



# UGC-NET

English Literature

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# Afro - American Writers

African American literature is the body of literature produced in the United States by writers of African descent. The genre traces its origins to the works of such late eighteenth century writers as Phillis Wheatley and Olaudah Equiano, reaching early high points with slave narratives and the Harlem Renaissance and continuing today with authors such as Toni Morrison, Maya Angelou and Walter Mosley. Among the themes and issues explored in African American lit are the role of African Americans within the larger American society, African-American culture, racism, slavery and equality.

## Langston Hughes

He is very famous for his role in Harlem Renaissance (it is a kind of movement which re-established the African culture in America)

It is also known as 'The Renaissance of Africans in America'.

Langston, he played a vital role in this movement and celebrated the Harlem renaissance in his famous poetry \*'Harlem', subtitle - 'The Dream Defer'

He was a homosexual and inspired by Walt Whitman. He wrote a short story 'The Blessed Assurance' - it deals with the story of father and a son. Father is unhappy with the effeminacy of his son, he is gay. Hughes has been called a closeted person mean a person who is either a gay or a lesbian but hides it.

'The Negro Speaks of a River'  
this poetry is published in the  
collection 'The Very Blues'

'I Too Sing America'

'The Collection of Negro Heroes' <sup>non-fiction</sup>  
famous Negro heroes in America their  
biographies has been collected by  
Hughes. This is known as The famous  
Negro Heroes in America.

In 'Harlem' he talks about the Black Art  
Movement where the other people were  
rejuvenating the Black art or Black  
aesthetics and tried to re-established  
the Black identity.

Harlem Renaissance is quietly associated  
to Emory Stanzas, Negritude Movement and  
~~if we~~ <sup>if we</sup> relate it in Post colonial way, it is  
related to Tindi Borawick and Garrison  
mentality.

## Zora Neil Hurston

'Their Eyes were Watching God' 1937 story - a girl Janie Crawford who comes from a family of slavery, being a black she ventures out to make her identity.

## W.E.B. Du Bois

He popularised the famous line 'The Colour Line' (difference between the whites and the blacks)

His famous essay collection -

'The Souls of Black Folk'

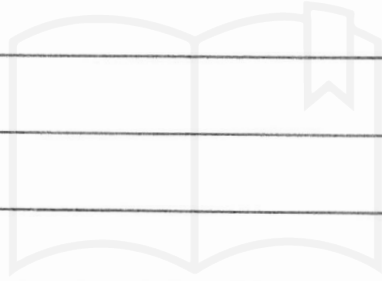
'The Black Reconstruction in America'

Du Bois has developed the concept 'Talented Tenth' it became a phrase. He says that in Africa every tenth person is a hero. Talented Tenth was also used for Barack Obama.

Toni Morrison - Nobel Awardee  
1993

\* Beloved, 1987 - Pulitzer Award

There is a lady, Sethe she escaped  
slavery with her 18 years old daughter



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\*

'The Bluest Eye' -

story of two different girls

Claudia MacTeer and Pecola  
Breedlove.

Claudia was very rich, white girl  
and narrator.

Pecola - she was poor, black

young maid. Pecola wanted to

have 'blue eye' because she thought  
that the whites supremacy can be  
equalized having the blue eyes.

'God Help the Child' 2015

Character - Breed - a lady and her  
own mother hates her for being black.

Essay - 'Mourning for Whiteness'  
2016, it is against Donald Trump.



'Tar Baby' - love story of  
two blacks

Sula - story of a farmer and  
a slave

'Song of Solomon'

Richard Wright

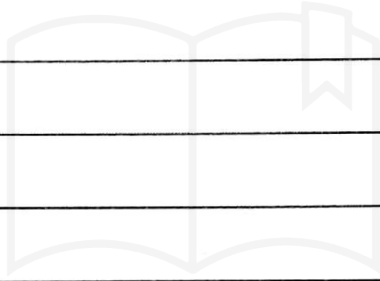
'Native Son' - story of bigger Thomas  
African Negro.

Bi Thomas is a classy character  
he has been appointed as a driver of  
white girl. He finds the girl flirting  
with white boys at parties. Once the  
negro Thomas wants to take advances  
when she is totally drunk....

'A Black Boy'

'Uncle Tom's Children'

it is inspired by Harriet  
Stowe's Uncle Tom's Cabin.



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# African literature

'Apartheid' is main theme of African literature. It is called colour segregation. The racial discrimination of the whites and the Blacks.

Africa was divided in tribes they weren't had their own literature. They had lots of folk tales, songs, stories which were in the oral tradition.

Africa has eleven languages which are Afrikaans, English, Zulu, Xhosa, Sotho, Tswana, Venda, Siswati, Pedi, Tsonga, and Ndebele.

Quotation by: George Joseph in his book - <sup>Understanding</sup> Contemporary Africa. Literature can also apply an artistic use of words for the sake of art alone. Traditionally Africans do not radically separate art from teaching rather than write or sing for beauty in itself. African writers taking their legature by Ugandan scholar Pio Zirimu. They use beauty to help communicate important truth and information to society. Indeed an object is considered beautiful because of the truth it reveals and communities it helps to build."

There was a law enabled by white people called Jim Crow Law in 1965 which enforce racial segregation. The Blacks were depart from social events.

Another rule was Black Course implemented between 1800-1826 which restricted blacks from their civil rights.

Rich Benjamin, he has written about the Black in his book "Searching for Whitopia" and Improbable journey to <sup>the</sup> heart of white America.

## Andre Brink

He is the first African writer to be banned by the government after he release a novel.

### A Dry White Season.

It deals with the white-south African who discovers the truth of his black friend who dies under the police custody. So the police torture in the prison for the whites are different and blacks are different.

This inhuman torture was given to the black guy. became the concept of the study in the novel and it became the first banned book in Africa lit.

In African literature the father of African Rural writing is Olive Schreiner. His famous work is The Story of an African Farm, 1883. It deals with the Boer war.

Alan Paton

His famous work

\* Cry, the Beloved Country, 1948

Nadine Gordimer  
1991, Nobel Award

— A Guest of Honour

— Occasions for Loving

— The Conservationist - a Booker Awardee book

\* My Son's Story, 1996

\* Burgess Daughter  
it deals with identity crisis in post-colonial Africa

Mongane Wally Serate

No Baby Must Weep.

Lewis Nkosi

He is the first writer in African literature to involve in psycho-analysis study in literature. His famous work is

Mating Birds

It is a story of an African boy or a white girl. There he tells that even the separate beaches are the whites and the blacks. The white lady she comes on the beach and starts flirting with black guy and Black man gets involved in love stories. But when this is discovered by white people, black man is dead.

## Mandela's Ego.

- It deals with the psycho sexual energy of the protagonist.
- Protagonist Dumisani a young Zulu boy, playboy of the African villages and he is going for various affairs and sexually involved in various things. He goes to attend a meeting by Nelson Mandela where Nelson Mandela put emphasise on identity, their own nationality. Keeps on telling that we Blacks are not inferior to anyone. This gathering gives him a message and psychologically he becomes more strong, and sexually involved in maximum affairs. He is sexually charged because of this meeting. One day while reading a newspaper he finds that Nelson Mandela has been imprisoned reading this news he loses his sexual desires or capabilities. And after 20-30 years when he finds that Nelson Mandela has been freed. He gets his energy back.



- This book is the best example of psychosexual energy mixed with the identity crisis in the African scenario.

\* Zakes Mda

— "The Heart of Redness"

- first African Book to win Commonwealth Award

\* Miriam Tlali

first black woman to publish a book in South Africa. Her famous work is

"Between Two Worlds"