

PERRINE'S
LITERATURE

STRUCTURE, SOUND & SENSE

Thirteenth Edition

Greg Johnson

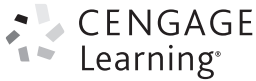
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**Perrine's Literature:
Structure, Sound & Sense,
Thirteenth Edition**

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PREFACE

In preparing this thirteenth edition of *Perrine's Literature: Structure, Sound, and Sense*, I have striven to be faithful to the principles established by Laurence Perrine more than sixty years ago while also acknowledging the evolving nature of literature. Not only have I been guided by my own experience but also by the rich legacy of Thomas R. Arp, who joined Perrine in 1979, and by the helpful suggestions of many teachers who have contributed the results of their classroom experience. Many of them are identified in the “Professional Acknowledgments” pages. Their insights have been invaluable in helping me replace more than 25 percent of the literature printed in the previous edition.

Here I must expand briefly on the contribution of Thomas R. Arp, who passed away in 2015 but whose work on *Literature* for more than thirty-five years has left an indelible imprint. Professor Arp's depth of knowledge and experience with the book as a whole, combined with his perspicacity in choosing stories to illustrate the principles of each chapter, has been a source of inspiration to me during the many years I worked with him, and here I wish to salute his achievement. Although any faults in this new edition are mine alone, I continued to benefit from his wisdom and insight in his last years, since he graciously consented to serve in a consulting role as we revised the book. Thus his name, I'm happy to say, continues to grace the cover of the book, a fitting reminder of his past contributions.

In keeping with Perrine's and Arp's shared principles, the book works to balance the classic with the contemporary, to represent a wide diversity of writers, and to emphasize the importance of understanding the elements of literature as the avenue to enjoy and appreciate it. Although there are many flourishing approaches to literature and its effects, all three of us have always believed that the initial step must be understanding the major elements of fiction, poetry, and drama.

This book is written for the student who is beginning a serious study of literature. It seeks to give that student a sufficient grasp of the nature and variety of fiction, poetry, and drama; some reasonable means for reading with appreciative understanding; and a few primary ideas on how to evaluate literature. The separate chapters gradually introduce the student to the elements of literature, putting the emphasis always on *how* and *why*: *How* can the reader use these elements to get at the meaning of the work, to

interpret it correctly, and to respond to it adequately. *Why* does the writer use these elements? What values have they for the writer and the reader?

In matters of theory, some issues are undoubtedly simplified, but I hope none seriously, and some more sophisticated theoretical approaches have had to be excluded. The purpose has always been to give the beginning student something to understand and use. The first assumption of *Literature* is that literature needs to be read carefully and considered thoughtfully, and that, when so read, it gives readers continuing rewards in experience and understanding. I also assume that some works repay more richly than others the trouble and effort expended in reading them, and my objective is to help the student identify, understand, enjoy, and prefer such works. To this end, the book examines the major elements of literature and suggests some criteria for judgment.

The organization and structure of the book reinforce the step-by-step approach to understanding literature. Each chapter contains two parts: (1) a discussion of the topic indicated by the chapter title, with illustrative works, and (2) a relevant selection of additional works with study questions for further illustration of the topic. Also, in each chapter I include a list of review topics for the materials, and a list of Suggestions for Writing about those materials as they are illustrated elsewhere in the book.

The book opens with a section on “Writing about Literature,” which embraces the important assumption that the fullest understanding and appreciation of a literary work arises from the reader’s ability to express in language its meaning and emotional effects. The process of finding the right words to make these clear, and the additional clarity that results from the correct and effective presentation of these materials, is a significant part of making a work part of one’s experience.

Although the book emphasizes the study of literature, not writers, I have continued the practice of representing some authors with a sufficient number of works to support the study of them as individual artists. In the fiction section, I include three stories each by a great nineteenth-century writer (Nathaniel Hawthorne), by a important modernist writer (Flannery O’Connor), and by a major contemporary author (Joyce Carol Oates). In this edition, there are also five poets amply represented as “Featured Poets”: John Donne from the Renaissance, John Keats and Emily Dickinson from the nineteenth century, and Robert Frost and Sylvia Plath from the modern era. The table of contents gathers the titles of their poems in a boxed format for easy reference.

This edition also presents “A Contemporary Collection,” five poets represented by six or more poems each, placed throughout the text: Billy Collins, Louise Glück, Seamus Heaney, Sharon Olds, and Natasha Trethewey. These too are identified in a boxed format in the table of contents.

Finally, to provide an introduction to the further works of individual poets, the book contains at least three poems each by more than two dozen writers, both classic and modern. These poems can easily be referenced in the index of the book.

In the drama section, I have maintained the practice of including a number of one-act plays, both within the section's chapters and the additional "Plays for Further Reading," so as to provide a wider range of dramatic styles and approaches, and to include contemporary playwrights of diverse backgrounds.

An *Instructor's Manual* has again been prepared to accompany this book. It is available to all teachers who adopt the book for their classes. The manual contains an analytical article on every selection, suggesting approaches to interpretation and providing information that places the works in their contexts. These articles are the work of the author who prepared this edition as well as the man who created the first edition, Laurence Perrine, and the man who worked on the series for several decades, Thomas R. Arp. In the interests of space, the main text does not provide extended biographical information about the writers, but instructors and students who feel the need for such material are urged to consult Wadsworth's valuable Literature resource Center at <http://trials.galegroup.com/thomson>.

Through the thirteen editions of this book, which originated in the middle of the twentieth century, *Literature: Structure, Sound, and Sense* has evolved in many ways, responding to shifts in interest, concern, and taste expressed by its users. However, certain abiding principles remain as relevant in the current century as they were in the last. Among these are the conviction that the close reading of a text is basic to understanding and appreciating it; that to understand the means by which a work achieves its ends is an essential part of experiencing it fully; and that reading imaginative literature is important to the development of the whole person.

G. J.

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