

Gertrude Stein Biography



Directions: Read the passage below. Then, answer the questions that follow.

Gertrude Stein was a writer, poet, and art collector. She was born in 1874 in Allegheny, Pennsylvania, a town which later became part of Pittsburgh. When Gertrude was three years old, her family moved to Vienna, Austria, and then to Paris, France. In 1878, they came back to the United States to live in Oakland, California.

The young life of Gertrude and her siblings, Michael, Simon, Leo, and Bertha, was marked by tragedy. Their mother passed away in 1888, and their father in 1891. Gertrude and Bertha went to live with their mother's family in Baltimore, Maryland. There, Gertrude made friends with a pair of sisters, Claribel and Etta Cone, who liked to collect and talk about art.

In 1903, Stein moved to Paris to live with her brother, Leo. There, she met Alice B. Toklas, a fellow art lover and writer, who became a lifelong friend. Their home became a center for art collection and conversation. Stein's friends included some of the most important writers and artists of the time. The Steins' collection included work by some of the most famous artists of the period, like Pablo Picasso and Henri Matisse.

In 1912, Stein published her first work of poetry, a book called *Three Lives*. She went on to write more books of poetry, novels, memoirs, and even *librettos*, the words that go along with opera music. She is remembered as an important writer, and also as an influential art collector. Along with her brothers, Leo and Michael, she helped support and make famous some of the most important European painters of the time.

1. Describe the tragedy Gertrude Stein experienced as a child.

2. How did Gertrude Stein influence the art community during her lifetime?

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3. The text defines *librettos* as the words that go along with opera music. Use the word *librettos* in your own original sentence.

4. How did Claribel and Etta Cone influence Gertrude Stein? Cite the paragraph that gave you information.

5. Create a timeline of important events in Gertrude Stein's life. Use the line below. Be sure to include dates and a few words to describe the event.

6. Using the timeline you created, which is the most significant event in Gertrude Stein's life? Explain your reasoning.
