

Snapshot of the Period

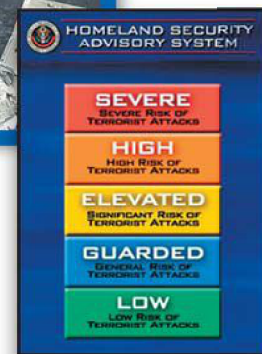
America emerged from the Cold War period as the sole superpower in a dramatically changing world. While national boundaries are still critical, globalization is the new model as the countries of the world become ever more interconnected economically, environmentally, and culturally.

Increasing globalization is due, in large part, to the dawning of the "Information Age" during the second half of the twentieth century. Computers, the Internet, cell phones, and other new technologies change the way people around the world work, play, and communicate. The world has become—simultaneously—more accessible and more complex.

Despite this new global energy, the new millennium opened with shock and sadness for Americans. The terrorist attacks of 9/11 damaged the sense of security and strength that Americans had always enjoyed. Though the world in the twenty-first century offers opportunities, beauty, and inspiration, it also presents individuals with complex questions and uncertainties.



▲► (top) Firemen raise the American flag over the rubble of the World Trade Center. (right) The Security Advisory System categorizes the level of terrorist risk.



Alvarez



Kunitz



Walker



Carver



Momaday



Tan



As you read the selections in this unit, you will be asked to think about them in view of three key questions:

What is the relationship
between place and *literature*?

How does literature
shape or reflect *society*?

What makes American
literature *American*?

Globalization in the Marketplace



1. A woman in Minneapolis shops for a pair of snowshoes online. She calls a toll-free number on the Web site with questions.
2. A customer-service agent in Bangalore, India answers her questions.
3. The customer's order is received and processed by a computer at the sporting goods company in Stockholm, Sweden. Messages are sent to two locations.
4. A message to the Swedish company's warehouse in Los Angeles tells workers to ship the snowshoes.
5. Another message to a factory in Shanghai, China tells workers to produce more snowshoes and ship them to Los Angeles.



Connect to the Period What does the information presented in the charts and graphs on this page suggest about changing relationships among countries and individuals in the contemporary period? [**Connect**]

Environmental Movement 1970 – Present



1970: The first Earth Day is celebrated on April 22nd.

1971: Greenpeace Foundation protests U.S. nuclear testing off the coast of Alaska.

1997: Negotiations on the Kyoto Protocol are finalized on December 11. The goal is to reduce greenhouse gases.

1999: The first mass-produced hybrid vehicle is available in the United States.

2007: The Live Earth concert on July 7 gathers a global audience in support of a campaign to solve the climate crisis.

2007: Al Gore and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change share the Nobel Peace Prize for their roles in climate change education.