

Navigating the 19th Century: a practical guide to teaching English literature for Brazilian students.



Cotton embroidered with a bunch of flowers tied in a ribbon. England, early 19th century.
Author unknown. [Cooper Hewitt, Smithsonian Design Museum, Public domain, via
Wikimedia Commons](#)

DELFINA CRISTINA PAIZAN

Navigating the 19th Century: a
practical guide to teaching
English literature for
Brazilian students.



Pedro & João
editores

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Delfina Cristina Paizan

Navigating the 19th Century: a practical guide to teaching English literature for Brazilian Students. São Carlos: Pedro & João Editores, 2025. 75p. 14 x 21 cm.

ISBN: 978-65-265-1801- 4 [Digital]

1. Literatura inglesa. 2. Formação de professores. 3. Curadoria Digital I. Título.

CDD – 370

Capa: Delfina Cristina Paizan

Ficha Catalográfica: Hélio Márcio Pajeú – CRB - 8-8828

Diagramação: Delfina Cristina Paizan

Editores: Pedro Amaro de Moura Brito & João Rodrigo de Moura Brito

Conselho Editorial da Pedro & João Editores:

Augusto Ponzio (Bari/Itália); João Wanderley Geraldi (Unicamp/Brasil); Hélio Márcio Pajeú (UFPE/Brasil); Maria Isabel de Moura (UFSCar/Brasil); Maria da Piedade Resende da Costa (UFSCar/Brasil); Valdemir Miotello (UFSCar/ Brasil); Ana Cláudia Bortolozzi (UNESP/Bauru/Brasil); Mariangela Lima de Almeida (UFES/Brasil); José Kuiava (UNIOESTE/Brasil); Marisol Barenco de Mello (UFF/Brasil); Camila Caracelli Scherma (UFFS/Brasil); Luís Fernando Soares Zuin (USP/Brasil); Ana Patrícia da Silva (UERJ/Brasil).

Pedro & João Editores

www.pedroejoaoeditores.com.br

13568-878 – São Carlos – SP

2025

CONTENTS

Preface	6
Principal Features	8
Acknowledgement	9
Introduction	10
Chapter 1: 19th Century English Literature	11
Chapter 2: 19th Century US Literature	36
Chapter 3: Teaching English Literature in Basic Education Schools in Brazil	65
Closing Remarks	73
Bibliography	74

PREFACE

The teaching of English language literature is a delightful yet exhausting challenge. This challenge has been presented to me twice: the first time, almost 20 years ago, when I joined the Portuguese-English Language program at UNIOESTE - Universidade Estadual do Oeste do Paraná - Foz do Iguaçu, Paraná/Brazil; the second, in recent years, coinciding with the period of the pandemic caused by SARS-CoV2.

If the first period was marked by the search for content, mainly in printed form and difficult to find, to support my teaching and to create OHP acetates for projecting this content in the classroom, the second period was marked by the huge amount of content available on the internet and the need to curate content (eg. texts, videos, webpages) to share with my students during a remote 68 hour-course. This book is mainly about sharing the content curated which is a practice defined by the British Council as:

"the process of finding, evaluating, categorizing, and sharing digital resources. These could include links to teaching materials, articles, videos, podcasts, or useful content for lessons."

Also, Deschaine & Sharma (2015, p.19) add:

"...it is essential for teacher educators to become digital curators by identifying and utilizing resources that are reflective, relevant, and representative of the goals and objectives contained within the curriculum."

Now, as my teaching career at this institution is coming to an end, I share here my curation, my practice and some of my students' productions in the hope that it can assist teachers in this field. May this material - an open resource - expands itself and inspires the creation of many other practical guides.

PRINCIPAL FEATURES

Firstly, this ebook does not aim to be exhaustive in its content; it provides the material I used to fulfill the requirements of a 68-hour course on English Literature at the university, along with some additional content I wished I could have included. The selection of authors was made because they represent the socio-historical moment delimited here - 19th century - but also because they were already close to me. However, the curated content provided can be helpful for research and classroom work with other authors within the period being studied.

Secondly, this ebook presents one main feature: its practical purpose, as it was designed to be used for teaching English literature at the university level. It has also an educational nature, as it focuses on the training of English literature teachers. I hope you find it useful.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

In these few years working with the teaching of English language literature, I have had many special moments of teaching and learning alongside my students. I am grateful to all of them, but especially to the ones named below for allowing me to use their productions here:

André Eggers Muniz
Anna Luiza Gobi de Oliveira
Clara Luz
Gabriela de Paula Andrade Lima
Gabriele Silvestre
João Pedro Cemin Marcon
Josiane Pereira
Laura Zanon Irineu
Luan Henrique Mendes

I am also very thankful to two teachers who inspired me throughout this journey: my first English literature teacher, Helena Maria Moura Peres, and Professor Thomas Bonicci, who guided me in the early steps of this teaching endeavor so many years ago.

My eternal gratitude.
Delfina Cristina Paizan
Foz do Iguaçu, Paraná - Brazil

INTRODUCTION

The English Language Literature II course at UNIOESTE in Foz do Iguaçu - Paraná/Brazil covers English language literary production during the 19th century. It involves the study of literary texts of various genres along with the historical, social, political, and cultural context of their production. Additionally, there is a space for the production of literary texts in English and, finally, the course addresses the teaching of English Language Literature in elementary and middle schools (in 68 hours!!!!). As a personal choice, these last two are worked on together during the course. Therefore, this ebook is divided into 3 chapters.

Chapter 1 address English Literature in the 19th, from Romantic to the Victorian Era. Chapter 2 delve into USA Literature in the 19th century and extends from the study of Romanticism to Naturalism and Realism. Finally, in Chapter 3, I share my experience of working with my Brazilian students using the Comprehensive Approach by Bloemert et al (2016, 2017). Finally, I showcase some of my students' in-class productions.

CHAPTER 1: 19TH CENTURY ENGLISH LITERATURE

ROMANTICISM IN 19TH ENGLISH LITERATURE

Possible learning objectives:

- Explore the historical and socio-political context that gave rise to Romanticism;
- Examine the key themes and characteristics of Romantic literature and art from this period;
- Assess how poems and novels represent the ideals of Romanticism.

Historical Context

I think the first thing we do in the classroom is to make clear that Romanticism is not about romance and love; rather, it is about expressing deep emotions, exploring the beauty of nature, and embracing individualism and imagination.

“The great object of life is Sensation – to feel that we exist – even though in pain..”

Lord Byron, 1813.

Romanticism was marked by disruptions caused by the War of Independence, by the French and Industrial Revolutions, and by philosophical ideals.

The War of Independence: the insurrection fought between 1775 and 1783 which involved 13 of Great Britain's colonies rebelling against British rule. This led to the establishment of the independence of the United States of America, formalized with the Declaration of Independence in 1776.



Eugène Lami, Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons

More information?

- [American Battlefield Trust: site](#)
- [American Battlefield Trust: video](#)
- [História do Mundo](#)
- [FFLCH USP: A independência dos Estados Unidos](#)

The French Revolution: it spanned from 1787 to 1799 and, in general terms, its aim was to entirely transform the connection between rulers and their subjects, as well as to redefine the essence of political authority: it abolished the monarchy and aristocracy, emphasizing the freedom for individuals to grow independently, opposing to institutions that restricted individual rights (Robinson, 2018).



The royal carriage of king Louis Philippe is burned in front of the Chateau d'eau during the French revolution of 1848, Paris 24th February 1848
Nathaniel Currier, Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons

There is a very sensitive video available at the link below about the French Revolution and Romanticism in literature, painting, and music:

- Britannica: Romanticism

The Industrial Revolution: the first Industrial Revolution spanned from the mid-18th century to around 1830 and was limited to the confines of Britain. It transformed society from a hand-made, agricultural economy to a manufacturing one, leading to the migration of people from rural areas to urban centers. One effect of it was the concentration of wealth in the hands of a few, as well as extremely poor working conditions in coal mines and factories, along with child labor and exploitation.



Thomas Harrison Hair (1808-75), Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons

Romanticism viewed the Industrial Revolution as the epitome of horror.

Some more information:

- Britannica: Industrial revolution causes and effects

Philosophical Roots: Some philosophers also contributed to the roots of Romanticism in British Literature. Rousseau argued that human beings are better when they are in proximity to nature and that society - and its conventions and customs - leads human beings to moral and intellectual corruption. Schilling - a German philosopher - connected nature and spirit: the "spirit of the world" is both in nature and within ourselves.

More about it:

- [Masterworks of British Literature](#)
- [The Basics of Philosophy](#)
- [História das Artes](#)

Romanticism in Literature



Caspar David Friedrich, Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons

Romanticism is marked by the production of novels, lyric poetries,¹ ballads and odes. Themes such as individualism, solitude, melancholy, spiritual and supernatural elements, and the worship of nature can be explored in the image above, which is frequently associated with Romanticism. It is great for brainstorming these elements with students.

1. Explore more by clicking on the underlined words, which are links to additional information.

Regarding literary production, remarkable works were produced during this period, ranging from delightful poems to innovative novels.

What is now proved was once, only imagin'd.

William Blake

Nature never did betray The heart that loved her

William Wordsworth

More:

- [The British Library: The Romantics²](#)
- [Poetry Foundation: British Romanticism](#)
- [Britannica: The Romantic period](#)
- [British Literature II: Romantic Era to the Twentieth Century and Beyond](#)

2. The British Library has been an important source of information to me. However, some links to the British Library provided may not be functional due to a cyber attack in October 2023.

Poetry

1. Willian Wordsworth (1770-1885)



Margaret Gillies, Public domain, via
Wikimedia Commons

Romanticism found in poetry its main form of expression. The publication of Lyrical Ballads - a collection of poems written by Willian Wordsworth and Taylor Coleridge in 1798 - is considered the beginning of the Romantic Period.

A very special poem composed by Wordsworth in 1804 is 'I wondered lonely as a cloud' which is also known as Daffodil.

One of my students said that
the only thing she remembers
from my classess 15 years ago
is the Daffodil (the flower, not
the poem).



Photo Stoo por Pixabay

I wandered lonely as a cloud

Willian Wordsworth

I wandered lonely as a cloud
That floats on high o'er vales and hills,
When all at once I saw a crowd,
A host, of golden daffodils;
Beside the lake, beneath the trees,
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.

Continuous as the stars that shine
And twinkle on the milky way,
They stretched in never-ending line
Along the margin of a bay:
Ten thousand saw I at a glance,
Tossing their heads in sprightly dance.

The waves beside them danced; but they
Out-did the sparkling waves in glee:
A poet could not but be gay,
In such a jocund company:
I gazed—and gazed—but little thought
What wealth the show to me had brought:

For oft, when on my couch I lie
In vacant or in pensive mood,
They flash upon that inward eye
Which is the bliss of solitude;
And then my heart with pleasure fills,
And dances with the daffodils.

The Poetry Foundation
Daffodils: congerdesign por Pixabay

2. William Blake (1756-1827)

Thomas Phillips, Public domain, via
Wikimedia Commons



William Blake also embraced the romantic ideals about nature, spiritual freedom and emotion liberation. He was also a painter and it is a valuable activity to compare the poem below to one of his paintings, both set within a pastoral backdrop.

THE LAMB

William Blake

Little Lamb who made thee
Dost thou know who made thee
Gave thee life & bid thee feed.
By the stream & o'er the mead;
Gave thee clothing of delight,
Softest clothing wooly bright;
Gave thee such a tender voice,
Making all the vales rejoice!
Little Lamb who made thee
Dost thou know who made thee

Little Lamb I'll tell thee,
Little Lamb I'll tell thee!
He is called by thy name,
For he calls himself a Lamb:
He is meek & he is mild,
He became a little child:
I a child & thou a lamb,
We are called by his name.
Little Lamb God bless thee.
Little Lamb God bless thee.

The Poetry Foundation



The Christ Child riding on a Lamb
William Blake, Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons

It is also very interesting to explore Blake's writings about the social problems of that time:

- Art Uk: William Blake: the romantic visionary
- British Library: Chimney Sweeper

3. Percy Shelley (1756-1827)

Amelia Curran, Public domain, via
Wikimedia Commons



I would like to bring here Percy Bysshe Shelley (1792-1822) and his poem England in 1819 addressing political events of the beginning of 19th century. It deserves to be read out loud for its alliteration:

“An old, mad, blind, despised, and dying King...”

A classroom objective here might be to identify common literary devices the author employs to achieve the desired effects.

More:

- Poetry Foundation: England in 1819
- YouTube: England in 1819 - reading & analysis

Novel

4. Jane Austen (1775-1817)

Cassandra Austen, Public domain,
via Wikimedia Commons



The debate over whether Jane Austen's writing fits into Romanticism is continuous, but she lived within this period and shows traces of passion, subjectivity, and sensitive descriptions of nature.

Elizabeth's mind was too full for conversation, but she saw and admired every remarkable spot and point of view. They gradually ascended for half-a-mile, and then found themselves at the top of a considerable eminence, where the wood ceased, and the eye was instantly caught by Pemberley House, situated on the opposite side of a valley, into which the road with some abruptness wound. It was a large, handsome stone building, standing well on rising ground, and backed by a ridge of high woody hills; and in front, a stream of some natural importance was swelled into greater, but without any artificial appearance. Its banks were neither formal nor falsely adorned. Elizabeth was delighted. She had never seen a place for which nature had done more, or where natural beauty had been so little counteracted by an awkward taste. (Pride & Prejudice, 1813)

<https://gutenberg.net.au/ebooks/m00008.html>

One thing that is very special about Jane Austen is the vast amount and diversity of material (sites, film adaptations, comics, manga) we can find about her and her novels on the internet.

Janeausten.org

[BBC Sounds](#)

[Project Gutenberg: Books by Jane Austen](#)

[Time. The best Jane Austen inspired films](#)

2. Mary Shelley (1797-1851)



Reginald Easton (1807–1893), Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons

The unknown, the irrational, the horror, the grotesque were explored in Dark Romanticism or Gothic Literature.

Challenged by Lord Byron to write a horror story and Influenced by experiments in electricity, Mary Shelley wrote 'Frankenstein,' the first science fiction piece of literature in history. Here, Victor Frankenstein brings his creature to life with '**a spark of being**':

"It was on a dreary night of November that I beheld the accomplishment of my toils. With an anxiety that almost amounted to agony, I collected the instruments of life around me, that I might infuse a spark of being into the lifeless thing that lay at my feet. It was already one in the morning; the rain pattered dismally against the panes, and my candle was nearly burnt out, when, by the glimmer of the half-extinguished light, I saw the dull yellow eye of the creature open; it breathed hard, and a convulsive motion agitated its limbs." (Frankenstein, Chapter 5, p.69)

<http://www.dominiopublico.gov.br/download/texto/pp000020.pdf>



Boris Karloff as The Frankenstein Monster from Bride of Frankenstein
film trailer
[Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons](#)

More:

[Britannica](#)

[History Today: The Spark of Being](#)

[Project Gutenberg: books by Mary Shelley](#)

VICTORIAN PERIOD

Possible learning objectives:

- Examine the impact of social, political, and economic forces on Victorian literature, including the effects of the Industrial Revolution, class disparities, and changing social norms;
- Identify the key themes and characteristics of Victorian literary works;
- Compare Victorian literature with Romanticism, identifying possible continuities (e.g. individualism) and contrasts in themes (e.g. industrialization) and styles (i.e. the novel as a dominant form) .

Historical Context

Queen Victoria ruled from 1837 to 1901. This period was marked by the expansion of the Empire, by industrialization, technological developments and conflicts between religion and science:

“The paramount characteristic of the Victorian Age was rapid change and concomitant conflict. It was a complex age, an age of great wealth and extreme poverty, of the family as sacred center and a burgeoning of prostitution, of morality and fraud, of belief in the Bible and in scientific determinism. In the 1830s, railroad expansion transformed England as it spurred immense material progress and economic growth. The Victorians came to think of progress as natural and tied progress to wealth and prosperity”. (Robinson, 2018, p. 289-290)

Although the Empire had lost the 13 American Colonies in the late part of the 18th century, as stated on the Britannica website:

“The Victorian British Empire dominated the globe, though its forms of rule and influence were uneven and diverse. The traffic of people and goods between Britain and its colonies was constant, complex, and multidirectional. Britain shaped the empire, the empire shaped Britain, and colonies shaped one another.”



Queen Victoria by Alexander Bassano, Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons

The conflicts of the Victorian era found expression in various literary forms: lyric poetry, verse novels, novels, serialized novels, and drama.

Poetry

1. Elizabeth Barrett Browning (1806-1861)



Michele Gordigiani, Public domain, via
Wikimedia Commons

Among Elizabeth Barrett Browning works, Sonnet 43, titled 'How do I love thee', stands out as her most renowned poem and a classic poem for Valentine's day:

*How do I love thee? Let me count the ways.
I love thee to the depth and breadth and height
My soul can reach, when feeling out of sight
For the ends of being and ideal grace.
I love thee to the level of every day's
Most quiet need, by sun and candle-light.
I love thee freely, as men strive for right.
I love thee purely, as they turn from praise.
I love thee with the passion put to use
In my old griefs, and with my childhood's faith.
I love thee with a love I seemed to lose
With my lost saints. I love thee with the breath,
Smiles, tears, of all my life; and, if God choose,
I shall but love thee better after death.*

<https://poets.org/poem/how-do-i-love-thee-sonnet-43>

There are some interesting activities we can do with students. For example, ask them to find music or an image to complement this poem. [Jamendo](#) is a nice site with free music, and [Pixabay](#) offers free images. I am also very fond of “The Cry of the Children”, from 1843, in which she explores the horror of children's labour during the Industrial Revolution.

Look at this [VIDEO](#) about children's labour during the Industrial Revolution:

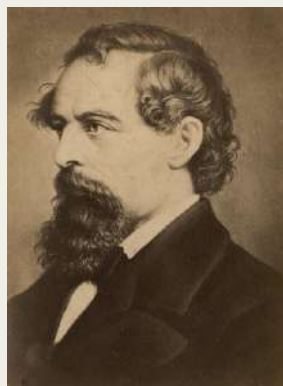


More:

- [The Browning Society](#)
- [The British Library](#)
- [Poetry Foundation](#)

Novel

1. Charles Dickens (1812-1870)



Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons

Biography: Charles-Dickens.org; [Britannica](#)

Novels: [Charles Dickens Info](#)

Dickens is an excellent introduction to the Victorian Era. I guided my students' reading of *Oliver Twist* in order to:

- analyze the social and economic themes depicted in 'Oliver Twist,' including issues related to poverty, class inequality, and institutional corruption;
- identify and discuss the development of key characters in 'Oliver Twist,' exploring their motivations, relationships, and transformations throughout the novel.

I divided 'Oliver Twist' into six blocks: Block 1 (chapters 1-8), Block 2 (chapters 9-16), Block 3 (chapters 17-28), Block 4 (chapters 29-37), Block 5 (chapters 38-48), and Block 6 (chapters 49-53). I utilized assistance from [SparkNotes](#) for ideas and questions. Students were given one week to read each block, choose and answer to specific questions and bring them to discussion in the classroom. Recognizing varying language proficiencies among students, I provided them with the option to read the text either in English or Portuguese.



[Oliver Twist in Portuguese](#)

[Oliver Twist in English](#)

[Harold Copping. Public Domain, via Wikimedia Commons](#)

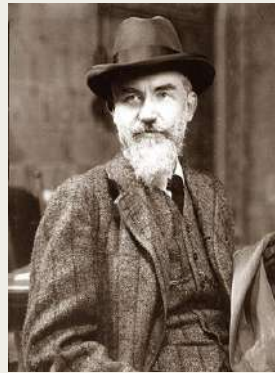
I also enjoy discussing with my students how Dickens, through his vivid depictions of Christmas in novels such as '[A Christmas Carol](#),' played a significant role in shaping the modern celebration of Christmas.

Drama

Following Shakespeare's influence on the history of British drama, this style experiences a resurgence in the late Victorian period, with notable figures such as George Bernard Shaw gaining prominence (Dietrich, 2012) .

1. George Bernard Shaw (1856-1950)

Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons



Biography

Five things to know about George Bernard Shaw

George Bernard Shaw won a Nobel Prize in Literature in 1925 and an Oscar in 1939 for Best Writing, Screenplay for adapting Pygmalion for the screen: the film - My Fair Lady - also became a successful musical. The adaptation of the musical for the Brazilian stage is available on YouTube.

Shaw and Bob Dylan were the only two who have won an Oscar and a Nobel Prize.

'My Fair Lady' is one of the films that had its impact on me during my teenage years and only later I discovered it was based on George Bernard Shaw's 'Pygmalion.' It would be nice to ask students to compare a segment from 'Pygmalion'—for example, the scene where Eliza Doolittle meets Professor Higgins in front of the theater—with its cinematic adaptation. A classroom objective may be:

- to analyze specific drama writing techniques employed by playwrights, for example, dialogue and stage directions.

Another important objective to address in the Letras program is:

- to analyse how language shapes and reflects societal norms in the play.

CHAPTER 2: 19TH CENTURY LITERATURE IN THE USA

PRE-COLONIAL LITERATURE

Historical Context

Before teaching 19th century literature in the USA, I like to remind my students that what we now know as the United States of America did not come into existence with the arrival of the British colonists: there were thousands of native civilizations. Thus, I present to them some examples of the oral traditions of the Native Peoples: their myths, tales, legends.

There are some links below that can help us with this task:

- [OpenALG](#)
- [National Museum of the American Indian](#)
- [Oklahoma Historical Society](#)
- [Cherokee Storytelling: how the world was made](#)



[Beinecke Library, via Wikimedia Commons](#)

What is life? It is the flash of a firefly in the night. It is the breath of a buffalo in the wintertime. It is the little shadow which runs across the grass and loses itself in the sunset.

Crowfoot (1821-1890), Blackfoot warrior and orator, 1890.

There's also an Oscar-nominated movie, 'Killers of the Flower Moon', which shed light on the tragic history of the Osage Nation. After being forcibly displaced from their ancestral lands multiple times by the U.S Government, the Osage were confined to a reservation what is now Oklahoma. There, they discovered oil and became incredibly wealthy. However, their prosperity made them target of exploration and violence.

PRE-COLONIAL LITERATURE

I also think it is important to present an overview of the early writings produced in the new land which was mainly Europeans accounts of explorations:

“They served as written records of a nation’s claim to a territory, as tales of exotic lands and thrilling adventure, and as testimonials to lure more people into investing in and emigrating to these fledgling colonies” (Kurant, 2019, p.5).



N. Currier. Public Domain, [via Wikimedia Commons](#)

One of the explorers I like to cite is Captain John Smith because of his connection to the story of Pocahontas, a Disney production that students might know. It is an interesting activity to ask students to investigate the true story of these two characters. John Smith is known for his role in establishing the Virginia colony at Jamestown in 1607, the first permanent English settlement in North America.

By the beginning of the 18th century, a total of 13 colonies were established on the American East Coast. Many of the settlers came for various reasons and one of them was the search for religious freedom.

With the arrival of Pilgrims and Puritans, sermons played the role of the most important form of literature. According to the site Oxford Bibliographies:

“For all of the 17th and most of the 18th century, the sermon was the dominant literary form in the American colonies. The sermon played an important role in the Revolution, and, while retreating somewhat in its dominance in the 19th and 20th centuries, remains a significant force in American cultural life.”

During the 1760s and early 1770s, the North American colonists experienced increasing conflicts with British imperial policies concerning taxation and frontier strategy and cut ties with the Empire by issuing the Declaration of Independence on July 4, 1776.



13 stars and stripes

By the end of the 18th century, the number of African slaves brought to the USA had reached its peak, with slavery eventually being abolished in 1865.

According to the site Britannica:

“A new era began when the United States declared its independence in 1776, and much new writing addressed the country’s future. American poetry and fiction were largely modeled on what was being published overseas in Great Britain, and much of what American readers consumed also came from Great Britain.”

Charles Dickens traveled to the USA in 1842 and observed that his works were consistently pirated, with no compensation received for his writing. Learn more about this issue on the BBC.

ROMANTICISM IN THE 19TH CENTURY USA LITERATURE

Possible learning objectives:

- Examine how the social and political events of the time influenced artistic and literary expression.
- Investigate recurring themes in Romantic literature, such as nature, the sublime, individualism, the pursuit of freedom, and social criticism.
- compare the optimism and idealism of Romanticism with the skepticism and exploration of darker themes in Dark Romanticism.

Historical Context

The 19th century in the USA began with the expansion of territory through purchases, conflicts, and by pushing Native Americans to less-desired lands. The Second Industrial Revolution was marked by significant technological developments: the invention of the steamboat, the construction of railroads, and the mass production of goods. These transformations shifted the country from a rural, agrarian society to an urban, industrialized one. However, this shift was not smooth: the conflicts between the rural, slave-supported agrarian society and the industrial, abolition-supporting urban society, ultimately led to the Civil War in 1861. Within this context, Romanticism came to life, yet strongly influenced by the Romanticism in Europe.

Poetry

In the early 19th century USA, Romanticism characterized poetry with its emphasis on emotions, imagination, nature, and individualism over society. It was also a period of experimentation with diverse poetic techniques.

1. Emily Dickinson (1810-1850)



[Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons](#)

Emily Dickinson was not publicly recognized during her lifetime; however, her poems secure her position as one of the most distinctive voices in American literature. She explored themes such as isolation, solitude, death, immortality, and the complexities of self. Pure beauty!

More:

[Emilydickinson.org](http://emilydickinson.org)

Poets.org

[USP: The complete poems of Emily Dickinson](#)

[Emily Dickinson: Poemas traduzidos](#)

Given that the poems of Emily Dickinson are highly evocative and capable of inspiring vivid images in the minds of readers, I invited my students to reflect on the images her text inspired in them and to put those images on paper:

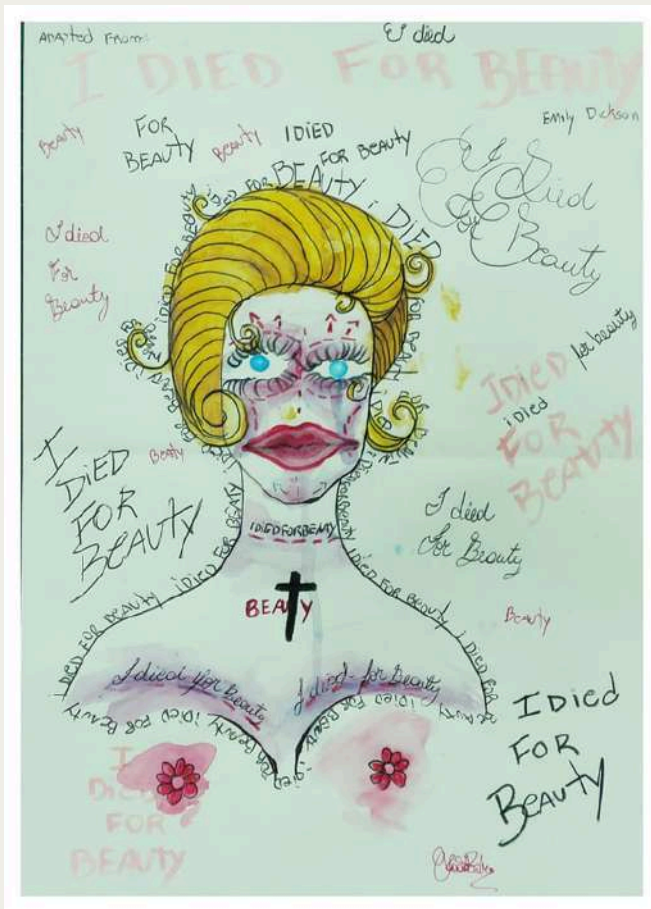


Illustration by João Pedro Cemin Marcon of 'I died for beauty' by Emily Dickinson.

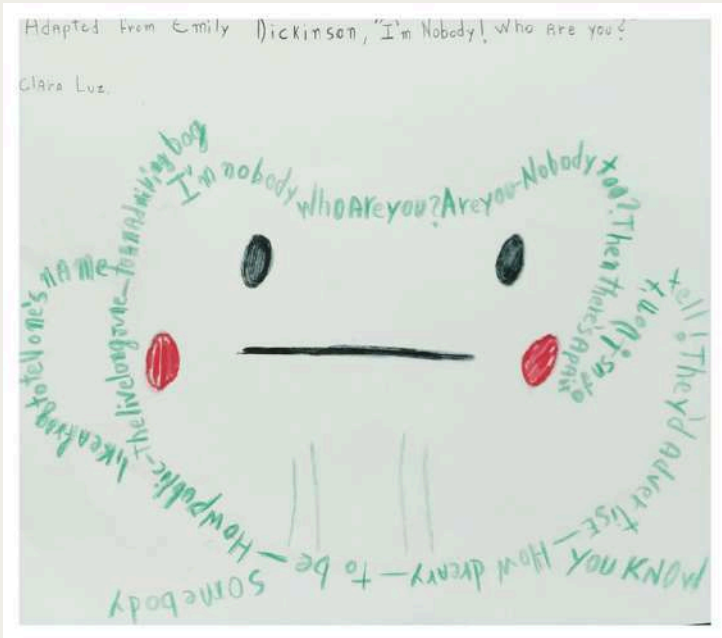


Illustration by Clara Luz from 'I'm Nobody. Who are you?'
by Emily Dickinson

A classroom objective might be:

- to illustrate the diverse thematic and stylistic elements present in various pieces of literature from the era/period being studied, with a particular emphasis on exploring the unique qualities of Emily Dickinson's poetry.

2. Walt Whitman (1819-1892)



George Collins Cox, Public domain, via
Wikimedia Commons

Biography and more

I enjoy discussing Walt Whitman with my students, drawing connections to the film 'Dead Poets Society.' If time permits, it's a nice activity to watch the film together. When time is limited, I typically bring trailers available on YouTube to the class.



By www.impawards.com, Fair use, <https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?curid=6755817>

Oh Me! Oh Life!

Walt Whitman

Oh me! Oh life! of the questions of these recurring,
Of the endless trains of the faithless, of cities fill'd with the foolish,
Of myself forever reproaching myself, (for who more foolish than I, and
who more faithless?)
Of eyes that vainly crave the light, of the objects mean, of the struggle ever
renew'd,
Of the poor results of all, of the plodding and sordid crowds I see around
me,
Of the empty and useless years of the rest, with the rest me intertwined,
The question, O me! so sad, recurring—What good amid these, O me, O
life?

Answer.

That you are here—that life exists and identity,
That the powerful play goes on, and you may contribute a verse.

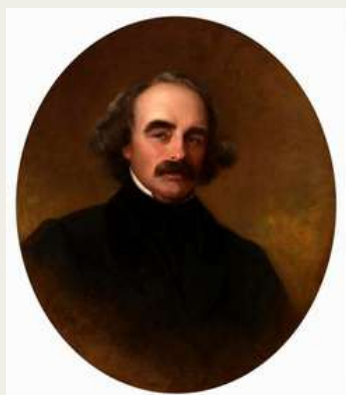
Dead Poets Society: Oh Me! Oh Life!

Dead Poets Society: O Captain! My Captain!

O Captain! My Captain!

Novel

1. Nathaniel Hawthorne (1804-1864)



[Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons](#)

Nathaniel Hawthorne is one of the greatest American authors. His masterpiece is 'The Scarlet Letter'. Many interesting themes are explored here: sin and guilt, puritanism and hypocrisy, nature and civilization, etc.

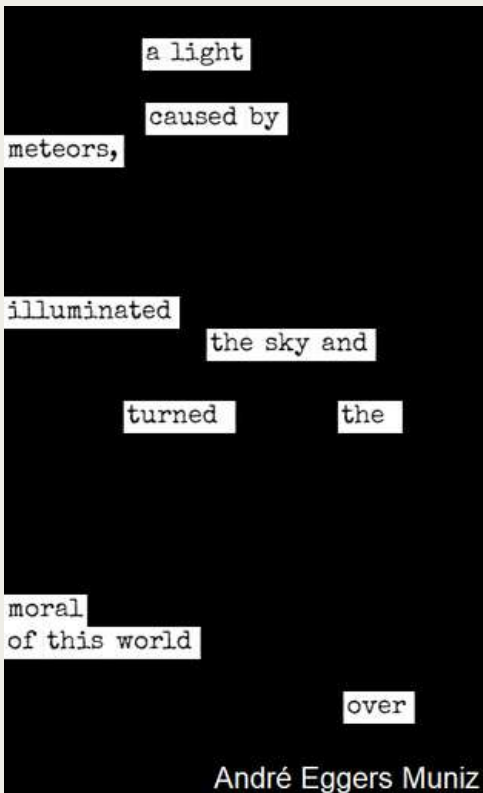
Once, I proposed a guided reading of 'The Scarlet Letter' with my students. I provided comments on the introduction (The Custom-House), divided the chapters into six parts for students to read as an extra-class activity, and set some questions for classroom discussions. Once again, the site [SparkNotes](#) was a valuable resource. Students could choose if they would read the text in [English](#) or in [Portuguese](#).

This is the classroom objective:

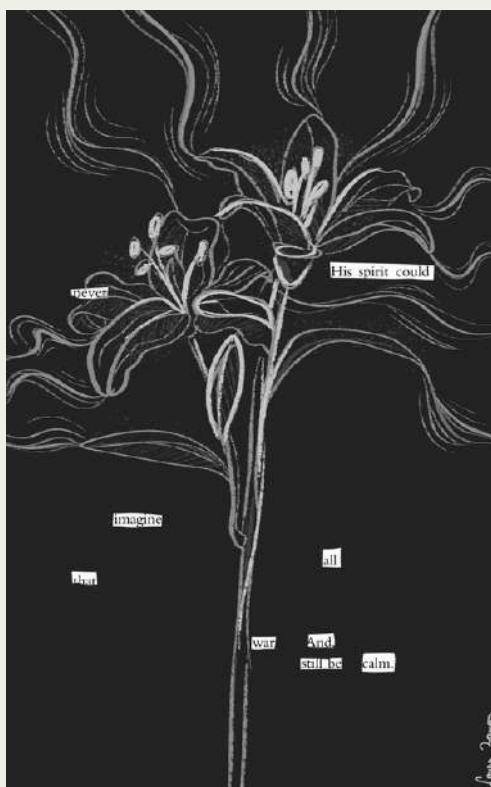
- to analyze and interpret the central themes, character development, and stylistic elements of the selected text.

This objective aims to guide readers toward a comprehensive understanding and critical exploration of the text.

In addition, I asked a group of my students to choose parts of the of 'The Scalet Letter' and to experiment something new from the production of Blackout Poetry:



Blackout poem by André Eggers Muniz.



Blackout poem by Laura Zanon

There is also a freely adapted [film](#) based on the book 'The Scarlet Letter,' released in 1995. Due to the differences in media, certain crucial elements, such as the depth of the characters, are missing, but it can still be a valuable suggestion for students.

More:

[Nathaniel Hawthorne documentary](#)

[The life of Nathaniel Hawthorne](#)

Short Story

According to Levy (2008), “[T]he birth of the short story as a literary genre was an American product of the mid- and late-nineteenth” (Levy, 2008, p.1). The author also adds that “later generations of short story writers, editors, and students invented Poe as the founder of the genre” (Levy, 2008, p. 10)

Reid (1977, p.29) identifies two key reasons for the emergence of the short story as a distinct genre in contrast to the novel, widely popular in British literature. Firstly, the novel reflected British society's focus on "manners, marriage, and money," while the short story thrived among the working class in areas of the American continent lacking social cohesion. The second reason is associated with the magazine market. The absence of international copyright regulations led to the proliferation of pirated cheap reprints of British novels, making it more expensive to print works by local novelists. Consequently, the short story gained popularity through inclusion in annuals and periodicals, particularly after 1830.

This book can be a useful classroom resource:
American Short Stories

1. Edgar Allan Poe (1809-1849)

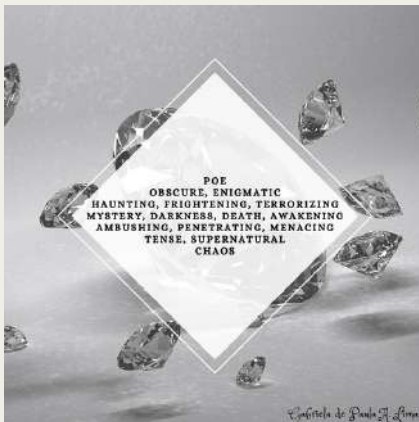


Edgar Allan Poe Public domain, via
Wikimedia Commons

Biography

Edgar Allan Poe wrote horror, mystery, detective and science fiction short stories. The author also wrote poems. ‘The Raven’ made him an overnight success.

After reading and discussing the emotions brought about by Poe's short stories, my students created some beautiful diamond poems exploring nouns, adjectives, etc.



Diamond poem by Gabriela de
Paula Andrade Lima



Diamond poem by Gabriele
Silvestre

There are also some examples of my students productions based on Poe's short stories in Chapter 3.

Edgar Allan Poe: complete tales & poem
Short Stories for EFL readers

TRANSCEDENTALISM IN THE 19TH CENTURY US LITERATURE

Possible learning objectives:

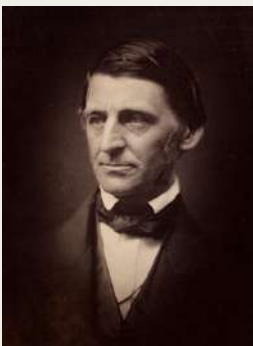
- Define and explain key Transcendentalist principles such as self-reliance, individualism, and the divinity of nature.
- Read and analyze primary Transcendentalist texts (or parts of) , including works by Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry David Thoreau.

According to VanSpanckeren (2007, p.12-13) Transcendentalism was, in general:

“a liberal philosophy favoring nature over formal religious structure, individualinsight over dogma, and humane instinct over social convention. American Transcendental Romantics pushed radical individualism to the extreme. American writers — then or later — often saw themselves as lonely explorers outside society and convention.”

Both Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry David Thoreau are two famous transcendentalists.

1. Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803-1882)



[Josiah Johnson Hawes. Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons](#)

“To go into solitude, a man needs to retire as much from his chamber as from society. I am not solitary whilst I read and write, though nobody is with me. But if a man would be alone, let him look at the stars.”

Ralph Waldo Emerson: excerpts from "Nature" (1836)

Biography

The complete works of R. W. Emerson

2. Henry David Thoreau (1817-1862)



Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons

Biography

Thoreau is also in 'Dead Poet Society'

Works by Thoreau

"I went to the woods because I wished to live deliberately, to front only the essential facts of life, and see if I could not learn what it had to teach, and not, when I came to die, discover that I had not lived. I did not wish to live what was not life, living is so dear; nor did I wish to practise resignation, unless it was quite necessary. I wanted to live deep and suck out all the marrow of life, ..."

Walden, 1850

Thoreau was one of the first American environmentalists, and he also argued for civil disobedience against unjust government and laws.

REALISM IN THE 19TH CENTURY USA LITERATURE

Possible learning objectives:

- Read and analyze representative Realist works from the 19th century, such as the ones by Mark Twain;
- Examine the literary techniques employed by Realist writers, such as use of dialect, and an emphasis on the mundane aspects of life.

Historical Context

From 1861 to 1865, the USA went through the Civil War. One significant trigger for it was the conflict between states that supported slavery and those that were abolitionists. Southern states, relying on an agricultural-based economy, needed slave labor, which was different from the more industrial-based economy of the Northern states.

According to McPherson (2010):

“The Civil War had a greater impact on American society and the polity than any other event in the country’s history. It was also the most traumatic experience endured by any generation of Americans.”

The Civil War freed millions of enslaved people, strengthened the formation of a single nation, and set the basis for establishing the USA as a global power in the 20th century. On the other hand, it was a bloody conflict, causing the death of more than 620,000 soldiers.



Julian Scott - Surrender of a Confederate Soldier - Smithsonian American Art Museum.jpg, via Wikimedia Commons.

Realism in Literature

Realism impacted both art and literature in the USA in the late 19th century. With the country suffering the consequences of the Civil War and

“Within this heady mix of political, economic, social, and cultural change, American writers began to look more to contemporary society and social issues for their writing material, rather than to the distant or fictional past.” (Berke et al., 2015, p. 53).

George Bellows, Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons



According to the site American Literature,

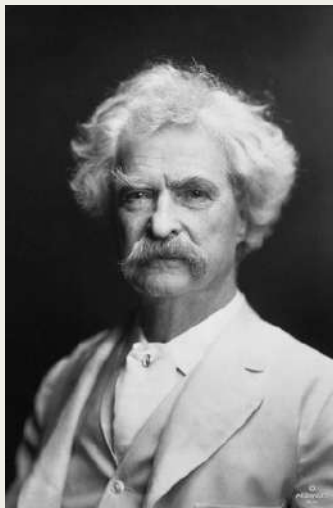
“Realism is the polar opposite of Romanticism. Realists depend on facts and reality, while Romantics embrace emotions, intuition, and individual freedoms of expression. ... Realists account for the forces of nature, government, and war, which confront the common man.”

The rise of Realism

Realism, Local Color and Regionalism

1. Mark Twain - Samuel Langhorne Clemens (1835-1910)

AF Bradley, Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons



Biography

Main Works

I really appreciated to work with my students ‘Adventures of Huckleberry Finn’ which is one of the great American novels. I presented them a summary available on YouTube. Language is an important issue to be discussed. According to the site SparkNotes:

“Although numerous characters in the novel speak in dialects different from Huck’s, the most notable character who does so is Jim, as evident in the first sentence Jim utters in the novel: “Yo’ ole father doan’ know, yit, what he’s a-gwyne to do.” When we first encounter Jim, his speech may be hard to parse and slow our understanding of the book. Words like “gwyne” (going,) “us” (was,) and “pooty” (pretty) may initially cause confusion. Jim’s unique vocabulary marks him as a speaker of a dialect Twain calls “the Missouri Negro dialect” in his “Explanatory” note. However, once the reader becomes familiar with Jim’s manner of speaking, his dialogue becomes easier to understand. In this way, the reader may experience Jim’s speech similarly to the way Huck experiences him as a person: initially foreign and strange, but soon sympathetic and engaging.”

NATURALISM IN THE 19TH CENTURY USA LITERATURE

Possible learning objectives:

- Define and explain the key characteristics of Naturalism in literature, including its emphasis on determinism, environmental influence, and a scientific approach to depicting human behavior.
- to reflect on the deterministic worldview.

The site Modern American Fiction argues that:

“Whereas Realism as a literary movement focused on the self-made individual, Naturalism was preoccupied with the impossibility of rising above one’s biological origins.”

Naturalist writers were highly influenced by:

- **Charles Darwin.** According to the site History.com:

“...Darwin’s theory of evolution, only the plants and animals best adapted to their environment will survive to reproduce and transfer their genes to the next generation. Animals and plants that are poorly adapted to their environment will not survive to reproduce.”

- **Social Darwinism.** The site Britannica.com states that Social Darwinism is:

“... the theory that human groups and races are subject to the same laws of natural selection as Charles Darwin perceived in plants and animals in nature. According to the theory, which was popular in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the weak were diminished and their cultures delimited while the strong grew in power and cultural influence over the weak.”

- **Determinism.** Also the site [Britannica.com](https://www.britannica.com) defines it as:

“Determinism entails that, in a situation in which a person makes a certain decision or performs a certain action, it is impossible that he or she could have made any other decision or performed any other action. In other words, it is never true that people could have decided or acted otherwise than they actually did. Determinism in this sense is usually understood to be incompatible with free will.”

- **Social Determinism.** The [Sociology Dictionary](#) presents the following definition: social determinism is

“A theory stating that all social phenomena are determined by external factors such as institutions or norms.”

As I have some orchids at home, once I brought one of them to my online classes and explained why it is known as Darwin's Orchid. Students just loved it!



According to Peterson et al. (2024):

“Naturalistic works went where Realistic works did not go, dealing with taboo subjects for the time, subjects such as prostitution, alcoholism, domestic violence, violent deaths, crime, madness, and degeneration. Sometimes defined as pessimistic materialistic determinism, Naturalism sought to look at human nature in a scientific light, and the author often took on the role of scientist, coolly observing the human animal in a variety of plights, at the mercy of forces beyond his control or understanding, compelled by instinct and determined by cause and effect to behave in certain, often self-destructive, ways as a result of heredity and environment.”

1. Edith Wharton (1862-1937)

Edith Wharton
Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons



Biography

Open Library

Domínio Público

Medium: reflections for contemporary times

Edith Wharton came to my attention after I watched the film 'The Age of Innocence'. Two things made this film one of my favorites: the camera movement showing the lavish decor and customs of New York society by the end of the 19th century, and barriers that separated Newland Archer and Countess Ellen Olenska.

'The Age of Innocence' earned Edith Wharton the Pulitzer Prize in 1921. She was the first woman to accomplish that feat.

Here, I conclude the navigation through 19th-century English Literature. I hope you enjoyed navigating as much as I did. Next, I will present the approach I have recently used for teaching literature to EFL students in basic education, along with some additional productions from my students.

CHAPTER 3: TEACHING
ENGLISH LITERATURE IN
BASIC EDUCATION
SCHOOLS IN BRAZIL

AN APPROACH TO TEACHING LITERATURE

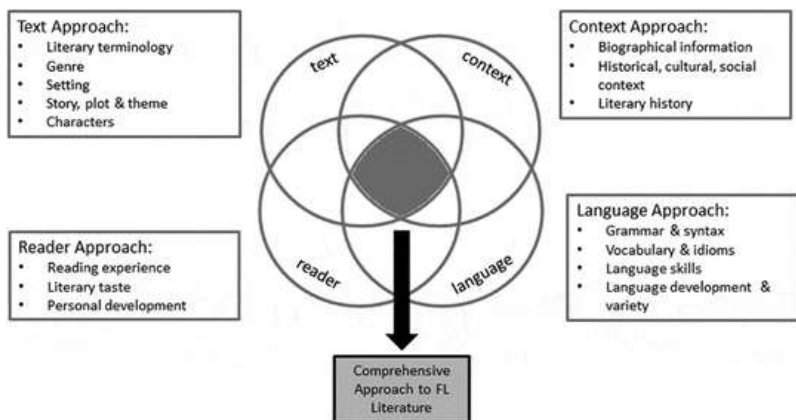
One of my concerns when teaching English Literature has been also how the content I teach can serve as a tool or resource for the teaching of English as an Foreign Language (EFL) in Brazilian basic education. This is (or should be) an integral part of training teachers in the Letras program.

Additionally, this ebook aligns with the Brazilian “Common Core” Curriculum or *Base Nacional Comum Curricular* (Brasil, 2017) and the State of Paraná’s Curricular Reference or *Referencial Curricular do Paraná* (Paraná, 2018). While these documents define the Genre Approach to EFL teaching, they do not provide a theoretical foundations for teachers. As such, I think Rojo and Barbosa (2015) might be helpful in addressing this gap.

Acknowledging that transferring educational policies into practice is no easy task, I discuss with my students the Comprehensive Approach to Foreign Language Literature Learning by Bloemert et al (2016, 2017). This model encompasses four approaches:

- The Text Approach allows for a thorough understanding of literary terminology, literary text types, story, plot and themes.

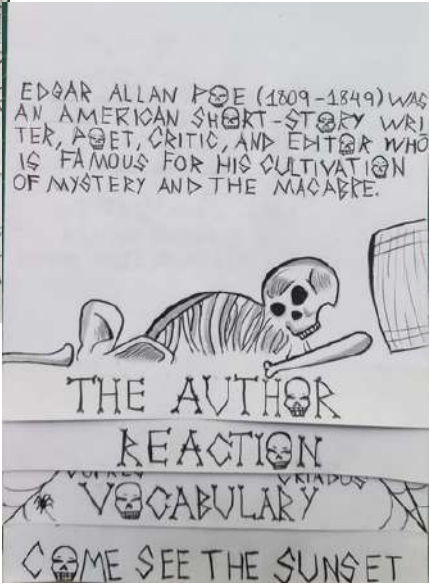
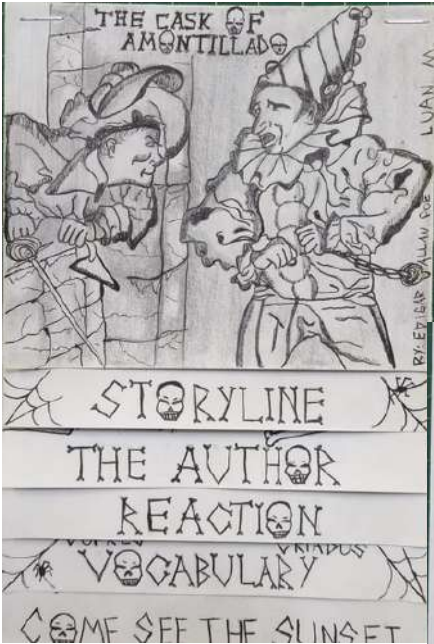
- The Context Approach provides insights, for example, into setting and the role of time and place, characters and biographical information.
- The Reader Approach promotes reader engagement, encouraging personal connections with the text by exploring personal reading experiences, literary reading taste, etc.
- The Language Approach contributes to language development by the analysis grammar and syntax, vocabulary and idioms, English language skills (reading, listening, speaking, writing), language development and variety.



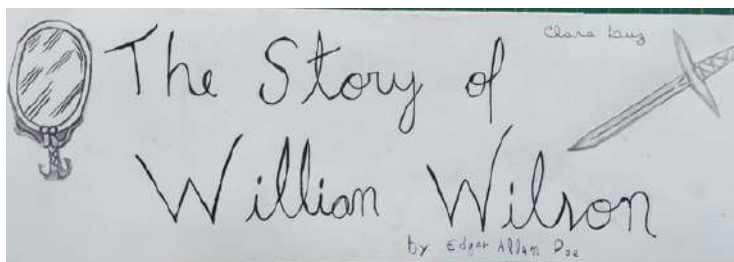
Bloemert et al (2017)

I believe the Comprehensive Approach provides students with a toolkit for understanding and appreciating literature, while simultaneously enabling meaningful language teaching and learning.

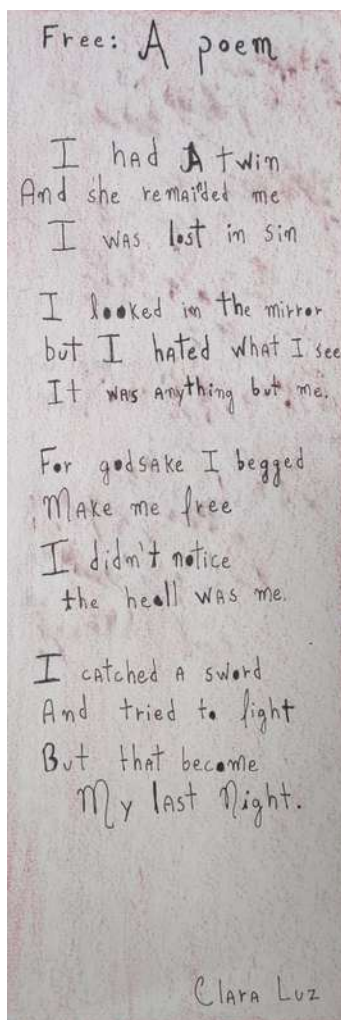
After reading about the Comprehensive Approach and discussing its potential application in basic education, I invited my students to apply it to one of their class readings (Edgar Allan Poe's Short Stories) using flipbooks. Here are some of their productions:



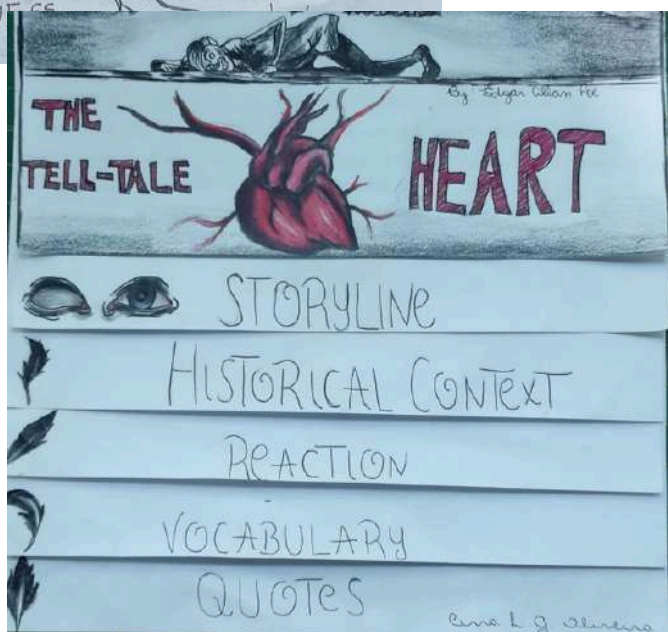
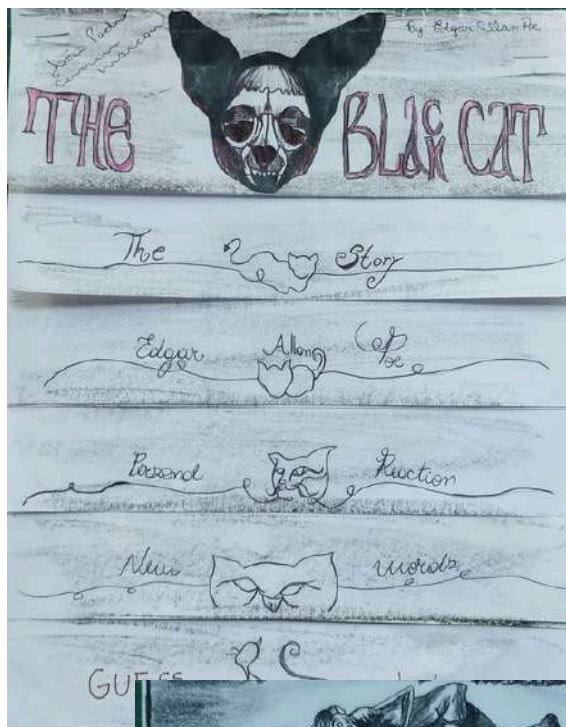
Flipbook by Luan Henrique Mendes



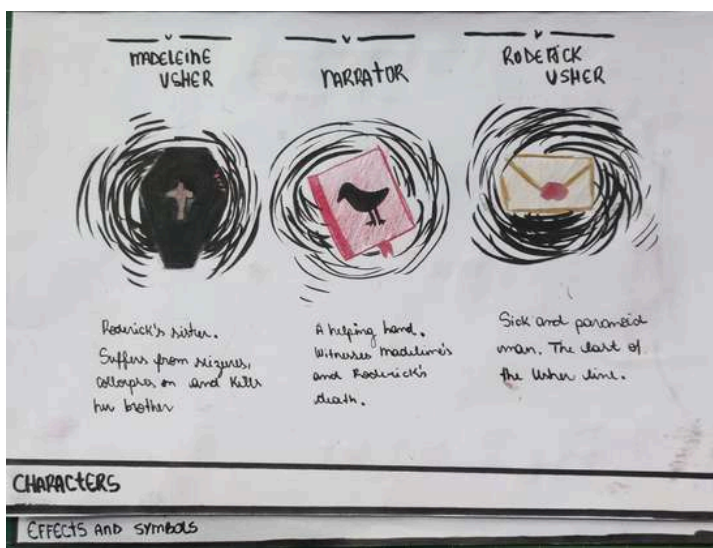
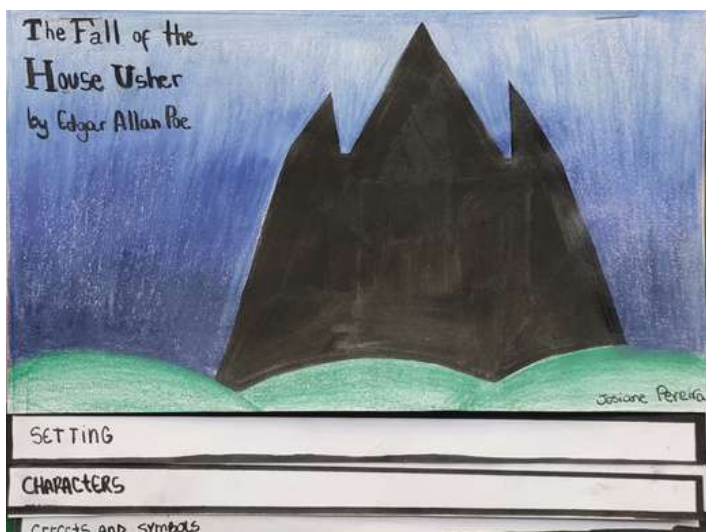
Flipbook by Clara Luz



Poem by Clara Luz



Flipbook by Ana Luiza Gobi de Oliveira



Flipbook by Josiane Pereira

Classroom objectives might be:

- Promote creative expression by encouraging students to write their own texts, reflecting the themes and styles of the era/period being studied.
- Illustrate the different elements -text, context, reader, and language - present in various pieces of literature from the era/period being studied.

Considering the mixed language proficiencies of students in Brazilian basic education and the lack of high-quality digital resources, I tasked my students with studying and producing different simple genres. such as the Blackout and Diamante Poetry mentioned before, and Magnetic Poetry, and Zine.

These are some more of the resources I believe we can use to explore the new language basic education students are learning in digital contexts and to delve into their ideas and feelings:

Poetry Machine

Poem Generator

Twitter Magnets

CLOSING REMARKS

This book is mainly about content curation. It is also a record of my experience of teaching English literature at UNIOESTE - Universidade Estadual do Oeste do Paraná - Foz do Iguaçu/Brazil as it traces the changes over the years, from having few resources to managing a wealth of information. As you read, I hope this collection supports you in learning and teaching English literature and EFL, particularly within the context of basic education in Brazil. It also reflects the adaptability and resilience of teachers during challenging times. I extend my gratitude to everyone who has been part of this journey. May this book serve as a valuable guide, and please feel free to adapt it, make corrections, and contribute your own ideas along the way.

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