

**Teacher's Guide For
Great American Authors Since 1650
Program 6: 1940 - 1949**

For grade 7 - College

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LINKS TO CURRICULUM STANDARDS

The design for this program was guided by the National Center for History in the Schools, United States History curriculum Era 3: Revolution and the New Nation-Standards 1 and 3 for grades 5-12, Era 9 Postwar United States -Standard 4 for grades 5-12, and the California Public School Standards for Historical Content, Grade 8 - Standards 8.1, 8.2 and 8.3 (#4 - #7), Standard 8.8 (#1) and Grade 11, Standards 11.1 (#2, #3), 11.3 (#5), 11.5 - (#3, #4) and 11.10 (#2, #3) and Grade 12, Standards 12.1, 12.4 and 12.5; and the California State Board of Education English Language Arts Grade 8, Section 3.0 – 3.5 Literary Response and Analysis; Grades 9 and 10, Section 3.0 – 3.5 Literary Response and Analysis; and Grades 11 and 12, Section 3.0 – 3.5 Literary Response and Analysis.

MATERIALS IN THE PROGRAM

Teacher's Guide -This Teacher's Guide has been prepared to aid the teacher in utilizing materials contained within this program. In addition to this introductory material, the guide contains the following:

- *Suggested Instructional Notes*
- *Student Learning Goals*
- *Test Questions on Blackline Masters Quizzes for duplication and handout to students.*
- *Gallery of Great American Authors*

INSTRUCTIONAL NOTES

It is suggested that you preview the program and read the related Student Goals and Teacher Points. By doing so, you will become familiar with the materials and be better prepared to adapt the program to the needs of your class. Please note that this show is set up to be played continuously and you will probably find it best to follow the program in the order in which it is presented, but this is not necessary. The program can be divided into chapters accessed through the DVD's Menu Screen under Chapter Selects. It is also suggested that the program presentation take place before the entire class and under your direction. As you review the instructional program outlined in the Teacher's Guide, you may find it necessary to make some changes, deletions, or additions to fit the specific needs of your students. After viewing the programs you may wish to copy the **Test Questions on Blackline Masters 6A** and distribute to your class to measure their comprehension of the events.

INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY OF PROGRAM

A DVD of Great American Authors Since 1650, Program 6: 1940 - 1949 is a new approach to presenting in an exciting way the great literary tradition of the United States. The program is designed to present American authors and literature in a way that promotes successful student learning. Program 6 outlines the decade of the forties, a decade of brilliant writers. It begins with the greatest of the lost generation authors, Ernest Hemingway, and continues with the 20th century's greatest humorist, James Thurber, the start of science fiction's golden age with the three masters, Isaac Asimov, Ray Bradbury and Robert Heinlein, and ends with America's best known playwrights, Tennessee Williams and Arthur Miller.

The program is laid out so it can be viewed in its entirety, or by individual chapters accessed through the DVD's Menu Screen under Chapter Selects. Each chapter presents a complete story of an exceptional American literary figure, as well as themes of American literature: the unique and innovative American voice, lost generation authors, Nobel Prize winners and playwrights. The chapters show how American authors told the story of America as its chroniclers and interpreters. Most importantly, historical themes and figures are clearly presented using state of the art visuals.

Below is a list of the program and its chapters. Using this program, teachers can create a lesson plan to cover the specific issues, themes and historical figures mentioned.

Great American Writers Since 1650

Program 6: 1940 - 1949

1. 1940 – Ernest Hemingway’s *For Whom the Bell Tolls* is Published
2. 1941 – James Thurber Writes *The Secret Life of Walter Mitty*
3. 1947-1953 - Robert Heinlein, Ray Bradbury and Isaac Asimov Usher in the Era of Popular Science Fiction
4. 1948 - Tennessee Williams Wins His First Pulitzer Prize for *A Street Car Named Desire*
5. 1949 - Arthur Miller Produces *Death of a Salesman*

SUMMARY OF PROGRAM

Program 6: 1940 – 1949

Program six examines how America’s writers fared in the turbulent decade of the 40’s.

Chapter one looks at the life and writing of the lost generation’s greatest writer, Ernest Hemingway.

James Thurber was the greatest humorist of the first half of the 20th century. His life and style are discussed in chapter two.

How the efforts of Isaac Asimov, Robert Heinlein and Ray Bradbury brought science fiction from the back of the bookstore to the front is shown in chapter three.

Two of America’s greatest playwrights, Tennessee Williams and Arthur Miller, are showcased in chapters four and five.

1940 – Ernest Hemingway’s *For Whom the Bell Tolls* is Published

Student Goals - In this chapter of Great American Authors, students will learn:

- Ernest Hemingway was the 20th century’s greatest American novelist
- In 1921 Hemingway settled in Paris with other expatriates, such as F. Scott Fitzgerald, Ezra Pound, Sherwood Anderson, John Dos Passos, and T. S. Eliot
 - This was the beginning of *the lost generation*, a term coined by the writer Gertrude Stein
 - The term *lost generation* was made popular by Hemingway in *The Sun Also Rises*
- *The Sun Also Rises*, was the story of Americans disillusioned by WWI
 - It introduced Hemingway’s simple but powerful and evocative style of writing
 - It also introduced the *Hemingway hero* ... The larger than life individual who takes on what life throws at him with self-sacrificing courage to illustrate universal themes of heroism and struggle
- *A Farewell to Arms* is an intensely written anti-war novel
- In the 1930s Hemingway continued to live life to the fullest and used these experiences in writing *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, a novel about the Spanish Civil War
- In 1952, Hemingway wrote his greatest book, *The Old Man and the Sea*, for which he won a Nobel Prize in 1954

1941 – James Thurber Writes *The Secret Life of Walter Mitty*

Student Goals - In this chapter of Great American Authors, students will learn:

- James Thurber’s unique writings and peculiar sketches made him America’s greatest and most

original humorist since Mark Twain

- In 1927 Thurber joined *The New Yorker's* magazine staff, where he developed his clear, yet unusual comedic style of writing
- Thurber's comedic masterpiece of the human condition was his short story, 'The Secret Life of Walter Mitty'
- Thurber had picked up the mantle of humor from Mark Twain and in turn passed it onto such other humorists such as Art Buchwald, Erma Bombeck and Dave Barry
- He legitimized comic short form writing for newspapers and magazines, a largely American art form

1947-1953 - Robert Heinlein, Ray Bradbury and Isaac Asimov Usher in the Era of Popular Science Fiction

Student Goals - In this chapter of Great American Authors, students will learn:

- Science fiction is a broad genre of fiction that tells speculative stories based on current science or technology
- Long the stepchild of American literature, that would change abruptly after World War II with the works of three masters of the genre – Robert Heinlein, Ray Bradbury and Isaac Asimov
- Robert Heinlein, a graduate of the United States Naval Academy, was the first American to mainstream science fiction when in February 1947, *The Saturday Evening Post* published "The Green Hills of Earth"
- Isaac Asimov is known for his *Foundation* series and for his extraordinary book, *I, Robot*
- Ray Bradbury, one of science fiction's biggest stars and influences, displayed his genius in his three masterpiece books, *The Martian Chronicles*, *The Illustrated Man*, and *Fahrenheit 451*
 - Their social commentary and speculative ideas were widely read by the American public
- These three pioneers laid the foundation for future science fiction writers such as Kurt Vonnegut, Philip Jose Farmer, Vonda McIntyre and William Gibson

1948 - Tennessee Williams Wins His First Pulitzer Prize for *A Street Car named Desire*

Student Goals - In this chapter of Great American Authors, students will learn:

- Tennessee Williams is the most famous playwright of the 20th century
- A family tragedy in 1943 awakened Williams' genius and unleashed his deeply symbolic writing about dysfunctional characters
 - Williams' writing became more powerful and haunting
 - His family experiences would find expression in his work
- Williams' most successful plays were *The Glass Menagerie*, *A Streetcar Named Desire* and *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*
 - What made *A Street Car Named Desire* such a great play
 - Blanche and Stanley, together with Arthur Miller's Willy Loman, are perhaps the most recognizable characters in American drama

1949 - Arthur Miller Produces *Death of a Salesman*

Student Goals - In this chapter of Great American Authors, students will learn:

- Arthur Miller was the first Jewish American literary voice, recognized for his masterpieces of stage and screen
- In 1949, Miller wrote his masterpiece – *Death of a Salesman*
 - *Death of a Salesman's* Willie Loman is one of the most recognizable characters in American Theater

- *Death of a Salesman* embodied Miller's strongest themes – how false values such as material success and popularity can destroy families
- Miller's life was filled with experiences that made him an icon to everyday Americans
 - He was investigated by the House UnAmerican Activities Committee
 - He married Marilyn Monroe
- After the success of *Death of a Salesman*, Miller opened the door for many Jewish authors to write directly about the Jewish experience in America

Answers to Blackline Master Quiz 6A, Great American Authors Since 1650, Program 6 1940 – 1949

1-d; 2-a; 3-b; 4-c; 5-a; 6-d; 7-c; 8-b; 9-c