

# why we study literature

**why we study literature** is a question that delves into the core of human culture, education, and intellectual development. Literature, encompassing a wide range of written works from various periods and cultures, serves as a powerful medium to explore human experiences, emotions, and ideas. Studying literature allows individuals to gain insight into different historical contexts, societal values, and philosophical questions that have shaped civilizations. It also enhances critical thinking, empathy, and communication skills by engaging with complex narratives and diverse perspectives. This article examines the many reasons why we study literature, highlighting its educational, cultural, and personal significance. Below is an outline of the main topics that will be discussed.

- The Educational Value of Studying Literature
- The Cultural and Historical Significance of Literature
- Developing Critical Thinking and Analytical Skills
- Enhancing Empathy and Emotional Intelligence
- Literature's Role in Language and Communication
- Personal Growth and Lifelong Learning through Literature

## The Educational Value of Studying Literature

The study of literature plays a crucial role in formal education by fostering intellectual growth and broadening knowledge. It provides students with exposure to different writing styles, genres, and thematic elements, which contributes to a well-rounded academic experience. Literature also acts as a foundation for understanding other disciplines, including history, philosophy, psychology, and cultural studies.

## Enhancement of Language Skills

One of the primary educational benefits of literature is the enhancement of language abilities. Reading and analyzing literary texts improve vocabulary, grammar, and comprehension. Through exposure to various writing techniques, students learn to express themselves more effectively, both in writing and speech.

## **Introduction to Diverse Perspectives**

Studying literature introduces learners to multiple viewpoints and cultural backgrounds. This exposure encourages open-mindedness and a deeper understanding of the world beyond individual experiences. It prepares students to engage thoughtfully with complex global issues and diverse communities.

## **The Cultural and Historical Significance of Literature**

Literature serves as a window into the cultural and historical contexts of different societies. By studying literary works, individuals gain insight into the values, beliefs, and social dynamics of various time periods and places. This understanding enriches cultural awareness and preserves the legacy of human creativity.

## **Preservation of Cultural Heritage**

Many literary works act as cultural artifacts that preserve traditions, folklore, and historical events. These texts help maintain a connection to the past and provide a sense of identity for communities. Literature thus plays a vital role in safeguarding cultural heritage for future generations.

## **Reflection of Societal Changes**

Literature often mirrors societal transformations, capturing shifts in politics, gender roles, technology, and morality. Analyzing such texts allows readers to trace the evolution of human societies and understand the forces that shape social progress.

## **Developing Critical Thinking and Analytical Skills**

Studying literature cultivates critical thinking by encouraging readers to interpret complex narratives, identify themes, and evaluate the intentions of authors. This intellectual engagement promotes a deeper understanding of texts and the ability to form reasoned arguments.

## **Interpreting Symbolism and Themes**

Literary analysis involves unpacking symbolism, metaphors, and thematic elements that contribute to a text's meaning. This process sharpens analytical skills and the capacity to discern nuanced ideas embedded within language.

## **Evaluating Multiple Interpretations**

Literature often supports diverse interpretations, requiring readers to consider different perspectives and justify their conclusions. This practice fosters open-mindedness and the ability to critically assess various viewpoints.

## **Enhancing Empathy and Emotional Intelligence**

One of the profound reasons why we study literature is its ability to foster empathy by allowing readers to experience the lives and emotions of characters from different backgrounds. This emotional engagement contributes to greater emotional intelligence and social awareness.

## **Experiencing Diverse Human Conditions**

Through literature, readers encounter a wide range of human experiences, including joy, suffering, love, and conflict. Immersing oneself in these narratives promotes understanding and compassion for others.

## **Building Emotional Awareness**

Engaging with complex characters and their struggles enhances emotional awareness and sensitivity. This development aids in interpersonal relationships and social interactions by deepening the ability to recognize and respond to emotions.

## **Literature's Role in Language and Communication**

Literature contributes significantly to the development and preservation of language. It enriches communication by introducing new expressions, idioms, and storytelling techniques that influence everyday discourse.

## **Influence on Language Evolution**

Literary works often pioneer innovative uses of language, shaping how people communicate over time. Classic texts have contributed numerous phrases and stylistic devices that remain integral to modern language.

## **Improving Communication Skills**

Studying literature encourages precise and creative use of language, which enhances both written and oral communication. This skill is invaluable across professional and social contexts.

## **Personal Growth and Lifelong Learning through Literature**

Engagement with literature supports personal development by stimulating curiosity, imagination, and self-reflection. It encourages lifelong learning and intellectual fulfillment beyond formal education.

## **Stimulating Imagination and Creativity**

Literature invites readers to envision different worlds and scenarios, fostering creativity and imaginative thinking. This stimulation benefits problem-solving and innovation in various fields.

## **Encouraging Self-Reflection**

Reading literary works often prompts introspection about one's own beliefs, values, and experiences. This reflective process contributes to personal growth and a deeper understanding of oneself.

## **Benefits of Lifelong Literary Engagement**

- Continuous intellectual stimulation
- Enhanced cultural literacy

- Improved empathy and social skills
- Greater appreciation for art and human expression

## **Frequently Asked Questions**

### **Why is studying literature important in education?**

Studying literature is important because it helps develop critical thinking, enhances language skills, and provides insight into different cultures and human experiences.

### **How does literature reflect society and culture?**

Literature reflects society and culture by portraying social norms, values, conflicts, and historical contexts, allowing readers to understand diverse perspectives and societal changes.

### **What role does literature play in understanding human emotions?**

Literature explores complex human emotions and experiences, helping readers develop empathy and a deeper understanding of themselves and others.

### **How does studying literature improve communication skills?**

Studying literature improves communication skills by exposing readers to diverse vocabulary, writing styles, and rhetorical techniques, enhancing both reading comprehension and expressive abilities.

### **Why do we study classical literature alongside contemporary works?**

We study classical literature alongside contemporary works to appreciate the evolution of ideas, themes, and literary forms, and to recognize the foundations of modern thought and storytelling.

### **In what ways does literature contribute to critical thinking?**

Literature encourages critical thinking by challenging readers to analyze themes, motives, and narratives, fostering the ability to interpret complex texts and question assumptions.

## How can literature influence personal growth?

Literature can influence personal growth by inspiring self-reflection, expanding worldviews, and providing models for moral and ethical reasoning.

## Why is literature considered a reflection of human history?

Literature is considered a reflection of human history because it documents historical events, social issues, and cultural shifts, preserving collective memory across generations.

## How does literature help in understanding different perspectives?

Literature helps in understanding different perspectives by presenting diverse characters, cultures, and ideologies, promoting open-mindedness and cultural sensitivity.

## What is the value of studying literature in a digital age?

In a digital age, studying literature remains valuable as it cultivates deep reading skills, critical analysis, and cultural literacy, which are essential for navigating vast and varied information sources.

## Additional Resources

### 1. *Why Literature Matters: The Value of Reading in a Digital Age*

This book explores the enduring significance of literature in contemporary society. It argues that literature fosters empathy, critical thinking, and cultural awareness, which are essential skills in an increasingly digital world. The author investigates how literature can bridge gaps between diverse experiences and perspectives, enriching our understanding of humanity.

### 2. *The Purpose of Reading: Understanding Literature's Role in Human Experience*

Focusing on the intrinsic purposes of studying literature, this work delves into how literary texts help individuals make sense of their lives and the world around them. It highlights the transformative power of stories to shape identity and moral reasoning. The book also discusses the therapeutic and educational benefits of engaging with literary works.

### 3. *Reading for Life: The Importance of Literature in Education*

This book emphasizes literature's critical role in educational curricula, arguing that it cultivates imagination and ethical reflection. It addresses debates surrounding the teaching of literature and makes a case for its integration as a tool for personal and intellectual growth. Relevant examples demonstrate how literature prepares students for complex societal challenges.

### 4. *The Study of Literature: Unlocking the Human Condition*

Examining literature as a mirror to human nature, this book discusses how literary analysis reveals universal themes and cultural specificities. It posits that studying literature offers

insight into historical contexts and human psychology. The author presents literature as a vital discipline that fosters deeper emotional intelligence and cultural literacy.

#### 5. *Why We Read: The Cognitive and Emotional Benefits of Literature*

This book investigates the psychological and neuroscientific reasons behind our engagement with literature. It explores how reading enhances empathy, memory, and analytical skills. The author uses scientific research to explain why literature remains a powerful medium for cognitive and emotional development.

#### 6. *Literature and Life: Exploring the Reasons Behind Our Stories*

This title addresses the fundamental question of why humans create and study stories. It discusses literature as a reflection of societal values and individual experiences. Through various literary traditions, the book reveals how storytelling is essential for cultural continuity and personal meaning-making.

#### 7. *Engaging with Texts: The Meaning and Purpose of Literary Study*

Focusing on the active process of literary interpretation, this book highlights the dynamic relationship between reader and text. It emphasizes the skills developed through literary study, such as critical thinking and interpretive reasoning. The author argues that these skills are transferable and valuable beyond the classroom.

#### 8. *The Art of Literature: Understanding Its Role in Human Expression*

This book examines literature as an art form and its significance in expressing complex human emotions and ideas. It explores how literary works communicate experiences that might otherwise remain inexpressible. The author highlights literature's unique capacity to evoke aesthetic appreciation alongside intellectual engagement.

#### 9. *Literature as a Lens: Exploring Society, Culture, and Identity*

This book presents literature as a tool for examining social structures and cultural identities. It discusses how literary texts challenge dominant narratives and provide alternative viewpoints. The author demonstrates that studying literature encourages critical awareness of power dynamics and fosters social empathy.

## **Why We Study Literature**

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**why we study literature:** *Why Study Literature?* Jan Alber, Kraglund, Rikke Andersen Kraglund, Stefan Iversen, Louise Brix Jacobsen, Reestorff, Camilla Møhring Reestorff, Nielsen, Henrik Skov Nielsen, 2011-10-11 This book presents new ways of thinking about the historical, epistemological and institutional role of literature, and aims at providing a theoretically well-founded basis for what might otherwise be considered a relatively unfounded historical fact, i.e. that both literature and the teaching of literature hold a privileged position in many educational institutions. The contributors take their point of departure in the title of the volume and use narratological,

historical, cognitive, rhetorical, postcolonial and political frameworks to pursue two separate but not necessarily related questions: Why literature? and, Why study? This collection brings together theoretical studies and critical analyses on literature as a medium among, and compared to, other media and includes essays on the physical and mental geography of literature, focusing on the consequences and values of its reading and studying.

**why we study literature:** *Literary Studies in Action* Alan Durant, Nigel Fabb, 2006-05-19 'This is a textbook for the times, which addresses itself brilliantly to the twin phenomena of expanding horizons and diminishing resources of English studies.' - David Lodge

**why we study literature: Brown on Brown** Frederick Luis Aldama, 2009-07-21 Common conceptions permeating U.S. ethnic queer theory tend to confuse aesthetics with real-world acts and politics. Often Chicano/a representations of gay and lesbian experiences in literature and film are analyzed simply as propaganda. The cognitive, emotional, and narrational ingredients (that is, the subject matter and the formal traits) of those representations are frequently reduced to a priori agendas that emphasize a politics of difference. In this book, Frederick Luis Aldama follows an entirely different approach. He investigates the ways in which race and gay/lesbian sexuality intersect and operate in Chicano/a literature and film while taking into full account their imaginative nature and therefore the specific kind of work invested in them. Also, Aldama frames his analyses within today's larger (globalized) context of postcolonial literary and filmic canons that seek to normalize heterosexual identity and experience. Throughout the book, Aldama applies his innovative approach to throw new light on the work of authors Arturo Islas, Richard Rodriguez, John Rechy, Ana Castillo, and Sheila Ortiz Taylor, as well as that of film director Edward James Olmos. In doing so, Aldama aims to integrate and deepen Chicano literary and filmic studies within a comparative perspective. Aldama's unusual juxtapositions of narrative materials and cultural personae, and his premise that literature and film produce fictional examples of a social and historical reality concerned with ethnic and sexual issues largely unresolved, make this book relevant to a wide range of readers.

**why we study literature:** *An Introduction to the Study of Literature* William Henry Hudson, 2006 Literature Is A Vital Record Of What Men Have Seen In Life, What They Have Experienced Of It, What They Have Thought And Felt About Those Aspects Of It. Fundamentally An Expression Of Life Through The Medium Of Language, Literature Accordingly Needs To Be Systematically Studied. The Present Book Is A Treasure In This Direction Owing To Its Concise And Easily Comprehensible Elucidation Of Ways Of Studying The Varied Genre Of Literature Poetry, Prose Fiction, Drama, Short Story, Essay And Criticism.A Great Contribution Of W.H. Hudson A Prominent 19Th Century Literary Figure, The Present Book Is Planned As A Guide And Companion To One S Own Study. It Is Self-Contained, Highly Interesting And Suggestive In Itself. It Is Hoped That It Will Prove Immensely Useful To All Those Readers For Whom Literature Is Primarily A Means Of Enjoyment And A Help To Life.

**why we study literature: Teaching English Literature 16-19** Carol Atherton, Andrew Green, Gary Snapper, 2013-07-18 Teaching English Literature 16 - 19 is an essential new resource that is suitable for use both as an introductory guide for those new to teaching literature and also as an aid to reflection and renewal for more experienced teachers. Using the central philosophy that students will learn best when actively engaged in discussion and encouraged to apply what they have learnt independently, this highly practical new text contains: discussion of the principles behind the teaching of literature at this level; guidelines on course planning, pedagogy, content and subject knowledge; advice on teaching literature taking into account a range of broader contexts, such as literary criticism, literary theory, performance, publishing, creative writing and journalism; examples of practical activities, worksheets and suggestions for texts; guides to available resources. Aimed at English teachers, teacher trainees, teacher trainers and advisors, this resource is packed full of new and workable ideas for teaching all English literature courses.

**why we study literature:** Sanshiro Natsume Soseki, 2009-11-26 One of Soseki's most beloved works of fiction, the novel depicts the 23-year-old Sanshiro leaving the sleepy countryside for the



first time in his life to experience the constantly moving 'real world' of Tokyo, its women and university. In the subtle tension between our appreciation of Soseki's lively humour and our awareness of Sanshiro's doomed innocence, the novel comes to life. Sanshiro is also penetrating social and cultural commentary.

**why we study literature:** *The Academy and Literature* , 1903

**why we study literature: Transnationalism and Translation in Modern Chinese, English, French and Japanese Literatures** Ryan Johnson, 2020-12-15 The theory of "literary worlds" has become increasingly important in comparative and world literatures. But how are the often-contradictory elements of Eastern and Western literatures to cohere in the new worlds such contact creates? Drawing on the latest work in philosophical logic and analytic Asian philosophy, this monograph proposes a new model of literary worlds that is best suited to comparative literature dealing with Western and East Asian traditions. Unlike much discussion of world literature anchored in North American traditions, featured here is the transnational work of artists, philosophers, and poets writing in English, French, Japanese and Mandarin in the twentieth century. Rather than imposing sharp borders, this book suggests that vague boundaries link Eastern and Western literary works and traditions, and that degrees of distance can better help us to see the multiple dimensions that both distinguish and join together literary worlds East and West. As such, it enables us to grasp not only how East Asian and Western writers translate one another's works into their own languages and traditions, but also how modern writers East and West modify their own traditions in order to make them fit in the new constellation of literary worlds brought about by the complex flow of literary information across twentieth-century Eurasia.

**why we study literature:** Proceedings of the ... Convocation of University of the State of New York University of the State of New York, 1895

**why we study literature:** *The J. Hillis Miller Reader* Joseph Hillis Miller, Julian Wolfreys, 2005 This anthology exhibits the diversity, inventiveness, and intellectual energy of the writings of J. Hillis Miller, the most significant North American literary critic of the twentieth century. From the 1950s onward, Miller has made invaluable contributions to our understanding of the practice and theory of literary criticism, the ethics and responsibilities of teaching and reading, and the role of literature in the modern world. He has also shown successive generations of scholars and students the necessity of comprehending the relationship between philosophy and literature. Divided into six sections, the volume provides more than twenty significant extracts from Miller's works. In addition, there is a new interview with Miller, as well as a series of specially commissioned critical responses to Miller's work by a number of the leading figures in literary and cultural studies today. Following a comprehensive critical introduction by the editor, each section has a brief introduction, directing the reader toward pertinent themes. There is also a comprehensive bibliography and a chronology of Miller's professional life and activities. This reader, the first of Miller's work in English, provides an indispensable overview and introduction to one of the most original critical voices to have emerged since the inception of the teaching of English and American literature in universities in the English-speaking world.

**why we study literature: Literature & Dogma** Matthew Arnold, 1873

**why we study literature:** American Languages, and Why We Should Study Them Daniel G. Brinton, 2020-03-16 In *American Languages, and Why We Should Study Them*, Daniel G. Brinton delves into the rich tapestry of Indigenous languages across North America, exploring their complexities and cultural significance. Brinton adopts an analytical yet accessible literary style, weaving together linguistic anthropology and historical context to demonstrate how these languages reflect diverse worldviews and social structures. His examination is not just a linguistic inquiry; it is a call to recognize and appreciate the intellectual heritage embedded within these languages, which are often marginalized in mainstream discourse. Daniel G. Brinton, a prominent American linguist and ethnologist of the late 19th century, was deeply influenced by his interest in the preservation of Native American culture and languages. His extensive travels and interactions with various Indigenous communities enriched his understanding of their languages, illuminating the profound

connections between language, identity, and cultural survival. This book is a culmination of his passion for linguistic diversity and his commitment to advocating for the recognition of Indigenous voices. This book is essential for anyone interested in linguistics, anthropology, or cultural studies, as it not only broadens the understanding of American Indigenous languages but also emphasizes the importance of their preservation. By studying this book, readers will gain insight into the crucial role these languages play in shaping the cultural landscape of America and the broader implications of linguistic loss.

**why we study literature:** *English Journal* , 1920

**why we study literature:** *Proceedings of the High School Conference* University of Illinois. High school visitor, 1922

**why we study literature:** *The Journal of English and Germanic Philology* , 1908

**why we study literature:** *Opening Hearts by Opening Minds* Connie Wineland, 2007-06-01 This book is for Christian readers of fiction who might experience difficulty trying to make an informed choice beyond what is being published by evangelical presses. Marketed to a specific target audience, evangelical fiction oftentimes leaves a reader with a strong emotional response but lacks the literary depth or the breadth of subject that could inspire life-changing spiritual growth. With this premise at the heart of her book, Connie Wineland includes her own story of conversion to Christianity by way of reading fiction. During her late twenties and early thirties, particularly while in graduate school, Wineland became immersed in literary and rhetorical studies while also practicing an Eastern form of religion as well as Native American spirituality. However, despite all her training in literary theory, her readings in Romantic, Victorian, modern, and postmodern literature (which she explains), as well as her personal interest in mythology and world religions, kept her questioning the existence of God and the possible nature of God. Then, as a relatively new convert to Christianity, she faced several challenges at a small Christian college where she taught literature and writing courses. Eventually wanting to reach beyond the academic community, Wineland began a local Christian readers' group, which she ran for four years. She includes in this book resources and materials such as sample syllabi and study-guide questions, useful Web addresses, and plenty of how-to information for starting and running your own book club. Also included is an extensive list of annotated titles of recommended reading to get anyone started!

**why we study literature:** *Exam Nation* Sammy Wright, 2024-08-15 School should equip children for adulthood. In reality, it means one thing: exams. Exam Nation sets out a better way - and, crucially, shows us how we might get there. 'An essential read - as entertaining as it is insightful - for anyone who cares about the way we treat young people ... Brilliant' OBSERVER Educationalist and Head of School Sammy Wright argues that grades, rankings and Ofsted reports all miss the point of school, and together they are undermining our whole approach to education. Rather than sorting pupils into winners and losers, we need to think differently about what our schools are actually for - to see them as communities not factories - if we are to give all young people the opportunities and future they deserve. 'Such a compelling read' TELEGRAPH 'Deeply absorbing ... Wright deserves the highest marks' FINANCIAL TIMES 'Extraordinary ... The book education has been waiting for' LAURA MCINERNEY 'Persuasive ... He is clearly a superb teacher' SAM FREEDMAN, LITERARY REVIEW

**why we study literature:** *A Handbook for Teacher Research* Colin Lankshear, Michele Knobel, 2004-04-16 "This informative book helped me to understand research in general and to bring focus and clarity to my current research project. The text answers questions and provides guidance and support in a manner that is user-friendly and easy to comprehend.... After reading this book, I feel empowered as a teacher-researcher and would unhesitatingly recommend it to other teacher-researchers, graduate students and educators."Francesca Crowther - teacher and doctoral student, Nova Scotia, Canada. This book provides a comprehensive and detailed approach to teacher research as systematic, methodical and informed practice. It identifies five requirements for all kinds of research, and provides clear and accessible guidelines for teachers to use in conducting their own classroom-based studies. Features: A clear definition of teacher research which insists on

more than 'stories' and anecdotal 'retrospectives' Innovative organisational structure based on the collection and analysis of spoken, written and observed data, with strong emphasis on the design of research projects Easy-to-use and widely applicable tools and techniques for collecting and analysing data in qualitative research Informed by the authors' own wide-ranging experiences, A Handbook of Teacher Research provides everything the teacher researcher needs in order to conduct good quality practitioner research. It is ideal for upper level undergraduate Education programmes and for postgraduate research, as well as for teacher researchers who conceive and drive their own independent studies.

**why we study literature: Why the Humanities Matter** Frederick Luis Aldama, 2008-07-01 Is there life after postmodernism? Many claim that it sounded the death knell for history, art, ideology, science, possibly all of Western philosophy, and certainly for the concept of reality itself. Responding to essential questions regarding whether the humanities can remain politically and academically relevant amid this twenty-first-century uncertainty, *Why the Humanities Matter* offers a guided tour of the modern condition, calling upon thinkers in a variety of disciplines to affirm essential concepts such as truth, goodness, and beauty. Offering a lens of new humanism, Frederick Aldama also provides a liberating examination of the current cultural repercussions of assertions by such revolutionary theorists as Said, Foucault, Lacan, and Derrida, as well as Latin Americanists such as Sommer and Mignolo. Emphasizing pedagogy and popular culture with equal verve, and writing in colloquial yet multifaceted prose, Aldama presents an enlightening way to explore what culture actually does—who generates it and how it shapes our identities—and the role of academia in sustaining it.

**why we study literature: Tech Anxiety** Christopher A. Sims, 2013-06-11 This project examines the representation of anxiety about technology that humans feel when encountering artificial intelligences in four science fiction novels: *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?*, *Neuromancer*, 2001: A Space Odyssey, and *Cloud Atlas*. By exploring this anxiety, something profound can be revealed about what it means to be a person living in a technologically saturated society. While many critical investigations of these novels focus on the dangerous and negative implications of artificial intelligence, this work uses Martin Heidegger's later writings on technology to argue that AIs might be more usefully read as catalysts for a reawakening of human thought.

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**Do you need the "why" in "That's the reason why"? [duplicate]** Relative why can be freely substituted with that, like any restrictive relative marker. I.e, substituting that for why in the sentences above produces exactly the same pattern of

**"Why do not you come here?" vs "Why do you not come here?"** "Why don't you come here?" Beatrice purred, patting the loveseat beside her. "Why do you not come here?" is a question seeking the reason why you refuse to be someplace. "Let's go in

**indefinite articles - Is it 'a usual' or 'an usual'? Why? - English** As Jimi Oke points out, it doesn't matter what letter the word starts with, but what sound it starts with. Since "usual" starts with a 'y' sound, it should take 'a' instead of 'an'. Also, If you say

**Where does the use of "why" as an interjection come from?** "why" can be compared to an old Latin form qui, an ablative form, meaning how. Today "why" is used as a question word to ask the reason or purpose of something

**Contextual difference between "That is why" vs "Which is why"?** Thus we say: You never know, which is why but You never know. That is why And goes on to explain: There is a subtle but important difference between the use of that and which in a

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