

Cultural Literacy: What Every American Needs to Know | 9780394758435 | Vintage Books, 1988 | 251 pages | 1988 | Eric Donald Hirsch, Joseph F. Kett, James S. Trefil

What Every American Should Know. Defining common cultural literacy for an increasingly diverse nation. By Eric Liu. The appendix became a sensation and propelled the book to the top of the best-seller list. Hirsch became that rare phenomenon: a celebrity intellectual. His list was debated in every serious publication and elite circles. Let's begin with the claim that Americans do in fact need a list of what every American needs to know. If you take the time to read the book attached to Hirsch's appendix, you'll find a rather effective argument about the nature of background knowledge and public culture. Literacy is not just a matter of decoding the strings of letters that make up words or the meaning of each word in sequence. Cultural Literacy: What Every American Needs to Know. E. D. Hirsch, Jr. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1987. We present two reviews of this book because we think that each has important insights to offer on this topic of national educational importance. -Ed. In the period between the world wars the wealthy Chicago suburb of Winnetka larger dictionary of cultural literacy is now in preparation. Hirsch proposes that the list or some expanded version thereof constitute the content of what he calls the "extensive curriculum," which would be. Literacy "reading and writing taken in a serious sense" is the rhetoric of our day, the basis of public discourse in a modern republic. The teaching of Ciceronian literacy as our founders conceived it is a primary but currently neglected responsibility of our schools. How did we skid so far downhill from the Eighteenth- and Nineteenth-Century ideals of American education? (It's a failing of the post-modern West in general, but we will follow Hirsch in sticking to the American situation.) Surely we could have continued substantive education: America has not been physically overrun and had its Hirsch's Cultural Literacy is simply the most important book I've read during my professional career. While the appendix (What Literate Americans Know) has drawn some criticisms of (WASP, gender) bias, the summaries of various research findings & other seminal works provide a solid base for his conclusions. The basic premise is that children are not being taught what they need to know in order to have a common foundation of knowledge with others, and they are definitely not being taught the knowledge specific to our heritage, which would be Western and American culture. Hirsch does not really name it as such, because the multiculturalism fad really became prominent after the book was written (20 years ago). The book is not really 272 pp long. See what's new with book lending at the Internet Archive. Cultural literacy : what every American needs to know. Item Preview. remove-circle. Share or Embed This Item. Share to Twitter. Share to Facebook.