

New Movements in America**Section 2****MAIN IDEAS**

1. Transcendentalists and utopian communities withdrew from American society.
2. American Romantic painters and writers made important contributions to art and literature.

Key Terms and People

transcendentalism belief that people should rise above material things in life and that people should depend on themselves rather than outside authority

Ralph Waldo Emerson American writer most famous for his essay “Self-Reliance”

Margaret Fuller American writer who wrote and edited material on transcendentalism

Henry David Thoreau American writer most famous for the transcendental ideas he summarized in his book *Walden*

utopian communities experimental communities that tried to create a perfect society

Nathaniel Hawthorne American writer best known for his novel *The Scarlet Letter*

Edgar Allan Poe American writer best known for his short stories and poetry

Emily Dickinson American poet whose poems were published after her death

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow American poet who wrote popular story-poems like *The Song of Hiawatha*

Walt Whitman American poet best known for his poem *Leaves of Grass*

Academic Vocabulary

abstract expressing an idea without reference to an actual thing

Section Summary**TRANSCENDENTALISTS**

Transcendentalism was a belief system in which followers thought they could rise above the material things in life. Transcendentalists believed that people should depend on themselves rather than outside authority. **Ralph Waldo Emerson**, **Margaret Fuller**, and **Henry David Thoreau** were among the great American thinkers who were also transcendentalists.

**Name two
transcendentalist thinkers.**

Section 2, continued

Emerson expressed his ideas in the essay “Self-Reliance.” Fuller wrote *Women in the Nineteenth Century*, a book about women’s basic rights. In his book *Life in the Woods*, Thoreau summarized many of his transcendentalist beliefs.

Some transcendentalists created communities apart from society. In these **utopian communities**, people hoped to form a perfect society. Some, such as the Shaker communities, were based on religious beliefs. Other groups pursued utopian lifestyles for **abstract** and transcendental reasons.

Why might transcendentalists seek to create utopian communities?

AMERICAN ROMANTICISM

In the early and mid-1800s, many artists were inspired by simple life and nature’s beauty. Some joined the Romantic movement that began in Europe with British poets such as Blake, Byron, Keats, and Shelley. For the Romantics, each person brought a unique point of view to the world. These writers used their emotions to guide their words.

At this time American Romantic writers began to develop an American style. Female writers such as Ann Sophia Stephens wrote popular historical fiction. Another historical novel, *The Scarlet Letter* by **Nathaniel Hawthorne**, described Puritan life in America. Herman Melville wrote *Moby Dick*, considered to be one of America’s finest novels. **Edgar Allan Poe** also gained fame for his short stories and poetry.

Underline all the writers’ names that appear in this section. Put an ‘X’ by the names you have heard before.

Emily Dickinson, **Henry Wadsworth Longfellow**, and John Greenleaf Whittier are just three poets of this time whose works have long outlived them. The same is true of **Walt Whitman**, who used his poem *Leaves of Grass* to praise American individualism and democracy.

Circle the titles of famous novels written by American Romantics.

CHALLENGE ACTIVITY

Critical Thinking: Make Inferences In this section certain writers’ names appear in bold print while other names do not. Explain what you think the difference is and why it is important.

Section 2, *continued*

DIRECTIONS Write two adjectives or descriptive phrases that describe the term.

1. Edgar Allan Poe _____
2. Emily Dickinson _____
3. Henry David Thoreau _____
4. Nathaniel Hawthorne _____
5. Ralph Waldo Emerson _____
6. Thomas Cole _____
7. transcendentalism _____
8. utopian communities _____
9. Walt Whitman _____

DIRECTIONS Read each sentence and fill in the blank with the word in the word pair that best completes the sentence.

10. “The Raven” is the most famous work by writer and poet _____ . (Ralph Waldo Emerson/Edgar Allan Poe)
11. _____ wrote *Leaves of Grass*.
(Nathaniel Hawthorne/Walt Whitman)
12. _____ edited the transcendentalist publication *The Dial*.
(Margaret Fuller/Emily Dickenson)
13. One of the best-known pieces of Romantic literature is *The Scarlet Letter*, a novel by New England writer _____.
(Nathaniel Hawthorne/Walt Whitman)
14. _____ lived for two years at Walden Pond and wrote about his beliefs in a book titled *Walden*. (Margaret Fuller/Henry David Thoreau)