of dissent; The Mather dynasty; Personal narratives; Bradstreet, Wigglesworth and Taylor; The Enlightenment and the Great Awakening; Jonathan Edwards and other individualists; The South.

3. The revolution
   Benjamin Franklin; Thomas Jefferson; Poetry; The novel.

4. The waiting poem
   Irving, Bryant and Cooper; Poe.

5. Renaissance
   Humourists and Brahmins; The Transcendentalists; Emerson and Thoreau; Hawthorne; Melville; Walt Whitman and the Civil War

6. Realisms
   Regionalists; Imaginary worlds and wishful thinking; Twain; ‘Real Life’; Henry James; Women, war and money; Gopher Prairie and West Egg.
7. Modernisms
   Emily Dickinson; Henry Adams and the dynamics of the modern world; Native voices in poetry; Making it new; T. S. Eliot: alienation and language; Hart Crane; e. e. cummings; Reality and imagination; The rise of American drama; O'Neill; Realism and protest in the novel; Hemingway; The South; Faulkner; The Nashville Fugitives; Robert Penn Warren.

8. War and post-war
   The war in fiction; Civilian themes in the pre-war generation of novelists; John Cheever; Other specialists; J. D. Salinger; William Burroughs; Walker Percy and Truman Capote; John Updike; Humour and satire; De Vries and Condon; Kurt Vonnegut; Science fiction; Drama after 1940 – Williams and Miller; Poetry, personality and politics; Beat poets; Berryman and Lowell.

9. Diversity
   Civil Rights and Black writing; Black poets; Fiction by women; Poetry by women; Anne Sexton and Sylvia Plath; Mary Oliver; Jewish novelists; Saul Bellow; E. L. Doctorow; Barth, Pynchon, Gardner and Kennedy; Recent American theatre: Albee and after; Sam Shepard; Mind and language in recent poetry.

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