

Guide Questions for Portrait of American Authors

Where is the author from?

What was his or her social-economic status as a child -- rich, poor, educated, etc.?

What challenges did this person face while growing up?

What privileges did this person enjoy while growing up?

When did he or she begin writing?

Why did he or she begin writing?

What novels did this person write that invoked the American dream? Describe them: which characters worked toward the American dream, why, and how?

What was happening in the United States and in the world at the time the author wrote about the American dream?

Why do you think the author used the American dream idea in his or her writing?

How did using the idea of the American dream help create interesting or uninteresting characters?

Would you say that this author felt satisfied that he or she had personally achieved the American dream?