

1. The Beat Generation

Jack Kerouac, the father of the Beat Generation was born on March 12th, 1922. He might still have been alive today were it not for the reckless way in which he and his friends lived – half died young and half went on to become famous writers/poets in their own right. This week we take a look at this extraordinary group of people, and particularly Jack Kerouac, who shaped the United States of the 1950s and the generations to come.

Level

Upper Intermediate and above

How to use the lesson

1. You may want to find some pictures of typical ‘beatniks’ and show your students as an introduction to the lesson. The web sites below may help.

2. Tell your students you are going to ask them to read a text and then you are going to give them some questions about the text. Give each student in the class a copy of Worksheet A and four minutes to read it and remember as many facts as they can.

3. When they have finished reading, divide the class into two groups, A and B. Give all ‘A’ students the half of Worksheet B that says Student A. Give all ‘B’ students the half of Worksheet B that says Student B. Ask them to work together (in pairs or small groups) to re-order the questions and then answer them. Remind them that the first word of each question is in **bold** type. Be on hand to help both groups as this stage may prove tricky.

4. When they have finished re-ordering and answering the questions, ask students to form new pairs, Student A with Student B. Each student takes it in turns to ask and answer the questions (without checking their pieces of paper). Each correct answers is worth 1 point.

5. Check answers in open class.

6. If you wanted to extend the activity further, you could ask pairs to write some more questions for each other to answer.

Questions (Answers in italics)

Student A

- What was Jack Kerouac’s original name? *Jean-Louis de Lebris Kerouac*
- The works of which writer did Jack enjoy reading? *Thomas Wolfe*
- Which newspaper did Jack work for? *The Lowell Sun*
- Between the mid 40s and 50s, what did Jack spend his time doing? *Travelling*
- In what ‘style’ was *On The Road* written? *A style called ‘spontaneous prose’*
- What was the cause of Jack Kerouac’s death? *Prolonged alcoholism*

Student B

- Joual* is a dialect of which language? *French*
- Which sport was Jack good at? *Football*
- What was Jack’s first novel called? *The Town and the City*

- d. Can you name Jack Kerouac's most famous work? *On The Road*
- e. In which year was it published? *1957*
- f. Dark clothing was the trademark of which group of people? *Beatniks*

2. Related Websites

Send your students to these websites, or just take a look yourself.

Here's a selection of links to the Beat Generation and the beatniks

<http://www.bluesforpeace.com/beat.htm>

<http://www.rooknet.com/beatpage/index.html>

<http://www.teenreads.com/authors/au-kerouac-jack.asp>

http://members.aol.com/geekox3/linx_4_b.htm

<http://www.cartoonstock.com/directory/b/beatniks.asp>

some cartoons of stereotypical beatniks