Who is the author?

Dr. Wendell “Whit” Jones is a professor of English at Bryan College, where he has taught for twenty-four years. His work has been published in *Southern Writers: A Biographical Dictionary* and *The Companion to Southern Literature*. Whit earned his PhD in English literature from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. He loves good literature in part because story, character, and image reveal deep truths about life and human nature that make him a better husband, father, and follower of Christ. Whit and his wife, Amy, homeschooled their daughter and three sons.

Is this course taught from a biblical worldview perspective?

Yes. While the course does not specifically instruct students in the tenets of a biblical worldview, it does require the student to approach and think critically about literary works from a biblical perspective. Dr. Whit Jones helps students to accurately interpret what the author of each work is saying about the world and mankind’s place in it, and then determine in light of Scripture what we, as Christians, can embrace of the author’s viewpoint and what we must reject.

What grades is this course for?

American Literature is for use by students in grades 9 through 12.

What high school credits will my high school student earn for completing this course?

Apologia’s American Literature course can satisfy both a composition and an American literature credit. Therefore, the student would earn *two* high school course credits. The amount of required reading goes beyond the usual standard for a literature course. All major genres and time periods are covered, and selections from larger works are extensive, and not just the short excerpts you often find in literature textbooks. The course also requires a substantial amount of writing, including two literary analysis papers, at least one essay question in each chapter test, and written answers to the study questions. The Student Notebook also provides detailed instruction and examples of how to write a literary analysis paper, as well as guidance for parents on how to grade writing assignments.

Is this considered an honors-level high school course?

If the student completes all assignments and course readings, Apologia’s American Literature is definitely an honors-level course.

Do we need to complete all of the chapters?

No. Keep in mind that American literature is an enormous subject encompassing a multitude and variety of great works that couldn’t possibly be covered comprehensively in a single textbook. The publishers and author have limited the course to just ninety of these literary achievements while aiming to take students deeper in their understanding and appreciation of them. Whit Jones’s philosophy as an educator is that it is better for students to thoroughly understand fewer literary works than to settle for only a superficial comprehension of a great many works.
As the parent/teacher, you must determine how many of the readings to assign your students during this course. Your students have much to gain from this study, even if they do not read all ninety of the works covered in the textbook. You should take students’ emotional maturity and reading skills into account when determining which of the works they will read, but we also encourage you to challenge your students to reach beyond what they think they’re capable of.

Will I need to buy additional books for the course?
Assuming you choose to assign all four novels and the play covered in the course, you will need to obtain copies of these works through your local library or a bookstore. These include:

- Mark Twain’s *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*
- F. Scott Fitzgerald’s *The Great Gatsby*
- Ernest Hemingway’s *The Old Man and the Sea*
- Harper Lee’s *To Kill a Mockingbird*
- Lorraine Hansberry’s play *A Raisin in the Sun*

Also, in order to make the course more affordable, we have chosen not to reproduce some of the twentieth-century short stories and poems studied in the text. However, these works are all considered classics and are readily available in many literature collections available at the library. These stories and poems include:

- John Steinbeck’s short story “A Leader of the People”
- James Thurber’s short story “The Secret Life of Walter Mitty”
- William Faulkner’s short story “Barn Burning”
- Eudora Welty’s short story “A Worn Path”
- Flannery O’Connor’s short story “Revelation”
- Robert Frost’s poems “Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening,” “Design,” and “Never Again Would Birds’ Song Be the Same”
- Langston Hughes’s poems “Harlem” and “The Weary Blues”
- Theodore Roethke’s poems “My Papa’s Waltz” and “The Waking”

All of these works are assigned later in the course, so you should have plenty of time to locate them. These are classic stories and poems, rich in insight into human nature and beautiful in their artistry, and are well worth including in your student’s study.
What comes with the course?
The American Literature course comprises three primary components: the textbook, the Student Notebook, and the online answer key.

The full-color, beautifully illustrated hardcover textbook includes most of the required readings, as well as introductions to every major period and literary movement. Each literary work is accompanied by a biographical essay examining the background, culture, and beliefs of the work’s author. And each work is followed by meaningful, incisive, thought-provoking study questions—more than are found in any comparable text.

The spiral-bound, consumable Student Notebook includes every study question from the textbook, with space for students to record their answers. Also, the notebook is where you will find the chapter tests and semester exams. But the most important element of the Student Notebook—unique to Apologia’s literature course—is detailed, step-by-step instruction by Dr. Whit Jones on how to write an insightful and persuasive literary analysis paper. Your student will be guided through the preparation and writing of two papers—one on a poem and one on a short story. This outstanding feature, complete with helpful examples, makes the American Literature Student Notebook invaluable preparation for future college coursework.

The third component of the course is the extensive online answer key, included with your purchase of the textbook. Here, Dr. Jones offers deeper insight into each work by providing thorough answers to each of the study questions, as well as solutions to the tests and exams and a guide to grading the student’s essays and papers. Because of its instructive nature, the online answer key can also be used by the student (at your discretion) to gain a better understanding of each literary work.

Are there any prerequisites for this course?
There are no prerequisites for Apologia’s American Literature for grades 9–12.

How much time does my high school student need to set aside for this course?
This is a one-year course. At least two weeks should be allocated to complete the reading and answer the study questions for each chapter. Keep in mind, however, that some reading selections are more challenging and may require additional time to read and interpret, while others may require less time.

How much prep work is involved for the teacher?
No prep time is required, other than deciding whether you will assign all or just some of the readings. As with all Apologia curriculum for junior high and high school, the textbook is written directly to the student and is designed to foster and develop independent learning skills. You don’t even need to understand literary analysis to grade your student’s work in this course. That’s because Dr. Whit Jones has not only produced a masterful textbook, but he has also written a thorough online answer key that tells you exactly what to look for in the student’s notebook responses, test answers, and essays.