

**Hitler Hears a Who! The Lasting Effect WWII Left on Dr. Seuss'
Children's Books**

Tallulah Pitti and Ainsley Proctor
Senior Division
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For National History Day 2021, we chose to do the topic on the lasting effects WWII left on Dr. Seuss' children's books. We chose this topic because it was something that we both felt connected to, having grown up reading Dr. Seuss books. We didn't know much about the topic so we were interested in learning more about what influenced Theodor Geisel into becoming Dr. Seuss. Our topic relates to this year's theme of Communication in History because it is seen throughout all of Dr. In Seuss' books he communicates a valuable lesson to his readers. These messages have been influenced from Geisel's beginnings as an advertisement illustrator to his political cartoons and his work in the Army during WWII.

Due to COVID-19 all of our research was done online. Preliminarily we used websites to get overall information on our topic. However, most of our compelling resources were found on our high school's research databases and books. The archive collections of Geisel's political cartoons and advertisements found in the UC San Diego Library proved to be very resourceful to us. They gave primary source illustrations of Geisel's early work before becoming a children's author.

This year we created a website to showcase our NHD project. A website fit our topic best because we found it easiest to display all of Theodor Geisel's works including his political cartoons, advertisements, and children's books. After starting our research we established the different sections of information that we needed to prove our thesis. We then created the web pages and filled them in as we researched further. The website let us conduct our own research, and then come together to make an informative project that effectively organized the evidence for our argument.

Our historical argument is that without the experiences that Dr. Seuss went through during WWII, he would not be the children's author the world knows and loves. His work as a cartoonist and animator developed his writing style and illustrations that people identify him with. The rhyme schemes and unrealistic drawings and plots he portrayed throughout his entire career shaped him into spreading messages of kindness and educating children as an author. It

can be seen in many cases that he took from his early careers and applied directly to his most famous books, and without his experience as a cartoonist and a lieutenant, his success would have been exponentially smaller.

The first books children read are Seuss' because parents love the fun way that he teaches people to read. Ridiculous plot lines not only entertain children, but educate and teach them valuable lessons, such as kindness and respect. New and modern ways of developing Seuss' stories are being made so that every generation can learn the crucial lessons he teaches. It is significant because even though some books are 20, 30, or even 40 years old, their messages are still important to instill in children, and their messages will resonate with them forever.