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STUDY GUIDE: FAMOUS AMERICANS I

Artists, Actors, and Musicians

Adams, Ansel

He was a photographer and conservationist; born in San Francisco. A commercial photographer for 30 years, he made visionary photos of western landscapes that were inspired by a boyhood trip to Yosemite. He won three Guggenheim grants to photograph the national parks (1944-58).

Allen, Woody

He is a famous comedic actor and director, primarily in film.

Anderson, Marian

She was a famous contralto in the 1930s and 40s. She was the first African-American person to sing in the Metropolitan Opera.

Armstrong, Louis

He was both a trumpeter and a singer, popular in the 1920s.

Audubon, John James

John James Audubon (1785-1851) was not the first person to attempt to paint and describe all the birds of America (Alexander Wilson has that distinction), but for half a century he was the country's dominant wildlife artist.

Barnum, Phineas T.

Famous for his quote, "There's a sucker born every minute," he was a showman responsible for his traveling circus. Ultimately, his "Greatest Show on Earth" was the predecessor of the Ringling Brothers and Barnum and Bailey Circus.

Basie, Count

This famous, American jazz pianist was popular during the twentieth century.

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Berlin, Irving

This man wrote many classic Americana songs. He also wrote music and lyrics for early musicals.

Bernstein, Leonard

This composer and conductor is best known for his work in musical theatre as well as his directing the New York Philharmonic Orchestra.

Cassatt, Mary

This American painter borrowed and improved upon the concept of impressionism from many of her French colleagues.

Cohan, George M.

He wrote many classic standards of American song, including the upbeat "You're a Grand Old Flag" and "Yankee Doodle Dandy."

Crosby, Bing

Harry Lillis "Bing" Crosby was an American singer and actor whose career lasted from 1926 until his death in 1977. He was one of the most successful performing artists of the twentieth century.

Disney, Walt

His concepts of animation and character ideas formed the basis for many lucrative movies as well as the still-popular theme parks Disneyland and Disneyworld.

Dylan, Bob

This 1960s folksinger wrote various popular songs of social and political import.

Ellington, Duke

He was an American jazz composer.

Fitzgerald, Ella

She was a popular jazz singer known particularly for singing works by her contemporaries: Irving Berlin, George Gershwin, Cole Porter, and Duke Ellington.

Garbo, Greta

Born in Sweden, this American actress rose to fame on the screen.

Guthrie, Woody

This folksinger and songwriter preceded Dylan by decades, but he also wrote socially relevant lyrics and music.

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Hammerstein, Oscar

He is well known as the lyricist for multiple Broadway musicals. He is often mentioned as a collaborator with the composer Jerome Kern, among others.

Hepburn, Katharine

She was an iconic, four-time, Academy Award-winning, American star of film, television, and stage, widely recognized for her sharp wit, New England gentility, and fierce independence.

Hope, Bob

This long-lived American comedian is known for his work in films as well as for entertaining the troops abroad.

Houdini, Harry

He is famous for his entertaining exploits as a magician.

Key, Francis Scott

This man authored the words to "The Star Spangled Banner."

Miller, Glenn

He was a bandleader and composer in the twentieth century.

Monroe, Marilyn

Still adored, this actress rose to fame as a film icon and sex symbol in the 1950s.

Moses, Grandma

She was a renowned American folk artist, born Anna Mary Robertson, who spent most of her life as a farmer's wife and the mother of five children. She married Thomas Solomon Moses in 1887.

Pollack, Jackson

He was notorious in America for his colorful abstract paintings.

Presley, Elvis

He was one of the first men to make rock and roll popular.

Rockwell, Norman

His illustrations of small-town life in the U.S. are still popular.

Rodgers, Richard

He composed the music for many famous musicals. He often collaborated with Oscar Hammerstein.

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Rodgers, Ginger

An American movie star, she is best known for her roles opposite Fred Astaire.

Rogers, Will

William Penn Adair "Will" Rogers was an American comedian, humorist, social commentator, vaudeville performer, and actor.

Sousa, John Philip

He was a bandmaster in the late 1800s and early 1900s. The sousaphone was named after him.

Stewart, Jimmy

He was a film actor known for his speech idiosyncrasy.

West, Mae

She is best known for her seductive roles in mid-twentieth century, American movies.

Warhol, Andy

He was an American artist, filmmaker, writer, and social figure. With his background and experience in commercial art, Warhol was one of the founders of the pop art movement in the United States in the 1950s.

Authors

Angelou, Maya

She is a twentieth-century, American author of many books centering on her experience of growing up as an African-American girl in America.

Clemens, Samuel

This author, otherwise known as Mark Twain, set many of his tales along the Mississippi River.

Eliot, T.S.

This author is well known for poetry, prose, plays, as well as for books. His poetry on cats was the inspiration basis for the twentieth-century, musical, *CATS*.

Emerson, Ralph Waldo

He formulated and first expressed the philosophy of transcendentalism in his essay *Nature*.

Faulkner, William

William Cuthbert Faulkner was a Nobel Prize-winning novelist from Mississippi. He is regarded as one of America's most influential fiction writers.

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Fitzgerald, F. Scott

This author is best known for the novel, *The Great Gatsby*.

Frost, Robert

This author is best known for his poetry, including the oft-quoted work, "The Road Not Taken."

Hawthorne, Nathaniel

This American authored multiple books, including *The Scarlet Letter* and *The House of the Seven Gables*.

Hemingway, Ernest

He was an American novelist, short-story writer, and journalist. His distinctive writing style is characterized by economy and understatement, and it had a significant influence on the development of twentieth-century fiction.

Hughes, Langston

This twentieth century author wrote often about the African-American experience within the US.

Irving, Washington

This American author wrote "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow" and "Rip Van Winkle."

Longfellow, Henry Wadsworth

He was an American poet who wrote many works that are still famous today, including "The Song of Hiawatha," "Paul Revere's Ride" and "Evangeline."

Melville, Herman

This is the much-celebrated author of *Moby Dick*.

O'Neill, Eugene

He was a Nobel and Pulitzer Prize-winning, American playwright. More than any other dramatist, O'Neill introduced dramatic realism.

Poe, Edgar Allen

He is best known for his morbid and suspenseful short stories including "The Fall of the House of Usher," "The Pit and the Pendulum," and "The Raven."

Sandburg, Carl

This author is known for his poetry as well as his biographical account of Abraham Lincoln.

Stowe, Harriet Beecher

This woman is best known for *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, an anti-slavery novel.

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Whitman, Walt

This American poet is best known for his collection, *Leaves of Grass*.

Williams, Tennessee

This author has written many plays, as well as some short stories, most of which focus on the crimes of the Deep South and the passions of maladjusted individuals.

Wright, Richard

He is the author of *Black Boy* and *Native Son*, both of which focus on the African-American experience in the U.S.

Activists and Entrepreneurs

Carnegie, Andrew

This self-made immigrant became a leader in the steel industry. He donated many of the proceeds of his success to philanthropic endeavors, including the construction of Carnegie Hall.

Chavez, Cesar

This non-violent activist led laborers, predominantly Mexican Americans, into forming the United Farm Workers union, which later led famous boycotts of grapes and lettuce in the 60s.

Ford, Henry

This industrial leader is famous for his Model T and the Ford Motor Company. He used the innovative, assembly-line technique of production, which made the automobile available to many.

Iacocca, Lee

This successful man is best known for saving Chrysler Corporation from financial devastation.

Lewis, John L.

This labor leader was best known for his long-standing term as the president of the United Mine Workers.

Pierpont, Morgan J.

This man formed the United States Steel Corporation, which became the first billion-dollar corporation in the world.

Nader, Ralph

This lawyer is well known for calling attention to conditions that are unsafe for American consumers, specifically including dangerous automobiles and unsanitary food production.

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Rockefeller, John D.

This businessman founded the Standard Oil Company, which led him to become the richest man in the world at the time when he retired.

Vanderbilt, Cornelius.

This businessman was the originator of the Vanderbilt family fortune.

Scientists and Philosophers

Carnegie, Dale

This author of the prominent book, How to Win Friends and Influence People, sold millions of copies of this practical guide to success.

James, William

This American philosopher proposed that human behavior is grounded in instinct.

Mead, Margaret

This anthropologist is best known for her courageous field research, as well as for authoring the 1928 book, Coming of Age in Samoa.

Skinner, B.F.

This psychologist is famous for his Skinner box experiment, which increased our understanding of the learning process as well as the impact of conditioning on behavior.

Sports Figures

Aaron, Henry (Hank)

This baseball player beat Babe Ruth's record for home runs during his major league career.

Ali, Muhammad

This boxer's world champion title was revoked because he was a conscientious objector to the draft, but he regained it later.

Louis, Joe

This twentieth-century boxer was nicknamed the "Brown Bomber," and he held the world championship title as a heavyweight from 1937 to 1949.

Owens, Jesse

He was an extremely popular African-American athlete and civic leader. He participated in the 1936 Summer Olympics in Berlin, Germany, where he achieved international fame by winning four gold medals.

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Robinson, Jackie

He became the first African-American, major league, baseball player of the modern era in 1947.