

Opening Lines from American Literature

"A man stood upon a railroad bridge in northern Alabama, looking down into the swift water twenty feet below." From "An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge" by Ambrose Bierce

"It is very seldom that mere ordinary people like John and myself secure ancestral halls for the summer." From *The Yellow Wallpaper* by Charlotte Perkins Gilman

"When I wrote the following pages, or rather the bulk of them, I lived alone, in the woods, a mile from any neighbor, in a house which I had built myself, on the shore of Walden Pond, in Concord, Massachusetts, and earned my living by the labor of my hands only. I lived there two years and two months." From *Walden* by Henry David Thoreau

"During the whole of a dull, dark, and soundless day in the autumn of the year, when the clouds hung oppressively low in the heavens, I had been passing alone, on horseback, through a singularly dreary tract of country; and at length found myself, as the shades of the evening drew on, within view of the melancholy House of Usher." From "The Fall of the House of Usher" by Edgar Allan Poe

"I was born in Tuckahoe, near Hillsborough, and about twelve miles from Easton, in Talbot county, Maryland." From *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass* by Frederick Douglass

"Some of the caddies were poor as sin and lived in one-room houses with a neurasthenic cow in the front yard, but Dexter Green's father owned the second best grocery-store in Black Bear--the best one was 'The Hub,' patronized by the wealthy people from Sherry Island--and Dexter caddied only for pocket-money." From "Winter Dreams" by F. Scott Fitzgerald

"Mr. President, no man thinks more highly than I do of the patriotism, as well as abilities, of the very worthy gentlemen who have just addressed the House." From "Speech to the Virginia Convention" by Patrick Henry

"Hah-ah' eel-me'-whem, the great Spirit Chief, called the Animal People together." From "The Spirit Chief Names the Animal People" by Mourning Dove

"Ships from a distance have every man's wish on board." From *Their Eyes Were Watching God* by Zora Neale Hurston.

"In compliance with the request of a friend of mine, who wrote me from the East, I called on good-natured, garrulous old Simon Wheeler, and inquired after my friend's friend, Leonidas W. Smiley, as requested to do, and I hereunto append the result." From "The Notorious Jumping Frog of Calaveras County" by Mark Twain