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# *English III*

## *American Literature*

*Teacher: Mr. Smith*

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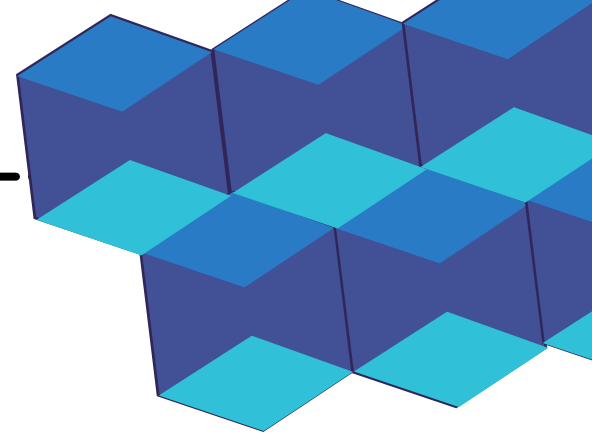
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# Anne Bradstreet



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## Early Colonial Literature

With the establishment of the colonies, the settlers did not concentrate their agendas towards producing what today is considered typical creative expressions. However, writers of the time in the Early Colonial period did produce interesting and unique products however.

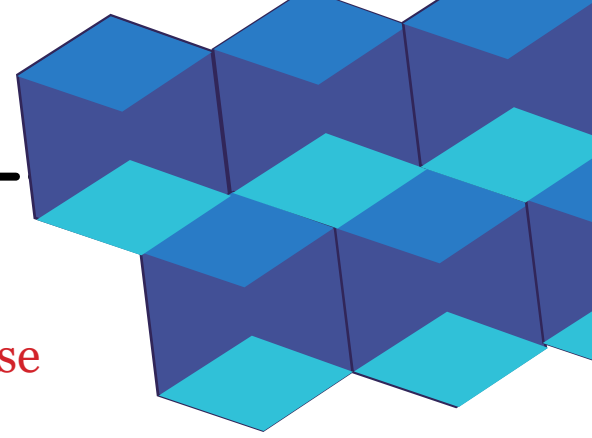
- their goals were idealistic and restrictive; little room for individuality
- the main forms of creative expression were reserved for such genres as:
  - > sermons
  - > religious meditations
  - > political discourse / pamphlet debates
- theatre was outlawed: as a result no dramas
- fiction and poetry were generally avoided in a *public* atmosphere;  
handfuls of personal journals do exist showing in private, poetry was created

# *Anne Bradstreet*

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## **The Puritan “Plain Style”**

- Works tended to be didactic, with a defined meditative purpose
- Language should be simple and straight-forward
- Language should be accessible to a broad audience
- Excessive rhetorical decoration was discouraged
- Order and outline should be clear and easy to follow



# Anne Bradstreet

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**Anne Bradstreet is typically anthologized:**

Her book was titled:

> *The Tenth Muse Lately Sprung Up in America (1650)*

- the poems deal with the expectations of her time and location

- > display often specific, didactic tones

- > carry heavy themes of religion

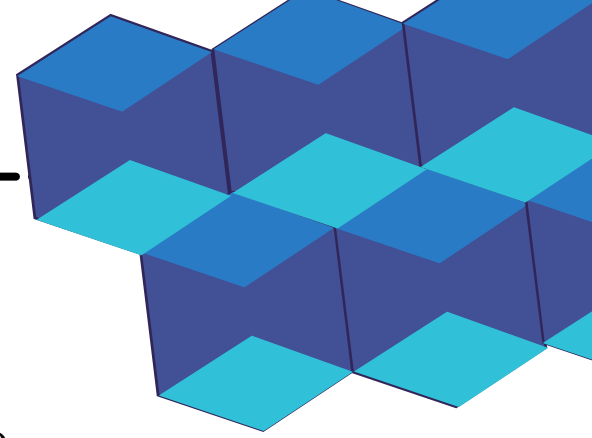
- > confirm her status as a woman in the Puritan colonies

- (however, some resistance of her limited role can be detected)

- her book was used as a promotion of the success of New England

- initially however, her work was not created for a *public* audience;

these poems show a *private voice* discussing personalized accounts of Puritan life



# Anne Bradstreet

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**According to tradition, it has been said that Anne Bradstreet's full book was published against her will.**

In 1647 Bradstreet's brother-in-law, John Woodbridge, left the colonies to return to England. He published her manuscript in London with the title:

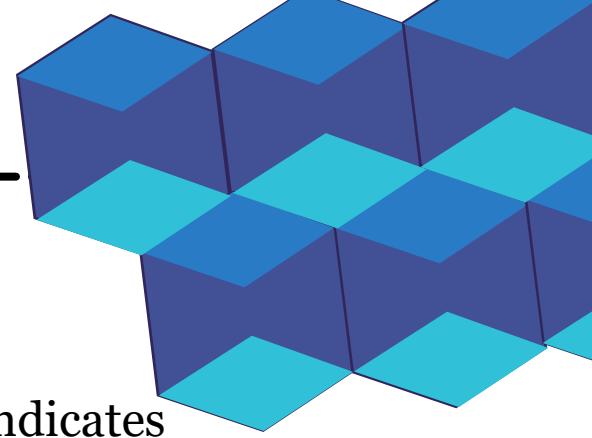
*The Tenth Muse, lately Sprung up in America, or Several Poems Compiled with Great Variety of Wit and Learning, Full of Delight, Wherein especially is Contained a Complete Discourse and Description of the Four Elements, Constitutions, Ages of Man, Seasons of the Year, together with an exact Epitome of the Four Monarchies, viz., The Assyrian, Persian, Grecian, Roman, Also a Dialogue between Old England and New, concerning the late troubles. With divers other pleas and serious Poems, By a Gentlewoman in those parts*

# Anne Bradstreet

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## Critical Approaches for reading Bradstreet's poems:

- notice her persistent use of iambic pentameter—
- then look for variations in rhythm; often a change in meter indicates an emphasis, retraction, or resolution to be stressed (this is where her true feelings are expressed)
- double check denotations of her words; alternative and connotative understanding of a word or phrase may clarify or deepen meaning of her a feelings and ideas
- examine the imagery shown; she often utilizes what are called metaphysical conceits or extended metaphors
- examine her use of irony and subtle sarcasm
- her use and alteration of the male Puritan cultural discourse
- she will seem to question religious notions, then retract previous comments as a means of confirming established cultural concept



# Anne Bradstreet

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**Bradstreet's poetry can be divided into three major categories:**

## **1. Public**

- which include didactic meditations on Puritan issues and
- reflections on her own role as a writer and poet

## **2. Semi-public**

- which reveal elements of her private world

## **3. Private, domestic**

- which focus on family loss, lessons that illness brings, and her constant thought for her family's safety
- tender expressions of love for her husband

