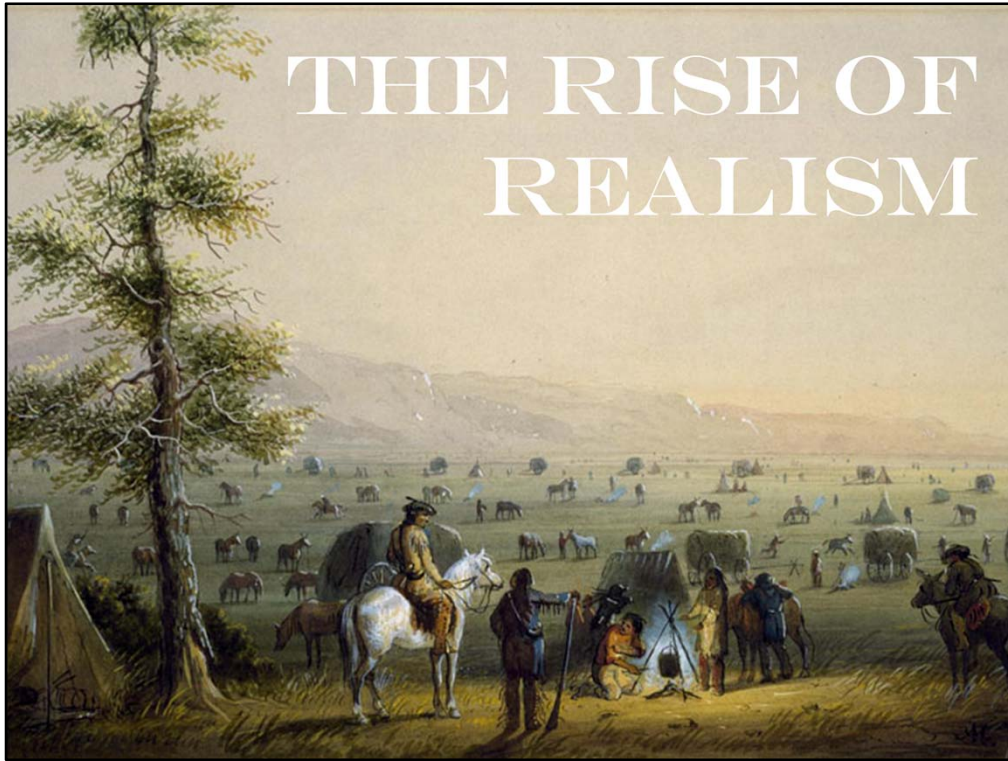


**Module 7: Realism in the Family**  
**Topic 1 Content: The Rise of Realism**



The Rise of Realism

## Module 7: Realism in the Family

### Topic 1 Content: The Rise of Realism

# REALISM (1850-1914)

- Focused on everyday realities
- Sought to represent the ordinary lives of people
- Incorporated aspects of biology, psychology, and sociology
- Characters from cities, rural settings, and lower classes



Realism was a literary movement that spanned the time period from approximately 1850 to 1914. Writers of Realism focused on everyday realities and sought to faithfully represent the ordinary lives of people, from the way they dressed and lived to the way they thought, felt, and spoke. Unlike the writers of the Romantic period, Realist writers often relied on and incorporated aspects of biology, psychology, and sociology into their writing. Rejecting the larger-than-life heroes from Romantic literature, Realism offered an emphasis on characters from cities, rural settings, and lower classes.

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## FORMS OF REALISM

- Regionalism - featured speech and mannerisms of people who live in specific geographic regions

**Mark Twain**

**Kate Chopin**

- Naturalism - relied heavily on emerging sciences to understand human behavior



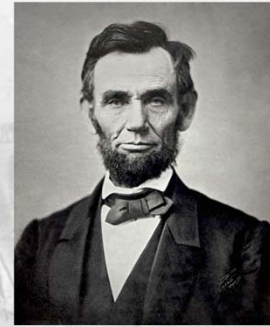
Regionalism, a form of Realism, featured the speech and mannerisms of people who live in specific geographic regions. Regionalist writers, such as Mark Twain and Kate Chopin, strove to depict the peculiarities of speech patterns, customs, and temperament of the people who lived in the region. Naturalism was another form of Realism that relied heavily on emerging sciences like biology and psychology in an attempt to understand human behavior. Jack London is a well-known writer of Naturalism.

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# DEVASTATION OF WAR

- Disagreements between the North and South
- 1850 - Fugitive Slave Act required people in every state to capture runaway slaves
- 1860 - Abraham Lincoln was elected president, prompting southern states to revolt
- Fighting began in 1861 and ended in 1865
- 620,000 died
- 500,000 wounded



Disagreements between the North and the South over slavery had been raging for years. In 1850, tensions flared higher with the passing of the Fugitive Slave Act, which required people in every state to capture runaway slaves. Additionally, the debate over slavery in the West; rising tariffs, or taxes between states; and differences in economics between the industrialized North and the agrarian South pushed everyone toward battle. Representing a political party that opposed the spread of slavery, Abraham Lincoln was elected president in 1860, prompting the southern states to revolt. Fighting began in April of 1861 and ended in 1865. By the end of the war, 620,000 men had died and at least 500,000 had been wounded. In this war, brother had truly fought against brother, and the task of reconstruction was daunting and long.

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## INFLUENCE OF THE CIVIL WAR

- Realism was greatly shaped by the Civil War
- Even Romantic writers documented the war
- Emerson was in favor of the war to end slavery



The rise of Realism was greatly shaped by the Civil War. Even Romantic writers such as Herman Melville and Ralph Waldo Emerson bore witness and documented the war in their writing. As you may imagine, their topics did not focus on exploring nature or non-conformity but on the horrors and atrocities of war. Emerson, a Romantic writer and thinker, was in favor of the war and felt it necessary to end slavery, which he staunchly opposed. But more than that, Emerson believed the war was justified and necessary to further the development of the nation as a whole.

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# SHIFT TO REALISM

- The Civil War - shift of attitude within the literary movements
- Authors felt the need to direct their attention to ordinary life and real aspects of the human condition



The Civil War was a major factor in the shift of attitude within the literary movements. Authors felt the need to direct their attention to ordinary life and real aspects of the human condition, often showing the negative or disparaging sides of reality. As you have learned, literature is not only written for entertainment but also to voice commentary about social and political issues. Many Realist writers during this time were inspired and motivated by the major problems of their generation.

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# WESTWARD EXPANSION

- Homestead Act of 1862 gave away 160 acres to anyone who could take land and establish a home
- 1869 - first transcontinental railroad
- 1890 - Native American civilizations were annihilated



While the eastern states battled, the western states were forming. The Homestead Act of 1862 gave away 160 acres to each eligible person who could take the land and establish a home on it. Over half a million farmers moved immediately to escape the pressures of war and to gain land. Miners and ranchers followed them by the thousands. In 1869, the first transcontinental railroad was completed, thus making travel more efficient. By 1890, in less than thirty years, the face of the West had changed forever and the Native American civilizations that had lived there were practically annihilated.