



World Literature

Literature Study Guide Version 3.1

©The Rockford Quiz Bowl Company 2026 · rockfordqb.com

Authors are listed first by country, then roughly chronologically by the publication of their listed works.

Africa

Answer	Major Works	Details
Wole <u>Soyinka</u>	Death and the King's Horsemen The Lion and the Jewel	Nigeria; both listed works are plays
Chinua <u>Achebe</u>	Things Fall Apart	Nigeria; the title is from the Yeats poem "The Second Coming"
Chimamanda Ngozi <u>Adichie</u>	Americanah Half of a Yellow Sun "The Danger of a Single Story"	Nigeria; "The Danger of a Single Story" is an essay
Naguib <u>Mahfouz</u>	The Cairo Trilogy Children of Gebelawi	Egypt; <i>The Cairo Trilogy</i> includes the novels <i>Palace Walk</i> , <i>Palace of Desire</i> , and <i>Sugar Street</i>
Alan <u>Paton</u>	Cry, the Beloved Country	South Africa
Nadine <u>Gordimer</u>	July's People The Conservationist	South Africa
Athol <u>Fugard</u>	Master Harold...and the Boys	South Africa; <i>Master Harold...and the Boys</i> is a play
J.M. <u>Coetzee</u>	Disgrace Waiting for the Barbarians	South Africa

West Asia

Answer	Major Works	Details
Rabindranath <u>Tagore</u>	Gitanjali "Jana Gana Mana"	Bengal (modern India and Pakistan); poetry; "Jana Gana Mana" is the national anthem of India
Salman <u>Rushdie</u>	Midnight's Children The Satanic Verses	India; Rushdie has been the target of assassination attempts as a result of a fatwa issued by Ayatollah Khomeini due to <i>The Satanic Verses</i> ; <i>Midnight's Children</i> is about people with magical abilities born in the first hour after India gained independence from Britain
Omar <u>Khayyam</u>	The Rubaiyat	Persia (modern Iran); <i>Rubaiyat</i> means " quatrains " or "four-line poems"
Antun Yusuf <u>Hanna Diyab</u> and Antoine <u>Galland</u>	One Thousand and One Nights	Syria; Antoine Galland was a French writer who collected Hanna Diyab's version of " Aladdin " and " Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves ," along with other peoples' stories about Sinbad and many other tales, in <i>One Thousand and One Nights</i> ; the collection's stories are framed by the story of Scheherazade , who must tell stories to her husband, Shahryar , so he does not execute her
Khaled <u>Hosseini</u>	The Kite Runner	Afghanistan (and America)

East Asia

Answer	Major Works	Details
<u>Li</u> Bai	"Quiet Night Thought" "Drinking Alone by Moonlight"	China; also called Li Po or Li Bo ; one of the Immortals of the Wine Cup , a group of poets who drank for inspiration
<u>Luo</u> Guanzhong	Romance of the Three Kingdoms	China; one of the Four Great Classics
<u>Shi</u> Nai'an	Water Margin	China; one of the Four Great Classics; a story about 108 outlaws who rebel against their government
<u>Wu</u> Cheng'en	Journey to the West	China; one of the Four Great Classics; a monk (Xuanzang or Tang Sanzang) is accompanied by the monkey king Sun Wukong , a human-pig (Zhu Bajie or Pigsy), a sand monster (Sha Wujing or Sandy), and White Dragon Horse (Bai Long Ma) as he travels west-ward to India to retrieve sutras , Buddhist scriptures
<u>Cao</u> Xueqin	Dream of the Red Chamber	China; one of the Four Great Classics
<u>Murasaki</u> Shikibu	The Tale of Genji	Japan; <i>The Tale of Genji</i> is sometimes considered the world's first true novel; Genji (nicknamed the " shining prince ") is a son of the Emperor of Japan; Genji is romantically entangled with Lady Aoi and Lady Fujitsubo , among others, and apparently dies in a blank chapter titled " Vanished into the Clouds "
<u>Sei</u> Shonagon	The Pillow Book of Sei Shonagon	Japan; Sei served at court at the same time as Murasaki (above)
<u>Matsuo</u> Bashou	The Narrow Road to the Deep North	Japan; Matsuo was a master of haiku poetry, such as one often translated as " ancient pond / frog jumps in / splash of water "
<u>Akutagawa</u> Ryunosuke	"In a Grove" "Rashomon"	Japan; Akutagawa wrote many short stories, and is the namesake of Japan's top prize for short stories; "In a Grove" concerns unreliable narrators giving testimonies about the death of a samurai , and was adapted into a Akira Kurosawa film that is confusingly titled <i>Rashomon</i> , although the film is unrelated to that short story
<u>Kawabata</u> Yasunari	Snow Country The Master of Go Thousand Cranes	Japan
<u>Mishima</u> Yukio	Confessions of a Mask The Temple of the Golden Pavilion The Sea of Fertility	Japan; <i>The Sea of Fertility</i> is a tetralogy , a series of four novels
<u>Oe</u> Kenzaburo	A Personal Matter The Silent Cry	Japan
Haruki <u>Murakami</u>	The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle 1Q84 Norwegian Wood Kafka on the Shore	Japan
<u>Han</u> Kang	The Vegetarian	South Korea; won the 2024 Nobel Prize in Literature

Oceania

Answer	Major Works	Details
Peter <u>Carey</u>	Oscar and Lucinda True History of the Kelly Gang	Australia; in <i>Oscar and Lucinda</i> , the title characters bet on whether Oscar can move a glass church from Sydney to Bellingen
Katherine <u>Mansfield</u>	"The Garden Party"	Aotearoa / New Zealand; "The Garden Party" is a short story

South American

Answer	Major Works	Details
Gabriel <u>Garcia Marquez</u>	One Hundred Years of Solitude Love in the Time of Cholera	Colombia; <i>One Hundred Years of Solitude</i> is about several generations of the Buendía family in the town of Macondo , including Aureliano and José Arcadio
Mario <u>Vargas Llosa</u>	Aunt Julia and the Scriptwriter	Peru
Pablo <u>Neruda</u>	Twenty Love Poems and a Song of Despair Canto General	Chile; <i>Twenty Love Poems and a Song of Despair</i> is a poetry collection that includes the lines " Tonight I can write the saddest lines " and " In you everything sank ;" <i>Canto General</i> is a collection that includes the poem " The Heights of Macchu Picchu " [sic]
Isabel <u>Allende</u>	House of the Spirits	Chile
Jorge Luis <u>Borges</u>	"The Garden of Forking Paths" "The Library of Babel" "The Aleph"	Argentina; the first two listed short stories are from the collection Ficciones

North American

Answer	Major Works	Details
Margaret <u>Atwood</u>	The Handmaid's Tale Oryx and Crake	Canada; <i>The Handmaid's Tale</i> is set in the future in the Republic of Gilead , a remnant of the USA, where Offred is a "handmaid" who is assigned to the Commander and his infertile wife Serena Joy to produce children; <i>Oryx and Crake</i> is part of the MaddAddam series
Octavio <u>Paz</u>	The Labyrinth of Solitude Sunstone	Mexico; <i>The Labyrinth of Solitude</i> is a nine-part essay on Mexico, including " The Sons of La Malinche " and " The Day of the Dead ;" <i>Sunstone</i> is a 584-line poem based on the Aztec calendar
Carlos <u>Fuentes</u>	The Old Gringo The Death of Artemio Cruz	Mexico

Russian

Answer	Major Works	Details
Alexander <u>Pushkin</u>	Eugene Onegin "The Bronze Horseman"	<i>Eugene Onegin</i> is a historical verse novel; "The Bronze Horseman" is a poem
Nikolai <u>Gogol</u>	"The Overcoat" "The Nose"	"The Overcoat" and "The Nose" are short stories
Fyodor <u>Dostoevsky</u>	Crime and Punishment Notes from Underground The Brothers Karamazov	<i>Crime and Punishment</i> is about Rodion Raskolnikov's murder of a pawnbroker and her sister and his subsequent sentencing and incarceration
Ivan <u>Turgenev</u>	A Sportsman's Sketches Fathers and Sons	<i>A Sportsman's Sketches</i> is a story collection
Anton <u>Chekhov</u>	The Cherry Orchard The Seagull Three Sisters Uncle Vanya	plays; <i>The Cherry Orchard</i> ends with the off-stage sound of chopping axes after Madame Ranevskaya sells the orchard to Lopakhin
Leo <u>Tolstoy</u>	War and Peace Anna Karenina The Death of Ivan Ilyich	<i>War and Peace</i> is about noble Russian families during and after Napoleon's invasion of Russia; <i>Anna Karenina</i> has an affair with Count Vronsky and throws herself under a train
Aleksandr <u>Solzhenitsyn</u>	One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich The Gulag Archipelago	