

### **American culture and literature:**

#### General questions:

1. Puritan literature: main genres and themes.
2. Compare and contrast literature of the Colonial times and the writings of the American Enlightenment (The Age of Reason).
3. Beginnings of American Poetry. Main representatives and their poems.
4. Literature of the Early National Period: poetry and fiction.
5. Philosophical foundations of American Transcendentalism. Main works of Emerson and Thoreau.
6. Development of American short story.
7. Literature as a factor shaping the American Dream.
8. Compare and contrast poetry of Walt Whitman and Emily Dickinson.
9. Realism in American literature. Main representatives.
10. American attitudes to Europe in American Literature.
11. The "international theme" in the works of American writers.
12. Psychological realism of Henry James.
13. Naturalism in American literature. Main representatives.
14. Poetry at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Main subjects and technique. Most important poets.
15. Poetry in the mid-war period. Main trends.
16. Drama in the mid-war period. Most important plays and playwrights.
17. Attempts to create great American tragedy in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.
18. Poetic drama: M. Anderson, T.S. Eliot.
19. Characterize briefly the writings of the "lost generation".
20. Imagism: main representatives and their poems.
21. Harlem Renaissance.
22. Social problems in American literature of the mid-war period.
23. Great symbolists: N. Hawthorne and H. Melville.
24. Criticism of the American Dream in literature.
25. Main features of Southern literature. Most important representatives.
26. Literature of Black Americans. Most important writers and their works.
27. Literature of the "Beat" generation.
28. Poetry of the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Main trends, groups and "schools".
29. American drama since 1945. Main playwrights and plays.
30. Main features of "postmodern" literature. Most important writers.
31. Ethnic voices in 20<sup>th</sup>- century American literature.
32. Great American war novels.

#### Specific questions.

33. Puritan sermons: their structure and message. Comment on Jonathan Edwards' *sinners in the Hands of Angry God*.
34. Poetry of Edward Taylor and Anne Bradstreet.
35. B. Franklin's contribution to American literature.
36. Tales of Washington Irving.
37. The frontier as a theme in J.F. Cooper's novels.
38. Literary theory and practice of E.A. Poe.
39. What is the importance of H.D. Thoreau's *Walden*?
40. R.W.Emerson's most important essays.
41. N. Hawthorne's technique in the *Scarlet Letter*.
42. Captain Ahab: "The ungodly God-like man."
43. Poetry of W. Whitman: themes and technique.
44. Poetry of E. Dickinson: themes and technique.
45. The importance of M. Twain's *Adventures of Huck Finn*.
46. The "international novels" of Henry James.
47. Naturalism and symbolism in S. Crane's *The Red Badge of Courage*.
48. T. Dreiser's *Sister Carrie*: a naturalistic novel.
49. Poetry of E.A. Robinson.
50. Poetry of R. Frost.
51. E. O'Neill's tragic vision. Comment on one of his plays.
52. T. Wilder's *Our Town*. Problems and technique.
53. Female poets of the mid-war period.
54. Characterization in the novels of E. Hemingway.
55. Main themes in J. Steinbeck's fiction.
56. Main themes in the fiction of W. Faulkner.
57. Carson McCullers: comment on one novel of your choice.
58. Comment on J.D. Salinger's novel *The Catcher in the Rye*.
59. The "confessional" poets in the 1960's and 1970's.
60. The theatre of T. Williams.
61. Social problems in A. Miller's plays.
62. Characterize the fiction of S. Bellow.
63. Comment on a novel by a Black American writer.
64. Comment on one postmodern novel of your choice.
65. Your favourite 20<sup>th</sup>-century American poet.
65. Your favourite 20<sup>th</sup>-century American playwright.