
5:1—The American Renaissance—Historical Background

Questions—Directions: Answer the following questions in complete sentence, using your literature book and any other resources you choose.

1. Why is this period of American literature known as the “American Renaissance”?
2. Two other names for this period are—
3. The two philosophers who were leaders during this period were—
4. Define *transcendentalism*.
5. Emerson taught that all things—humans, animals, and even inanimate objects—are connected to each other through a shared universal spirit he called the _____.
6. List three basic tenets of Transcendentalism.
7. Of the two, Emerson and Thoreau, _____ was the more practical.
8. Thoreau spent a period of about two years putting Transcendentalism into practice at a place called _____.

9. The Transcendentalists believed that humankind is essentially _____.
10. Because of this belief, they believed that it was possible to achieve a perfect society called _____.
11. The experimental farm on which many of the Transcendentalists lived was called _____.
12. The two writers who could be classified as anti-Transcendentalists from this period are _____.
13. The anti-Transcendentalists subscribed to nearly all the Transcendentalist beliefs, with the exception that they believed that humankind is basically _____.
14. Because of this belief, these two writers are sometimes also known as the _____.
15. The three reform movements that grew out of this period were:

II. Literary Terms—Directions: Write a concise definition for each of the following literary terms that are observable in American Renaissance writing.

1. Paradox—
2. First-person point of view—
3. Parable—
4. Civil disobedience—

5. Atmosphere—
6. Allegory—
7. Point of view—
8. Alliteration—
9. Internal rhyme—
10. Refrain—
11. Theme—
12. Symbol—
13. Moment of illumination—