

Famous authors

Name:

Date:



Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe was a German writer, poet, novelist, actor, scientist, geologist, botanist and philosopher. As a young boy, he wrote stories and plays and learned Greek, Latin, and French. He studied law in Leipzig and Strasbourg and later collected folk poetry with a poet named Herder.

At the age of 25, he wrote *The Sufferings of Young Werther* which was very successful all over Europe and inspired many young men. He also wrote a long play called *Faust* about a man who is promised happiness by the devil if he signs a pact with his own blood.

Goethe spent most of life working for a Duke called Karl August and studying geology, mineralogy, botany and anatomy. He went on two trips to Italy and wrote a play called *Iphigenie auf Tauris* combining the beauty of Classicism with great poetry. He was friends with famous poet Friedrich Schiller and they shared many ideas and helped each other with their works.

Goethe's most famous work is *Faust* which he worked on for most of his lifetime. He wrote *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre* (an education novel) and *Die Wahlverwandtschaften* (about divorce). His last book was *Westöstlicher Divan* which uses ideas from Persia and other Eastern countries. Goethe died in 1832 and left behind a big impact on European literature.

Who is the happiest of men? He who values the merits of others, and in their pleasure takes joy, even as though 'twere his own.

Maxims and Reflections. in "Poems of Goethe" (1853), translated by Edgar Alfred Bowring

My Notes

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Name

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Birth date

August 28, 1749

Birthplace

Frankfurt am Main, Germany

Life

Goethe was a German writer, poet, novelist, and playwright who wrote many books and plays. He influenced many 19th century writers and thinkers. He studied law in Leipzig, Strasbourg and Wetzlar and made many friends. He fell in love with several women, most notably Charlotte von Stein, and his love life often inspired his writing. He went to Italy twice and made lots of sketches, read ancient poets and books on the history of art.

Work

He wrote the book *Die Leiden des jungen Werthers* (The Sufferings of Young Werther), a play called *Iphigenie auf Tauris*, a novel called *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre*, and a play called *Faust*. He also wrote short works such as *Hermann und Dorothea* and poems as part of his collection *Westöstlicher Divan*.

Achievement

He influenced many 19th century writers and thinkers. His contributions to science include his work in botany and his *Theory of Colours*. His book *Die Leiden des jungen Werthers* was very successful all over Europe, and he spent many years on his novel *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre*. *Faust* was another of his highly regarded works.

Famous for

He is famous for his writings and poems, and for his work in botany and his *Theory of Colours*. Many of his phrases have become part of the German language, and his poems have been set to music by famous composers like Schubert, Schumann, Brahms, Wolf, and Strauss.

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Answer the questions

At what age did Johann Wolfgang von Goethe achieve European success with 'The Sufferings of Young Werther'?

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Which of the following subjects did Goethe NOT study?

- Mineralogy Astronomy Geology

Which of Goethe's works is famously a play about a man making a pact with the devil?

- Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre Iphigenie auf Tauris Faust

What was the theme of Goethe's book 'Die Wahlverwandtschaften'?

- Divorce Education Classicism