

1. Please write an essay to comment on the following statement:  
“Puritanism and Transcendentalism are two cornerstones of American literature before 1865.” Start by explaining what Puritanism and Transcendentalism are in the context of American literature. Then analyze major writers and their works to illustrate the significance of Puritanism and Transcendentalism to early American literature. In the final part of your essay, you may want to discuss what you would add to the statement above. For instance, are there other main currents of thought or literary tenets you deem important for a better understanding or appreciation of American literature before 1865?  
(50%)
2. Whereas Modernist texts were once regarded as shocking, provocative, and revolutionary, as the 20th century wound to its weary (postwar) end, ushering in a new millennium, the concept of Modernism itself has become a hotly contested concept. Select two to three American authors you have studied from this time period (1900-1950) who have been recently admitted to the “canon” of Modernist literature. How does their addition change our view of Modernism? Is Modernism flexible enough to accommodate these interlopers without undergoing significant change? Or does their very presence force us into a process of redefinition? In your essay, make your organization clear in three parts: an introduction with a lucid personal argument, the corpus of developing main arguments, and a clincher statement. (50%)

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