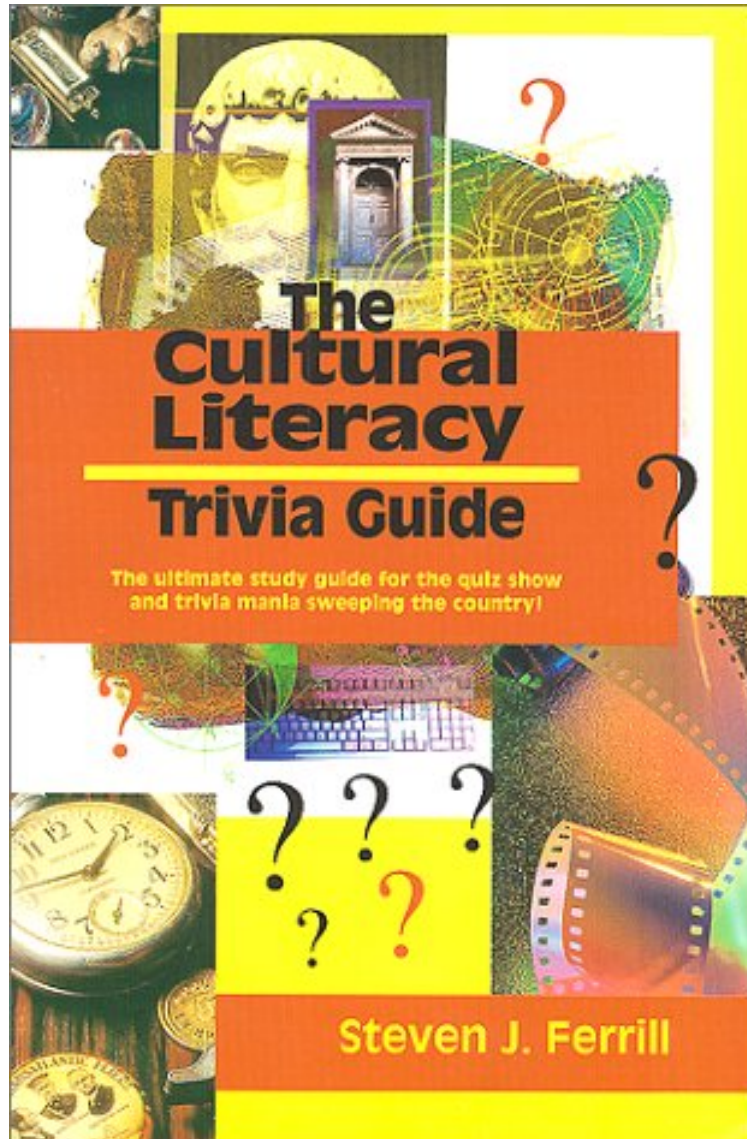


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The Cultural Literacy Trivia Guide

Steven J. Ferrill

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Steven J. Ferrill : The Cultural Literacy Trivia Guide before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Cultural Literacy Trivia Guide:

4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. Great concept... poor execution. By MadaminaI bought the book to prepare (cram, really) with about three weeks' lead time for my Jeopardy appearance. I can't say enough about the value of a reference like this when you have limited time. My friend and I used it over lunch and flipped through different categories each day. In turn, the things we went over gave us a springboard to look into other

sources. Remember, too, that if you're on a game show you most likely won't get questions so cut-and-dried as they appear in the book. ("Here's a fact; here's its location or date.") If you're studying with someone else, have them make up questions that use the info from the book. The most helpful parts of the book involved frequently recalled figures and events of countries or eras. If you're asked about a Norwegian composer, you'll most likely answer, "Grieg." The author focuses on this level of information so that you know no more and no less than what you'll need in this situation. But what good is easily accessible information if it's just plain WRONG? Other reviewers have noted the errors they found; for me, it came when he listed the director of *Sunset Boulevard* as Cecil B. DeMille... and then listed it correctly (Billy Wilder) on the very next page. And the director of *Scarface*: Jonathan Demme? Please. These are bush league facts that many non-trivia-geeks could recall at a moment's notice. Unacceptable. I also noted some slightly odd choices for lists of "notables." Maybe it's just my perspective, but in some cases I'd never heard of a particular film or book that the author listed as a major work. It's not expensive, so I'd recommend the purchase. However, keep your skepticism handy.

6 of 6 people found the following review helpful. "The Faltese Falson " Flies Again! Oops--No, It Doesn't! By A Customer This book will delight a certain kind of trivia buff, but not for any of the expected reasons. After all, you can spend just so many years on the couch yelling out the right answers ahead of the contestants on "Jeopardy" or "Who Wants to Whatever?"--right? At that point, some people find more fun in the WRONG answers. Boy, has Steven Ferrill got a book for YOU folks! It's FULL of wrong answers. Okay, so most of the mistakes are spelling gaffes. To the Spell-check generation, spelling itself is considered trivial, and spelling mistakes can be brushed aside like pizza crumbs, can't they? Well, not exactly. If the Jeopardy answer is: "Shelley's elegy on the death of Keats" and the contestant says, "What is 'Adonis'?" (see Ferrill, p. 144), Alex will frown regretfully and move on. Likewise, don't try to palm off Ferrill's "Sicaly" (p. 231)(which would be pronounced "Sikaly") as Shakespeare's "Sicilia" (the setting for *THE WINTER'S TALE*). If I tried to pronounce Samuel Butler's masterpiece on the basis of its spelling in this book ("Aerowan," also p. 144), I don't think I'd get close enough to EREWHON to win a toaster oven. (By the way, it's not often you see a seven-letter word with six spelling mistakes.) And surely, no self-respecting trivia judge would accept, as the title of the classic Bogart-Mary Astor film noir, Ferrill's gem on p. 51: "The Faltese Falson." Now here's a gaffe that won't lose you any points but will give you a giggle: Ferrill's version (p. 124) of the Newton Minow quote tells us that television is "a vast waistland." Finally, on p. 42, you'll find a truly charming blooper: America's largest exporter is "Boing." There's something almost Zen-like about that one. Yes, there are mistakes beyond the spelling slip-ups. If you have a single choice for "main character in Joyce's *ULYSSES*," go for Bloom, not Stephen Daedalus, as Ferrill does (p. 142). Do not, repeat, DO NOT identify Tybalt in *ROMEO AND JULIET* as "Juliet's nephew" (Ferrill, p. 230): the two teen-agers are cousins. Finally, and most gravely, never, EVER suggest within hearing of a University of Arizona alum (such as this reviewer) that that great institution is located in TEMPE! Well, there are more, but I don't want to spoil anyone's fun. Oh, all right, but this is the last. In the category "Latin Phrases," Ferrill tells us that "a god out of a machine" is "deux ex machina." Since "deux" means "two," perhaps he was thinking of "Two for the Seesaw." The traditional phrasing prefers the word "deus." Well, thus warned, you may want to buy the book anyway. It packs a lot of information in a compact format, has functional categories, puts the answers right next to the questions where a serious trivia hound (as contrasted with a party dilettante) wants to find them, and never tries to be cute, unlike some trivia books one might name. Besides, you'll probably enjoy the howlers. I surely did.

35 of 36 people found the following review helpful. Fraught with Errors! By MaineCajun While I appreciate and applaud Mr. Ferrill's unique effort, I must point out that within the first couple of minutes that I looked through this book, I KEPT FINDING ERRORS! For instance, the second American in Space was Gus Grissom, not Scott Carpenter. The first American to walk in space was Ed White, not Alan White. The Bismark was a German Battleship, not a Destroyer. The major rivers in Maine are the Penobscot, Androscoggin, and the Kennebec, not the KENNEBUNK. (The Kennebunk is a small river, significant only for its mouth's proximity to ex-Pres. Bush's estate.) Stonewall Jackson was killed at the battle of Chancellorsville in Virginia, not TENNESSEE. The trachea is not the "tube traveling from the mouth to lungs"-it connects the larynx to the lungs (or even more accurately, it connects the larynx to the left and right mainstem bronchi). Erythrocytes don't "carry" Red Blood Cells-they ARE Red Blood Cells, and they carry oxygen. Cartilage is not the "tissue that attaches tendons to bones"-tendons attach muscle to bones and insert directly into the bones. Tojo was a Japanese General, not an ADMIRAL. I won't even address the spelling errors. Again, I found these errors within a few minutes of picking the book up and randomly glancing through a couple of sections-and these are just the errors I could instantly identify. These errors may seem trivial, but after all, this is a book about trivia! I suppose this book may have served some game show participants and viewers adequately, and I'm sure the vast majority of Mr. Ferrill's information is accurate. But, based on the number of errors I discovered in the first ten minutes, I sure wouldn't trust it as a reliable source to settle a bet or an argument.

The Cultural Literacy Trivia Guide is designed for someone who wants to study for any of the many game shows now on TV. Many of the clues on *Who Wants to be a Millionaire?* and *Jeopardy!* are contained within the pages of this book. It contains over 12,500 facts that come up over and over on these types of shows. No other trivia book today

contains the amount of information in this book and designed with short easy to study clues. This book is a must for anyone studying for any of the challenging game shows on American TV today.

About the Author Steven Ferrill is a self-professed trivia fanatic. He first realized this magnetism toward diverse facts during the original run of Jeopardy! from 1964 to 1974, where he rarely missed a show. Today he is a veteran of High School Bowl, College Bowl and hundreds of local trivia matches. He has also passed the test for Jeopardy! twice, although he has yet to be called. Making the move behind the microphone, he now hosts trivia matches for many local charities in the St. Louis area. As a trivia maven, he knows what material comes up over and over again on today's game shows. He has taken eleven years to compile the information in this book and arrange it into an easy to study format.