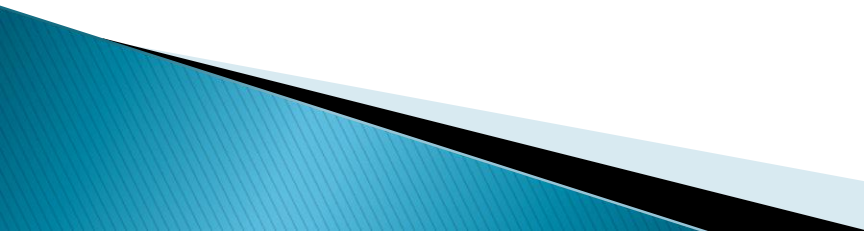


Themes in American Stories



American Folk Tradition

- ▶ **Oral Tradition**– stories originally told at festivals and around campfires, rather than shared in print.
 - ▶ **Theme**– central idea, message, or insight that is revealed within a story.
 - ▶ **Heroes or Heroines**– larger than life figures whose virtues and deeds are often celebrated in stories from the oral tradition.
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Storytelling Techniques

- ▶ **Hyperbole**– exaggeration or overstatement, either for comic effect or to express heightened emotion.
- ▶ **Personification**– human characteristics or personality given to nonhuman subjects, such as animals or natural elements.
- ▶ **Idioms**– expressions that develop in a language, region, community, or class of people that cannot be understood literally.
 - “It’s raining cats and dogs.”

Types of American Folk

- ▶ **Myths**– tales that explain the actions of gods and goddesses, and heroes who interact with them. Every culture has its own collection of myths or **mythology**.
These stories attempt to explain a natural phenomena.
- ▶ **Fables**– brief stories that often feature animals that act like humans. Fables usually **end in a moral that's directly stated.**
- ▶ **Tall Tales**– folk tales that exaggerate for comic effect. Involves hero who performs an impossible feat.
 - **Legend**– stories based on fact that become less true with each retelling.
- ▶ **Epics**– long narrative poems about larger–than–life heroes who engage in dangerous journeys, or quests, that are important to the nation or culture.