

# American Literature - Study Guide

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# Chapter 1

## Vocabulary

### 1.1 Unit 1

**approbation** to express approval or praise

**assuage** to make easier or to calm

**coalition** a combination or union

**decadence** to decline or decay; excessive self-indulgence

**elicit** to draw forth

**expostulate** to attempt to dissuade someone from some course of action by earnest reasoning

**hackneyed** used so often such that it lacks freshness

**hiatus** a gap or opening, a break in something

**innuendo** an indirect reference to something

**intercede** to plead on behalf of someone else

**jaded** wearied, worn-out (due to excessive self-indulgence)

**lurid** causing shock, horror

**meritorious** worthy, deserving of praise

**petulant** peevish, annoyed by small things

**perogative** a right or privilege

**provincial** pertaining to an outlying area

**simulate** to make a pretense of, to show the outer signs of

**transcend** to rise above or beyond something

**umbrage** shade cast by trees

**unctuous** very smooth, smug

## 1.2 Unit 2

**ameliorate** to improve or make better

**aplomb** poise, assurance, great self-confidence

**bombastic** pompous or overblown

**callow** without experience, immature

**drivel** saliva, mucus flowing from the mouth; aimless talk (nonsense); to let saliva from the mouth; to speak aimlessly

**epitome** a summary, an instance that represents a larger reality

**exhort** to urge strongly

**ex officio** by virtue of holding a certain office

**infringe** to violate or trespass

**ingratiate** to make oneself agreeable in order to gain favor of others

**interloper** one who moves in where he or she is not wanted

**intrinsic** belonging to something by its very nature

**inveigh** to make a violent attack in words; to express strong opinion

**lassitude** a weariness of body or mind

**millenium** a period of 1,000 years

**occult** something not detectable by ordinary means; matters involving the super-natural; to conceal

**permeate** to spread through

**percipitate** to fall as moisture; moisture

**stringent** strict, severe

**surmise** to think or believe without evidence

## 1.3 Unit 3

**abominate** to hate

**acculturation** the modification of social patterns to best fit a group

**adventitious** resulting from chance

**ascribe** to assign or refer to; to give credit to someone

**circuitous** roundabout, not direct

**commiserate** to sympathize with

**enjoin** to direct or order

**expedite** to cause to progress faster

**expiate** to make amends

**ferment** a state of great excitement; to be in or work to such a state; to produce alcohol by chemical action

**inadvertent** resulting from a lack of attention

**nominal** too small to be considered

**noncommittal** not definite

**peculate** embezzle

**proclivity** a natural tendency towards some behaviour

**sangfroid** composure, especially in dire situations

**tenuous** thin, unclear

**vitriolic** bitter, caustic, biting

**wheedle** to perform flattery for one's own gain

## 1.4 Unit 4

**affable** easy to speak to

**aggrandize** to increase in greatness, or power

**amorphous** shapeless, without definite form

**aura** that which surrounds (*ex. as an atmosphere*)

**contraband** illegal traffic, smuggled goods

**erudite** scholarly

**gossamer** thin, light

**infer** to find out by reasoning

**inscrutable** not able to be understood

**insular** isolated in a view upon something

**irrevocable** not able to be changed

**propensity** naturally bent towards something, proclivity

**querulous** complaining

**remonstrate** to protest against

**repudiate** to disown or reject

**reverberate** to echo

**scurrikous** one who is foul-mouthed

**sedulous** showing determination

**sleazy** cheap; inferior in quality

## 1.5 Unit 5

**amnesty** a general pardon for an offense, typically against a government entity

**autonomy** self-government

**axiomatic** self-evident

**blazon** to adorn or embellish

**caveat** a warning or caution to prevent misunderstanding or discourage behavior

**equitable** fair, just; the principals of justice

**extricate** to free from entanglements or difficulties

**filch** to steal in a subtle fashion and of petty amounts

**flout** to mock; to treat with contempt

**fractious** tending to be troublesome

**precept** a rule of conduct or action

**salutary** beneficial, helpful

**scathing** bitterly severe

**scourge** to whip or punish severely

**sepulchral** funeral, typical of the tomb

**soporific** tending to cause sleep

**straitlaced** extremely strict in regard to moral standards of conduct

**transient** lasting for a short time

**unwieldy** not carried, handled, or managed easily

**vapid** dull, uninteresting, tiresome

## 1.6 Unit 6

**anomalous** departing from the usual

**aspersion** a damaging or derogatory statement

**bizarre** very strange, atypical

**brusque** blunt, with no formalities

**cajole** to persuade someone through flattery to do something

**castigate** to punish severely

**contrive** to plan with ingenuity

**demagogue** a leader who exploits popular prejudices to gain power

**disabuse** to free from deception



**ennui** weariness or dissatisfaction from lack of interest  
**fetter** a chain or shackle placed on the feet; to render helpless or impotent  
**heinous** very wicked or offensive  
**immutable** not subject to change  
**insurgent** one who rebels or rises against authority  
**megalomania** a delusion marked by a feeling of power  
**sinecure** a position requiring little effort, an easy job  
**surreptitious** secret, intended to subvert observation  
**transgress** to go beyond a limit or boundary  
**transmute** to change from one nature into another  
**vicarious** preformed or experienced by one person in place of another

## 1.7 Unit 7

**austere** severe or stern in manner  
**beneficent** performing acts of kindness or charity  
**cadaverous** pale, resembling a corpse  
**concoct** to prepare by combining ingredients  
**crass** coarse, unfeeling  
**debase** to lower in character  
**desecrate** to commit sacrilege upon, to pollute  
**disconcert** to confuse, to disturb the composure of  
**grandiose** grand in an impressive way  
**inconsequential** trifling, unimportant  
**infraction** a breaking of the law  
**mitigate** to make milder or softer  
**pillage** to rob of goods  
**prate** to talk a great deal in a foolish fashion  
**punctilious** very careful and exact  
**redoubtable** inspiring fear or awe  
**reprove** to find fault with  
**restitution** the act of restoring faith or otherwise to something  
**stalwart** strong or sturdy  
**vulnerable** open to attack, capable of being wounded

## 1.8 Unit 8

**acrimonious** stinging bitter in tone

**bovine** resembling a cow or ox

**consternation** dismay, confusion

**corpulent** fat, having a large body

**disavow** to deny responsibility for, or have a connection with

**dispassionate** impartial, calm, free from emotion

**dissent** a disagreement, a sharp difference of opinion

**dissipate** to cause to disappear

**expurgate** to remove objectionable passages or words from a text; to cleanse, to purify

**gauntlet** an armored or protective glove; a challenge

**hypothetical** based on assumption or guess

**ignoble** mean, low, base

**impugn** to call into question

**intemperate** immoderate, lacking in self-control

**odium** hatred, contempt

**perfidy** faithlessness, treachery

**relegate** to place in a lower position

**squeamish** inclined towards nausea, easily shocked or upset

**subservient** subordinate in capacity or role

**susceptible** open to, easily influenced, a lack of resistance