

# Russell Baker

## Quotes

*People, Men, Years, Children, Writing, Funny, Science, America, War, Journalism, Thinking, Age, Car, Cities, Jobs, Food, Long, Birthday, Two, Home*

An educated person is one who has learned that information almost always turns out to be at best incomplete and very often false, misleading, fictitious, mendacious - just dead wrong.

~Russell Baker

The people who are always hankering loudest for some golden yesteryear usually drive new cars.

~Russell Baker

Usually, terrible things that are done with the excuse that progress requires them are not really progress at all, but just terrible things.

~Russell Baker

The only thing I was fit for was to be a writer, and this notion rested solely on my suspicion that I would never be fit for real work, and that writing didn't require any.

~Russell Baker

The worst thing about being a tourist is having other tourists recognize you as a tourist.

~Russell Baker

What the New Yorker calls home would seem like a couple of closets to most Americans, yet he manages not only to live there but also to grow trees and cockroaches right on the premises.

~Russell Baker

In an age when the fashion is to be in love with yourself, confessing to be in love with somebody else is an admission of unfaithfulness to one's beloved.

~Russell Baker

Americans like fat books and thin women.

~Russell Baker

A solved problem creates two new problems, and the best prescription for happy living is not to solve any more problems.

~Russell Baker

It seems to be a law in American life that whatever enriches us anywhere except in the wallet inevitably becomes uneconomic.

~Russell Baker

You can't enjoy light verse with a heavy heart.

~Russell Baker

Ah, summer, what power you have to make us suffer and like it.

~Russell Baker

Life is always walking up to us and saying, "Come on in, the living's fine," and what do we do? Back off and take its picture.

~Russell Baker

Don't try to make children grow up to be like you, or they may do it.

~Russell Baker

A group of politicians deciding to dump a President because his morals are bad is like the Mafia getting together to bump off the Godfather for not going to church on Sunday.

~Russell Baker

The worst thing about the miracle of modern communications is the Pavlovian pressure it places upon everyone to communicate whenever a bell rings.

~Russell Baker

Misery no longer loves company. Nowadays it insists on it.

~Russell Baker

Inanimate objects can be classified scientifically into three major categories: those that don't work, those that break down and those that get lost.

~Russell Baker

Listen once in a while. It's amazing what you can hear.

~Russell Baker

The sinister nature of the American soil is apparent in places like Gettysburg. Fertilize it with the blood of heroes, and it brings forth a frozen-custard stand.

~Russell Baker

In writing, punctuation plays the role of body language. It helps readers hear you the way you want to be heard.

~Russell Baker

Anticipating that most poetry will be worse than carrying heavy luggage through O'Hare Airport, the public, to its loss, reads very little of it.

~Russell Baker

People seem to enjoy things more when they know a lot of other people have been left out of the pleasure.

~Russell Baker

The charm of television entertainment is its ability to bridge the chasm between dinner and bedtime without mental distraction.

~Russell Baker

Happiness is a small and unworthy goal for something as big and fancy as a whole lifetime, and should be taken in small doses.

~Russell Baker

When it comes to cars, only two varieties of people are possible -

cowards and fools.

~Russell Baker

Serious journalism need not be solemn.

~Russell Baker

Except for politics, no business is scrutinized more exhaustively than journalism.

~Russell Baker

I gave up on new poetry myself 30 years ago when most of it began to read like coded messages passing between lonely aliens in a hostile world.

~Russell Baker

The goal of all inanimate objects is to resist man and ultimately defeat him.

~Russell Baker

Children rarely want to know who their parents were before they were parents, and when age finally stirs their curiosity, there is no parent left to tell them.

~Russell Baker

Live by publicity, you'll probably die by publicity.

~Russell Baker

The biographer's problem is that he never knows enough. The autobiographer's problem is that he knows too much.

~Russell Baker

Situation comedy on television has thrived for years on 'canned' laughter, grafted by gaglines by technicians using records of guffawing audiences that have been dead for years.

~Russell Baker

Caution: These verses may be hazardous to your solemnity.

~Russell Baker

In America, it is sport that is the opiate of the masses.

~Russell Baker

In America nothing dies easier than tradition.

~Russell Baker

Scientists have been struck by the fact that things that break down virtually never get lost, while things that get lost hardly ever break down.

~Russell Baker

People who say you're just as old as you feel are all wrong, fortunately.

~Russell Baker

Newspaper people, once celebrated as founts of ribald humor and uncouth fun, have of late lost all their gaiety, and small wonder.

~Russell Baker

New York is the only city in the world where you can get run down on the sidewalk by a pedestrian.

~Russell Baker

Is fuel efficiency really what we need most desperately? I say that what we really need is a car that can be shot when it breaks down.

~Russell Baker

Notice, for example, that people who talk about "the joys of childhood" are always adults. Only an adult, utterly remote from the reality of childhood, could suppose it is time of joys.

~Russell Baker

Reporters thrive on the world's misfortune. For this reason they often take an indecent pleasure in events that dismay the rest of humanity.

~Russell Baker

The American press has the blues. Too many authorities have assured it that its days are numbered, too many good newspapers are in ruins.

~Russell Baker

American foreign policy had still not recovered from its victory over communism when George W. Bush and Condoleezza Rice took over at the White House in 2001.

~Russell Baker

Anything that isn't opposed by about 40 percent of humanity is either an evil business or so unimportant that it simply doesn't matter.

~Russell Baker

Industrial-strength foolishness sets in in males, at least at about the age of 18. This is why the military prefers males in the 18-to-25-year-old range when there's combat to be done.

~Russell Baker

A railroad station? That was sort of a primitive airport, only you didn't have to take a cab 20 miles out of town to reach it.

~Russell Baker

It's always seemed odd to me that after a group of terrorists commits a vile and odious deed they rush messages to the public to claim credit for it.

~Russell Baker

Life seemed to be an educator's practical joke in which you spent the

first half learning and the second half learning that everything you learned in the first half was wrong.

~Russell Baker

Reality is the only obstacle to happiness.

~Russell Baker

I frankly admit to not knowing who I am. This is why I refuse to buy clothes that will tell people who I want them to think I am.

~Russell Baker

It was Queen Elizabeth who made me a foreign correspondent.

~Russell Baker

When you're the only pea in the pod, your parents are likely to get you confused with the Hope diamond.

~Russell Baker

Sending grown-ups up the wall is one of the things adolescence is all about. A few years ago it was done with rock 'n' roll music. Now at least they can do it quietly with a home computer.

~Russell Baker

Journalism was being whittled away by a Wall Street theory that profits can be maximized by minimizing the product.

~Russell Baker

There are good reasons why everybody should heed politicians' advise not to believe the media. One of the best is that the media report what politicians say.

~Russell Baker

Etiquette is the grease that makes it possible for all of us to rub together without unnecessary overheating.



~Russell Baker

It is safest to shut up and pay, which is what I shall eventually do, though I shall hate having to sell the children.

~Russell Baker

I've had an unhappy life, thank God.

~Russell Baker

Schoolteachers seemed determined to persuade me that 'classic' is a synonym for 'narcotic'.

~Russell Baker

Poetry is so vital to us until school spoils it.

~Russell Baker

The twentieth century seems afflicted by a gigantic... power failure. Powerlessness and the sense of powerlessness may be the environmental disease of the age.

~Russell Baker

Journalism talk is part of the nonstop background noise of American life.

~Russell Baker

Americans treat history like a cookbook. Whenever they are uncertain what to do next, they turn to history and look up the proper recipe, invariably designated "the lesson of history."

~Russell Baker

Rereading A.J. Liebling carries me happily back to an age when all good journalists knew they had plenty to be modest about, and were.

~Russell Baker

Feel good about linking hands in human chain for good causes.

~Russell Baker

After two years studying what rewrite men did with the facts I phoned them, I knew that journalism was essentially a task of stringing together seamlessly an endless series of cliches.

~Russell Baker

What sweeter words can fall on the human ear? It's going to be May all week long.

~Russell Baker

The old notion that brevity is the essence of wit has succumbed to the modern idea that tedium is the essence of quality.

~Russell Baker

Skins tanned to the consistency of well-traveled alligator suitcases.

~Russell Baker

Baltimore is permissiveness. The pleasures of the flesh, the table, the bottle, and the purse are tolerated with a civilized understanding.

~Russell Baker

Research is a scientific activity dedicated to discovering what makes grass green.

~Russell Baker

Gerald Boyd was a classic specimen of the self-made man. Born poor, he worked and studied his way up out of poverty under the guidance of his widowed grandmother.

~Russell Baker

Humans treat time as a map and always know where they are located on it and respond with the appropriate emotion.

~Russell Baker

It was clear soon after his election that Obama, like FDR, wanted to start dealing with the economic crisis immediately after his inauguration.

~Russell Baker

Every day and in every way, baseball gets fancier. A few more years and they'll be playing on oriental rugs.

~Russell Baker

When sudden death takes a president, opportunities for new beginnings flourish among the ambitious and the tensions among such people can be dramatic, as they were when President Kennedy was killed.

~Russell Baker

The best discussion of trouble in boardroom and business office is found in newspapers' own financial pages and speeches by journalists in management jobs.

~Russell Baker

A day spent praising the earth and lamenting man's pollutionist history makes you feel like a superior, sensitive soul.

~Russell Baker

Skinny women don't enjoy being told they're skinny nowadays. They enjoy telling you how they got that way, as though starvation were an achievement.

~Russell Baker

There are no liberals behind steering wheels.

~Russell Baker

The dirty work at political conventions is almost always done in the grim hours between midnight and dawn. Hangmen and politicians work best when the human spirit is at its lowest ebb.

~Russell Baker

Watergate left Washington a city ravaged by honesty.

~Russell Baker

Kingsley Amis was one of a trio of brilliant comic novelists who made English literature sparkle in the twentieth century.

~Russell Baker

It's good for the soul to hear yourself as others hear you, and next time maybe, just maybe, you will not talk so much, so loudly, so brilliantly, so charmingly, so utterly shamelessly foolishly.

~Russell Baker

The young cult of sociology, needing a language, invented one. There are many dead languages, but the sociologists' is the only language that was dead at birth.

~Russell Baker

A person whose job is deep thinking about atomic war would no more call a 'megadeath' a 'million corpses' than an embalmer would refer to a 'loved one' as a 'stiff.'

~Russell Baker

There's so much spectating going on that a lot of us never get around to living.

~Russell Baker

Ireland really is my problem; the breaking point of the huge suppuration which all British and all European society now is

~Russell Baker

You can always tell folks from nonfolks. Folks like to feel good, like to smile for the camera when there's a big photo opportunity for a really good cause.

~Russell Baker

Roosevelt's declaration that Americans had 'nothing to fear but fear itself' was a glorious piece of inspirational rhetoric and just as gloriously wrong.

~Russell Baker

Long words, fat talk they may tell us something about ourselves. Has the passion for fat in the language increased as self-confidence has waned?

~Russell Baker

The best advice I can give anybody about going out into the world is this: Don't do it. I have been out there. It is a mess....

~Russell Baker

Windows 95 is what Rube Goldberg would have designed if he'd studied cartooning at M.I.T.

~Russell Baker

Journalist: A person with nothing on his mind and the power to express it.

~Russell Baker

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