

Merriam-Webster's Dictionary of American Writers



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Published in conjunction with C-SPAN's American Writers series, this Dictionary of American Writers features capsule biographies of more than 1,100 American writers. Among them are "numerous American Indians, former slaves, and immigrants from every corner of the earth." There are writers of fiction, poetry, drama, history, essays, diaries, philosophy, and even screenplays. While some of these write-ups (on Emily Dickinson, Benjamin Franklin, and William Dean Howells, for example) are longer, most are around 150 words (and adapted from Merriam-Webster's Encyclopedia of Literature). You can't say a lot in 150 words. There are dates and places to fit in, as well as titles of major works, and, in some cases, pronunciations (though why there are five listed for John Brougham's surname eludes us). The biographical sketches are, in other words, sketchy. Still, the book starts in with Edward Abbey and doggedly charts a path all the way to Louis Zukofsky.

If you're looking for a little information about an awful lot of American writers, this will suit your needs just fine. And there are interesting tidbits throughout: lawyer Louis Auchincloss, we learn, managed to pen 50 books in part because he would take a writing notebook to court; Frances Hodgson Burnett paid for writing paper by "gathering and selling wild grapes"; and Mary Higgins Clark worked as a flight

attendant. Also included are more than 500 entries on literary works, and over 75 on groups, movements, and periodicals that have helped shape "the character of American literature." --Jane Steinberg

作者介绍:

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