Sue: Good morning, everyone. We have an exciting program for you today on “Literature Today.” We’re going to talk about two of the world’s most popular authors. Who should we start with, Jim?

Jim: Well, I guess about the most popular author in the world right now is J.K. Rowling.

Sue: Now, not many people know her first name. Isn’t that right?

Jim: Right, that’s true. She’s usually called J.K. Rowling. You see, her publisher asked her to use her initials on her first book so her readers wouldn’t know if she was a man or a woman.

Sue: I see.

Jim: That’s because her first book was about a young boy with magic powers – that’s Harry Potter, of course.

Sue: Of course.

Jim: Her publisher wanted to make sure that boys would read her book.

Sue: OK, now, can you give us a little history on her? Where was she born?

Jim: Uh...she was born in England in 1965, but she lives in Scotland now. And she started writing at a very early age – she was...uh...just six years old. (Wow.) Later, she worked as a translator and as an English teacher in Portugal. She got the idea for her first Harry Potter book while she was riding a train.

Sue: OK. And now she’s the richest woman in England. A-amazing! How does she do it? I mean, what’s her secret?

Jim: Well, for one thing, she writes every day. Some days she only writes for ten minutes, but most days she writes for ten hours.

Sue: You’re kidding! Ten hours? (Yeah!) Well, I have to tell you, I just love her books!

Sue: Now, who would you say is the most famous American author?

Jim: Well, that’s a hard question to answer. But I can talk about one of my favorite authors, and that’s Stephen King.

Sue: Uh-huh!

Jim: He’s from the east coast of the United States, just like I am, and he still lives there.

Sue: Now, uh...is he older or younger than J.K. Rowling?

Jim: Oh, he...he’s older. He was born in 1947.

Sue: And...uh...when did he start writing?

Jim: Well, he also started writing when he was a child. In fact, in high school, he used to write the stories of movies he’d just seen and then he would sell the stories to his friends!

Sue: Oh, my gosh, you’re kidding! Really?

Jim: And when his teachers caught him, they made him give back the money.

Sue: Oh, ho-ho, wow! Now, did he get a job as a writer as soon as he finished school?

Jim: No, apparently he first worked as a high school English teacher. And then he wrote some short stories for magazines, and finally he wrote the manuscript for his first big success, Carrie, the one about the girl with magic powers.

Sue: Mm-hm!

Jim: Now, King didn’t like the book at first, and he actually threw it away!

Sue: You’re kidding?

Jim: No, and his wife took it out of the garbage and encouraged him to finish it and, of course, it was published in 1974.

Sue: Huh, now, do all of King’s stories deal with magic powers?

Jim: Well, I think all his books – or at...at least most of them – are scary stories.

Sue: I see.

Jim: I find them pretty frightening.

Sue: Yeah.

Jim: But they’re very well-written. And, well, many of them have been made into movies.

Sue: Yeah, that’s true. Now, does King write every day?

Jim: Oh, yes. In fact, his advice to anybody who wants to be a writer is to read for four hours every day, and then to write for four hours every day.

Sue: Wow! You know, I don’t think I could be a writer, then. Ha-ha!

Jim: No, I don’t think I could, either! But...uh...I sure enjoy being a reader.

Sue: And so does our audience, I’m sure. Thanks for tuning in to “Literature Today,” and we hope to have you back with us next week, when we’ll discuss the question: Which was better, the book or the movie?