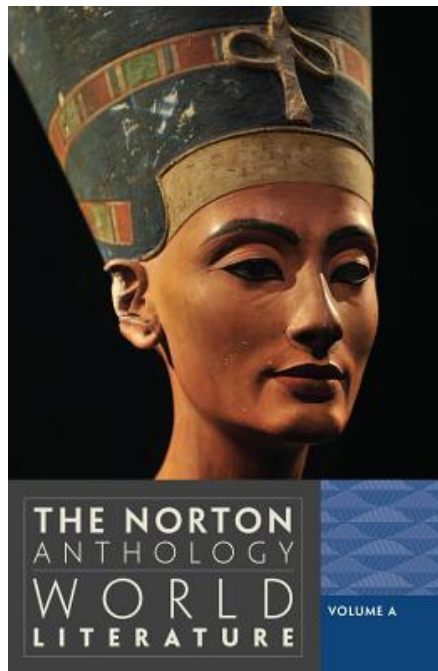




The Norton Anthology of World Literature, Volume A

Martin Puchner (Editor) , Suzanne Conklin Akbari (Editor) , Wiebke Denecke (Editor) , Vinay Dharwadkar (Editor) , Barbara Fuchs (Editor) , Caroline Levine (Editor) , Pericles Lewis (Editor) , Emily Wilson (Editor)

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Read by millions of students since its first publication, The Norton Anthology of World Literature remains the most-trusted anthology of world literature available. Guided by the advice of more than 500 teachers of world literature and a panel of regional specialists, the editors of the Third Edition a completely new team of scholar-teachers have made this respected text brand-new in all the best ways. Dozens of new selections and translations, all-new introductions and headnotes, hundreds of new illustrations, redesigned maps and timelines, and a wealth of media resources all add up to the most exciting, accessible, and teachable version of the Norton ever published."

The Norton Anthology of World Literature, Volume A Details

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From Reader Review The Norton Anthology of World Literature, Volume A for online ebook

Seth Holler says

Another textbook candidate, with five additional volumes. Skipped some material; grateful for an introduction to the *Ramayana* and the *Classic of Poetry*.

Jessica says

Before I get to my thoughts on this new edition, and how it compares to the one before it, I'd just like to say that after this edition came out, I tried to sell an extra copy I had of the second edition to a used book store. These anthologies, when they are new, cost around \$70 on Amazon, more at campus bookstores, but their resale value? Take a guess! \$30 you say? \$20? \$10? Wrong, wrong wrong. I was offered \$3 for a mint condition 2nd edition at my local campus bookstore. When a 3-volume compilation of the greatest works of literature takes a 97% nosedive in value just because a new edition has emerged, something is wrong with the market. I've already lamented the omnipresence of Norton on college campuses in my other reviews of these anthologies, but my recent experience with trying to resell an old edition gave me new insight to just how exploitative these companies are of students (trillion dollar student loan bubble, anyone?). Most ancient texts are available free online - professors should consider using them instead, or, even better, having students buy used copies of each work (despite what many think, this actually works out to be about the same money as a Norton anthology for an average semester's courseload, and comes with the added benefits of more sophisticated translations/introductions, and of students realizing that literature does not descend to us from the Great God Norton.)

Moving on: First, the positives. The format of the third edition is easier on the eyes, and the introductions to the texts are written in more accessible language. I found all of the introductions to be generally more helpful to students, and some of the new translations are truly transformative (especially the new translation of *Gilgamesh*). More of an effort has been made to include works by women (like Pizan's *City of Ladies*), and Boccaccio's *Decameron* has been expanded, to the delight of those of us who love a good Italian countryside sex story during the Bubonic Plague.

That said, some disturbing politics of the anti-sex, pro-Christian variety appear to be in play in this new edition. The section of *Gilgamesh* with the story of Noah (problematic for Jews/Christians because it implies that the Bible isn't original to the Hebrews) has been mysteriously removed from the anthology. In the section on Ancient Egyptian poetry, the most interesting poem (wherein the narrator tells a girl he's caught a fish, only to show her his penis - an ancient Egyptian version of middle school humor) has been removed. And Chaucer's "Miller's Tale," the most ribald of all the *Caterbury* collection, has been cut.

Other problems include the fact that only the play "Agamemnon" is included from the *Orestia* which makes it difficult to teach. This edition also does not include pronunciation guides, meaning students and teachers alike will be struggling to refer to difficult names/places with any clarity or consistency. There are also a good number of typos, which seems to be common with Norton, and is perhaps inevitable when one company decides to edit everything.

D.M. Kilgore says

Great literary resource and wonderful addition to any home/school library.

Nostalgia Reader says

Covers ancient literature, lots of myths and Greek plays

A good compilation of works. I like how this (and other volumes) highlight the Asian and Mid-Eastern literature, rather than white-washing and focusing only on European works. Historical introductions to the sections were also informative.

A VERY demeaning introduction, though. Here's some highlights.

"A world literature course is a semester-long encounter with the unknown—a challenging and rewarding journey, not a stroll down familiar, well-known paths." Because all people taking world lit classes are American and have absolutely no idea that there are other countries of the world, right? *eye roll*

After stating that *"by following a consistent pattern of presentation"* (shouldn't all textbooks do that?), they say *"The mere presentation of an anthology—page after page of unbroken text—can feel overwhelming to anyone."* WHAT ARE BOOKS THEN???? If books are not page after page of (mostly) unbroken text, WHAT ARE THEY????

They also discuss how *"Literature... also presents us with whole imagined worlds to which we as readers can travel."* YOU MEAN THERE'S SUCH A THING AS FICTION?!?!?!? *mind blown*

Sophie says

There are many things I love about Norton anthologies: they provide excellent historical and biographical context for each piece, the timelines and footnotes are helpful, and they always have a great variety of literature. Though, I would caution that the introductions often contain a lot of spoilers for the pieces themselves and should be read with caution if you are reading for enjoyment.

In this volume, there were several pieces I found interesting that without this anthology I never would have discovered such as "The Tale of Sinuhe" and really everything from Zhuangzi and Sima Qian. There are so many really great pieces that even over 2000 years later can still be related to.

The only downside I found with the selections was in the completed longer works. Over half of the longer complete works provided are Greek dramas. This unfortunately narrows the variety of longer pieces provided and, for those of us that see Greek drama as really angsty fanfiction, is thus a massively missed opportunity to include some much stronger and more influential pieces. Out of the remaining 3 longer pieces provided, most people who enjoy this era of literature have probably already read The Epic of Gilgamesh and The Odyssey...further narrowing what this volume has to offer in terms of longer works to just Plato's Symposium. Symposium was fantastic, however! What I would have liked to see instead would have been the full Ramayana. Though, I suppose the one good thing about not including them is that each person can

then go and find a translator and version that best suits their tastes to further enjoy the longer stories that were only sampled.

Craig Prather says

Norton always does a fantastic job of juxtaposing the background of the authors with the stories themselves. Well done
