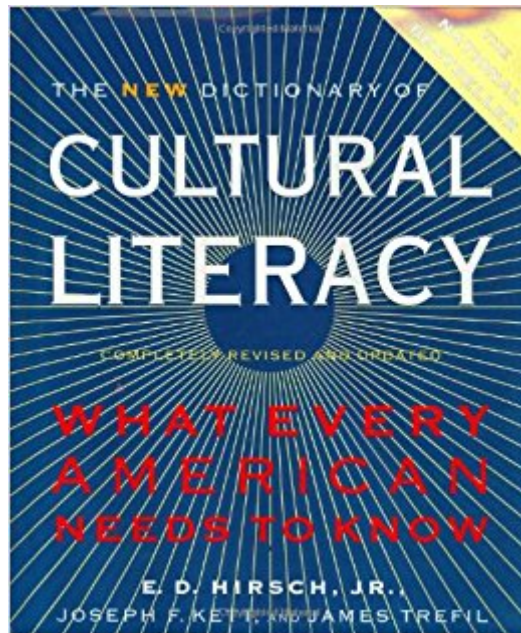


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# The New Dictionary Of Cultural Literacy: What Every American Needs To Know



## Synopsis

In this fast-paced information age, how can Americans know what's really important and what's just a passing fashion? Now more than ever, we need a source that concisely sums up the knowledge that matters to Americans -- the people, places, ideas, and events that shape our cultural conversation. With more than six thousand entries, *The New Dictionary of Cultural Literacy* is that invaluable source. Wireless technology. Gene therapy. NAFTA. In addition to the thousands of terms described in the original *Dictionary of Cultural Literacy*, here are more than five hundred new entries to bring Americans' bank of essential knowledge up to date. The original entries have been fully revised to reflect recent changes in world history and politics, American literature, and, especially, science and technology. Cultural icons that have stood the test of time (Odysseus, Leaves of Grass, Cleopatra, the Taj Mahal, D-Day) appear alongside entries on such varied concerns as cryptography, the digital divide, the European Union, Kwanzaa, pheromones, SPAM, Type A and Type B personalities, Web browsers, and much, much more. As our world becomes more global and interconnected, it grows smaller through the terms and touchstones that unite us. As E. D. Hirsch writes in the preface, "Community is built up of shared knowledge and values -- the same shared knowledge that is taken for granted when we read a book or newspaper, and that is also taken for granted as part of the fabric that connects us to one another." A delicious concoction of information for anyone who wants to be in the know, *The New Dictionary of Cultural Literacy* brilliantly confirms once again that it is "an excellent piece of work . . . stimulating and enlightening" (New York Times) -- the most definitive and comprehensive family sourcebook of its kind.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

I am a foreign citizen living in the US for about 4 years for graduate level degree in the US. Culture as well as language are the biggest obstacles of my life in the US. I overcame the basic survival and class language barrier after living 2-3 years, but the cultural barrier with combined with conversational language is very challenging. Not only for more socializing but also more nature English writing and speaking, I worked hard, and Culturacy Dictionary helps me a lot. It includes expressions from various areas, e.g. bible, literature, idiom, etc. During the reading or watching TV, I can understand better the implications and expressions rooted from religion, history, literature, and other areas of culture. I use this dictionary with several ways. First, just read the page I am interested in. Second, I consult it during my writing to find better expression, and do more research to understand the background better via internet. Third, play game with this book with my American Classmates - in fact, this helps me the most. They explain what is not written in the dictionary, and this is the way I can acquire the knowledge of the expression easily and last long in my brain. This dictionary is wonderful, I think, for both for native and non-native. Non natives can upgrade their English level with cultural understanding, and natives can be more sophisticated using their languages. It is a great tool, and I am happy to find it!

The pictures aren't flashy. The text isn't eloquent. But, this book delivers exactly what the subtitle suggests, "What Every American Needs to Know." Full of up-to-date and well-organized content, the book provides answers to everyday questions, in addition to being a source for research. (Writers of college papers will find this a very useful tool.) Although I am not one to pick up a dictionary and read through it, I typically cover several pages at a time when I reference this book. While reading the text of one piece, I often find myself intrigued about, and looking up, another topic. Every home should have a copy of this book! "Tight Lines!" ~..~..~.. >

Want to look up cultural references in Denis Miller's rants? Can't remember what the Byzantine empire did? Feel like your losing your memory? This book can help! Yes, I'll admit the title does have a certain haughtiness and presumptuousness to it, but this book is packed with information. The topics covered are quite broad, and I guess it would HAVE to be if the goal is to ensure cultural literacy. Including all the things you should have learned in highschool had you been paying attention, this book is a great refresher course in everything from History, to Literature, to proverbs and idioms in the English language. It has a bit of a western bias, which is sort of what I'm getting at when I say the title presumes a lot. Perhaps an alternate title (and I mean this without cynicism)

would be "what most Americans don't know about America but should." I include myself in that category, by the way. The best thing about this book is its organization. At first, I was wishing it was all alphabetical, but then you realize that grouping entries in categorized chapters is better. Additionally, the bites of data are concise and easily digested, enough to answer a question and provide enough information for you to look elsewhere if you want in depth explanations.

i am not the sharpest knife in the drawer, if you know what i mean. this book is just the ticket for a palooka like me. i've been dipping into the thing here and there for a couple of months now, and it's been a tremendous amount of fun. i was amazed by how much i had forgotten from my school days (i am 45). this compendium of learning covers a lot of ground, with a text that is clear and concise and enjoyable to read. the bible, mythology and folklore, literature, philosophy, religion, the english language, the fine arts, american history and world history, geography, psychology, sociology, business and economics, science, medicine, health, and technology, all get a going over. the format is easy and perfect for dipping into anywhere whenever you have the time to do so. a perfect coffee table book. a great bedside book. i highly recommend this to anyone who wishes to expand their knowledge or bone up on their facts in a wide variety of human endeavor.

One would think that when living in and being part of a culture, one would then automatically be literate in it. However, this is certainly not the case for most individuals. This book can fill in the gap with its "must know" info. that we should all be a little more familiar with. Of course it is selective in some areas and deliberately brief in its entries. That is understandable. Over all, I am happy I purchased this book and I am certainly getting my money's worth whether I am looking something up to get desired information, or simply killing time by flipping through it. There's always something new to learn in this fine book.

Our book club tends to stick with bestsellers like "Da Vinci" or McCrae's "The Bark of the Dogwood," so it came as quite a shock when this book was recommended. The truth is, it couldn't be more perfect, especially for a book club. The reason? You'll want to discuss what's in between these pages and boy, will there ever be a discussion! This is true food for thought and you'll all have a blast!

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