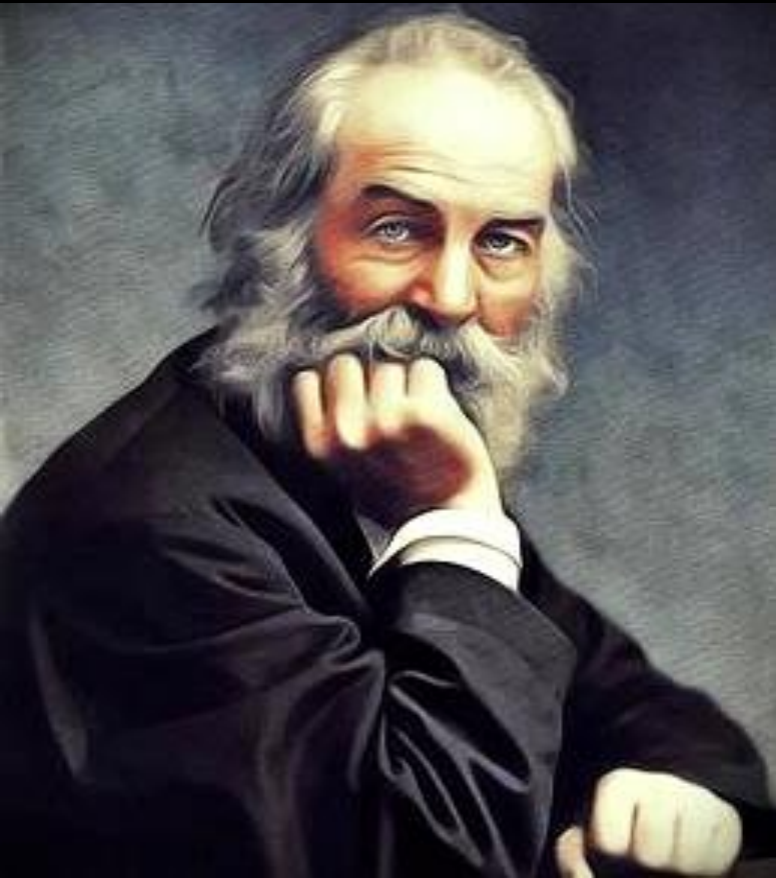


UNIT 3 A Nation Divided
Slavery and The Civil War 1850 to 1865

A STEM School
FROEBEL
BILINGUAL SCHOOL
Home of the Space Generation



Author Focus:
**WALT
WHITMAN**

with **Jim Soto**

SPEAK YOUR MIND

What do you **like** about living in the United States? What **don't** you like?
Take a minute to consider, answer and explain the question in your notebook.



Walt Whitman (1819–1892) is thought by many to be the greatest of all American poets, often called the father of free verse. A humanist, he was a part of the transition between transcendentalism and realism, incorporating both views in his works. He celebrated democracy, nature, love, and friendship. This monumental work chanted praises to the body as well as to the soul, and found beauty and reassurance even in death.





Whitman was a religious skeptic: though he accepted all churches, he believed in none. God, to him, was both immanent and transcendent and the human soul was immortal and in a state of progression.

from PREFACE TO LEAVES OF GRASS

Unconventional in both content and technique, **Leaves of Grass** is the most influential volume of poems in the history of American literature. It is the book of poetry for which Walt Whitman is best known. The 1855 edition is the only one for which Whitman wrote a preface, or introduction. In it, he presented many of his opinions and beliefs, hoping to enlighten the American people and regenerate the ideals of the American republic.



from I HEAR AMERICA SINGING

“I Hear America Singing” is one of the most famous poems from *Leaves of Grass*. It, too, celebrates the common man and woman. In this poem, Whitman salutes working-class people who take pride in their occupations. The poem is written in free verse and contains examples of Whitman’s evocative word choice.



In his day, Whitman sometimes was criticized for being unconventional. In reading Whitman's preface and poem, look for conventional Romantic elements, including his idealism and passion for America and Americans. Also look for ways Whitman broke from convention—for instance, his use of free verse.





LITERARY ELEMENTS

Romanticism

Literary and artistic movement of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries that placed value on emotion or imagination over reason, the individual over society, and freedom over authority.

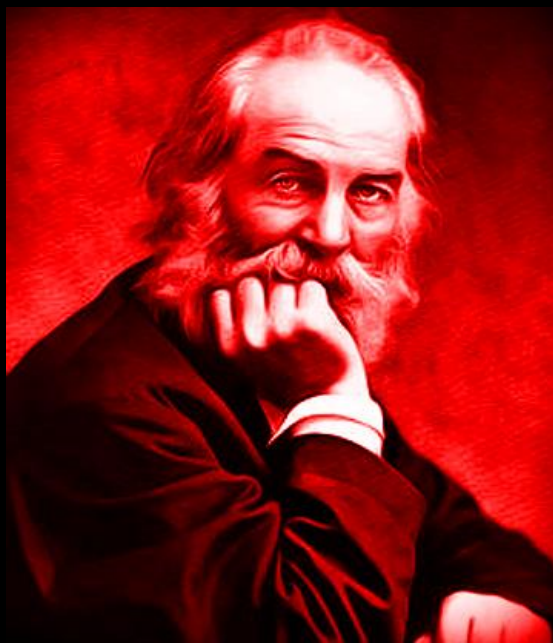
Free Verse

Is poetry that does not use regular rhyme, meter, or stanza division.

ASSESSMENT

After reading pages 203-208 in your book, complete the activities:

1. REFER TO TEXT &
2. REASON WITH TEXT
3. & ANALYZE LITERATURE
 - **Romanticism and Free Verse** - Which elements of Romanticism did you find in the preface to *Leaves of Grass* and "I Hear America Singing"? Do you think that laborers in the nineteenth century were as content as Whitman portrays them? Why or why not?
 - What elements of free verse are included in the Preface to *Leaves of Grass*? Why is "I Hear America Singing" an example of free verse?



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