

Activity Idea

The War of the Worlds

Recommended for Adults

Background:

The War of the Worlds by English author, H.G. Wells (1866-1946), was published in 1898 and is regarded as one of the most influential works of science fiction. The novel touches on the Victorian anxieties brought on by the end of the century. Scholars have argued that the novel is a critique of nineteenth-century imperialism and a commentary on Social Darwinism. *The War of the Worlds* was well-received and is one Wells' most widely-known works largely due to Orson Welles' 1938 radio dramatization which caused public panic in areas of the United States due to its similarity to the news bulletin format. It has had multiple film adaptations, with the most recent directed by Steven Spielberg, and starred Tom Cruise and Dakota Fanning. Both H.G. Wells and *The War of the Worlds* have been massively influential to the collective body of the science fiction genre.

The British author, Herbert George Wells (H.G Wells), was born in Kent, England in 1866. He earned a science degree from the University of London in 1890. Wells is known for his works of futurist science fiction which include *The Time Machine*, *The War of The Worlds*, *The Island of Doctor Moreau*, and *The Invisible Man*. His first novel, *The Time Machine* (1895) was an instant success and the start of a successful literary career that spanned nearly five decades. Wells published essays, comedies, novels, nonfiction books, and adapted some of his own work for Hollywood. He died in 1946 at the age of 79 in London. To his peers and contemporaries, he was regarded as an accomplished historian, author, and political and social thought leader. He is often referred to as the "Father of Futurism" as much of his predictions have come true. His collective body of work has inspired authors, films, and television adaptations.

Resources

Book:

The War of the Worlds on Overdrive - tinyurl.com/vvyd4c2

The War of the Worlds (Audiobook) on Hoopla - tinyurl.com/yx7jyftm

War of The Worlds: Infestation (graphic novel) on Hoopla - tinyurl.com/vxzqe7u

Music:

Themes Inspired by The War of the Worlds on Hoopla - tinyurl.com/tj24hh6



Film:

The War of the Worlds (1953) on Kanopy - tinyurl.com/vvuofut

Broadcast:

Orson Welles' 1938 broadcast: *The War of the Worlds* - tinyurl.com/o58c6b2

Further Research:

Gale Biography <https://tinyurl.com/vrv948>

Gale Literature Resource Center <https://tinyurl.com/rho7hld>

Spark an Idea!

Listen to the 1938 broadcast. If that aired today would it create a panic?

How has our relationship with media changed since 1938? How has it changed in the past 10 years?

Can you see a connection between this book and our current day views of extraterrestrial life?