

The Write Stuff

Author's Trivia Game



Stephen Crane

Born on November 1, 1871, in Newark, New Jersey, Stephen Crane was the last of fourteen children in a devout Methodist family. He began his writing career working for a newspaper in New York City. Crane's first attempt to publish a novel failed, but his next work, a serial titled *The Red Badge of Courage*, proved successful. It was published as a novel in 1895. In 1898, Crane traveled to Cuba as a war correspondent during the Spanish-American War. While in Cuba, he contracted malaria, and his health rapidly deteriorated. Stephen Crane died from tuberculosis in 1900, at the age of 28.



Trivia Question:

Crane's experiences with a shipwreck en route to Cuba inspired which of his short stories?

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Zora Neale Hurston

Zora Neale Hurston was born on January 7, 1891, in Notasulga, Alabama. When Hurston was three years old, her family moved to Eatonville, Florida. Her hometown would later become the backdrop for her most famous novel, *Their Eyes Were Watching God*. Hurston enrolled in the prestigious Barnard College in 1925. She joined the Harlem Renaissance movement, contributing to several African American publications. Aside from her literary work, Hurston's legacy lives on through her contributions to anthropology and African American cultural research.

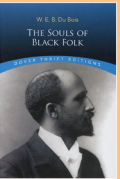


Trivia Question:

In order to complete her high school education at Morgan College, Hurston claimed she was actually born in what year?

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W. E. B. Du Bois

William Edward Burghardt Du Bois was born on February 23, 1868, in Great Barrington, Massachusetts. Growing up, Du Bois was fond of academics. In 1895, he became the first African American to earn a Ph.D from Harvard University. As a founding member of the NAACP, Du Bois advocated for equal rights for minorities. His essay collection, *The Souls of Black Folk*, is considered an essential piece of American literary history. Du Bois later moved to Ghana, where he worked on an encyclopedia of the African diaspora until his death in 1963.



Trivia Question:

In 1951, Du Bois went on trial for allegedly violating the Foreign Agents Registration Act. What famous scientist offered to appear as a character witness on his behalf?

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Emily Dickinson

The daughter of a politician, Emily Dickinson was born on December 10, 1830 in Amherst, Massachusetts. In her youth, she developed a love for writing poetry, having been inspired by the works of Ralph Waldo Emerson and William Wordsworth. As an adult, Dickinson led a reclusive life, spending most of her time at her family's home. Her work would not be recognized until after her death in 1886, when her sister Lavinia discovered her collection of nearly 1,800 unpublished poems.



Trivia Question:

Before her death, Dickinson requested that her coffin be carried through fields of what type of flowers?

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Edith Wharton

Edith Wharton was born on January 24, 1862, in New York City into a wealthy family at a time when the social elite held immense political and economic power. Her first novel, *The House of Mirth*, published in 1905, commented on the restrictive conventions of high society. *Ethan Frome*, published in 1911, was a commercial success. In 1921, Wharton won the Pulitzer Prize for *The Age of Innocence*. Two years later, she received an honorary doctorate from Yale University, making her the first woman to be so honored. Edith Wharton died in 1937.



Trivia Question:

Wharton personally designed her estate in Lennox, Massachusetts, which went by what name?

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Langston Hughes

James Mercer Langston Hughes was born February 1, 1901, in Joplin, Missouri. In high school, Hughes grew interested in poetry, especially the works of Carl Sandburg and Walt Whitman. His poem "The Negro Speaks of Rivers" appeared in a 1921 issue of *The Crisis*, an NAACP publication. Hughes was a core figure of the Harlem Renaissance, using his writing to highlight the lives of working-class African Americans. Well after his death in 1967, Hughes remains one of the most successful African American writers of the last century.

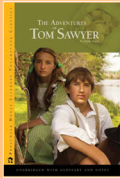


Trivia Question:

While attending Lincoln University, Hughes joined which historically African American fraternity?

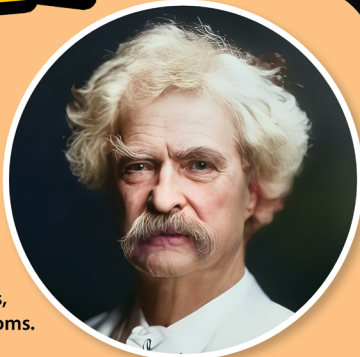
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Mark Twain

Samuel Clemens (pen name Mark Twain) was born and raised in Missouri. He grew up in Hannibal, a town on the Mississippi River. The steamboats, tradesmen, slaves, and violence there inspired the fictional towns in Twain's famous works *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* and *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*. As a teenager, Twain wrote for various papers before becoming a riverboat pilot. Known for his witticisms and social commentary, Twain wrote short stories, novels, and other works that continue to be treasured in classrooms.

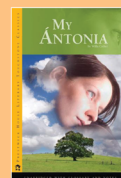


Trivia Question:

Twain's birth and death are famously associated with the appearance of which celestial object?

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Willa Cather

Willa Cather was born on December 7, 1873, in Back Creek Valley, Virginia. When she was nine, Cather and her family moved to Red Cloud, Nebraska. Her experiences growing up on the frontier later served as inspiration for many of her stories, including her 1918 masterpiece, *My Antonia*. After graduating from the University of Nebraska in 1895, Cather wrote for magazines in Pittsburgh and New York City. Well after her death in 1947, Cather is remembered for her nostalgic depiction of the pioneer spirit.



Trivia Question:

In 1923, Cather won the Pulitzer Prize for *One of Ours*, a novel set during which major historical event?

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F. Scott Fitzgerald

F. Scott Fitzgerald was a prolific writer, known for portraying the Jazz Age. In many ways, the decadence and idealism explored in Fitzgerald's classic novel *The Great Gatsby* reflects his own story—a rags-to-riches American Dream rooted in both triumph and ruin. He reaped the rewards of fame and fortune, but his extravagant lifestyle eventually took its toll. Fitzgerald died from a heart attack in 1940 at the age of 44. His work did not earn the distinction it holds to-day until years later.

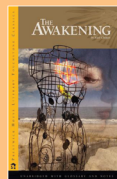


Trivia Question:

Fitzgerald was named after what famous composer—who also happened to be his second cousin three times removed?

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Kate Chopin

Katherine O'Flaherty Chopin was born in St. Louis, Missouri, on February 8, 1850 to an Irish father and French-Creole mother. Chopin was 35 when her husband and her mother died. Her experience as a widow is said to have inspired her writing, as she embraced the themes of the Creole population of New Orleans and the idea of a strong-willed woman. When originally published in 1899, *The Awakening* was poorly received because of its main character's unorthodox views. Today, readers and critics consider *The Awakening* to be a significant part of American literature.

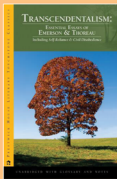


Trivia Question:

In an unpublished essay, Chopin noted that her writing style was influenced by which French short story author?

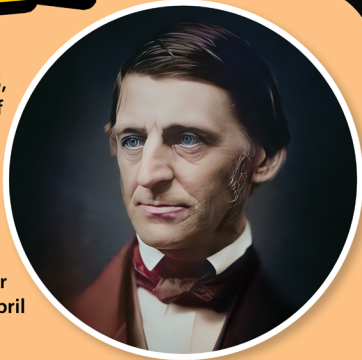
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Ralph Waldo Emerson

Ralph Waldo Emerson was born on May 25, 1803, in Boston, Massachusetts. The son of a Unitarian clergyman, Emerson studied at Harvard Divinity School and was ordained in 1829. However, after the death of his wife in 1831, Emerson had doubts about his faith and left the church. He would later found transcendentalism, a philosophical movement that valued individuality, spirituality, and the natural world. After a long career as a writer and lecturer, Emerson died on April 27, 1882.

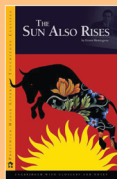


Trivia Question:

During a visit to St. Augustine, Florida, Emerson met and befriended the nephew of which French political leader?

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Ernest Hemingway

One of America's most honored novelists, Ernest Hemingway was born in 1899. He worked as a reporter, but then enlisted in WWI. His wartime experiences led directly to two of his most famous novels, *The Sun Also Rises* and *A Farewell to Arms*. Hemingway continued to write novels and short stories throughout his career. In 1953, he won the Pulitzer Prize for the novel *The Old Man and the Sea*, and he was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1954. His unique style is admired for its economy, simplicity, and power. Hemingway died in 1961.



Trivia Question:

While living in Paris in 1928, Hemingway was left with a permanent forehead scar after what object fell on his head?