

Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803-1882)

American poet, philosopher, lecturer, and essayist

Ralph Waldo Emerson was an American essayist and philosopher. Later he participated in national issues and delivered many antislavery speeches, even welcoming the beginning of Civil War. Ralph Waldo Emerson's works are a pivotal part of American literature.

Ralph Waldo Emerson was born on 25 May 1803 in the Puritan New England town of Boston, Massachusetts. Young Ralph had a strict but loving upbringing. Early on young Waldo as he like to be called started keeping journals and later would base many of his essays on his thoughts and observations. While his writings were sometimes criticized as being too abstract, he was an eloquent and popular speaker. After studying the classics at the Boston Latin School, Emerson enrolled in Harvard College, graduating in 1821.

Initially published anonymously, Emerson's first collection of essays, *Nature*, is the culmination of much soul-searching and scholarly study by Emerson in the fields of philosophy and religion. Never intending to be regarded as a philosopher, Emerson emerged as one of the original thinkers of his age.

The history of Emerson's thought is a rebel against the world of "mechanical necessity" created in the 18th century and the establishment of the sovereignty of a personality . His influence on the development of the American literature can hardly be overestimated. Emily Dickenson and Robert Frost grow as poets under his influence. His quotations are still popular in the modern American society.

Task 1

Questions:

1. What was Ralph Waldo Emerson's profession?

- A. Poet
- B. Philosopher
- C. Lecturer
- D. Essayist

2. Where was Ralph Waldo Emerson born?

- A. New York City, New York
- B. Boston, Massachusetts
- C. Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
- D. Chicago, Illinois

3. What did Emerson study at the Boston Latin School?

- A. Philosophy
- B. Religion
- C. Classics
- D. Literature

4. What was the title of Emerson's first collection of essays?

- A. Nature
- B. Soul-searching
- C. Scholarly Study
- D. Original Thinkers

5. How was Emerson's writing style sometimes criticized?

- A. Too abstract
- B. Too simplistic
- C. Too repetitive
- D. Too emotional

6. Who were two poets influenced by Emerson?

- A. Emily Dickinson and Robert Frost
- B. Walt Whitman and Langston Hughes
- C. Edgar Allan Poe and Sylvia Plath
- D. Maya Angelou and T.S. Eliot

7. What is the lasting impact of Emerson's work?

- A. Influence on American literature
- B. Influence on European literature
- C. Influence on Asian literature
- D. Influence on African literature

Task 2

Statements:

1. Ralph Waldo Emerson was an American novelist.
2. Emerson participated in national issues and delivered antislavery speeches.
3. Emerson was born in New York City.
4. Emerson's first collection of essays was titled "Nature."
5. Emerson's writings were often criticized for being too concrete.
6. Emerson studied the classics at Harvard College.
7. Emerson intended to be regarded as a philosopher.
8. Emerson rebelled against the world of "mechanical necessity."
9. Emily Dickinson and Robert Frost were influenced by Emerson.
10. Emerson's quotations are no longer popular in modern American society.