

READING

Jane Austen

Jane Austen is one of the most famous English novelists. She was born on December 16, 1775, in Steventon, Hampshire, England. She was the seventh child of Cassandra and George Austen. Her father had a large library and the children could read a lot of books. Jane was especially close to her father and to her older sister, Cassandra. Jane and her sister were sent to boarding schools. During this time, they caught typhus and Jane almost died. After a short period of studying, they had to return home because the family didn't have enough money.

Jane Austen started writing her own novels in the 1790s. She spent a lot of her time reading, helping her parents, playing the piano, going to the church and meeting her neighbours. She became a very good dancer. In 1801, Jane Austen moved to Bath with her father, mother and Cassandra. Then, in 1805, her father died after a short illness. The family had some financial problems, but in 1809, they settled at Jane's brother Edward's cottage in Chawton.

Now in her 30s, Jane started to anonymously publish her works. She published *Sense and Sensibility* in 1811, *Pride and Prejudice* in 1813, *Emma* in 1815 and *Mansfield Park* in 1816. The most famous of these novels is probably *Pride and Prejudice*. It is the story of the Bennet family. The Bennets have five daughters. They are very different from each other and they all want to get married. The main character is Elizabeth, the second eldest daughter. She has a complicated relationship with the handsome and rich but very proud Mr. Darcy. In the end, they get married.

In 1816, Jane Austen became ill. She tried to continue writing as long as she could. In May 1817, she was taken to Winchester to be under the care of a good doctor and she died there on July 18. She was buried in Winchester Cathedral. A year after her death, her novel *Northanger Abbey* was published by her brother.

1 Read the text and answer the following questions.

- 1 Why did Jane Austen and her sister have to stop studying? _____
- 2 Where did Jane Austen move in 1801? _____
- 3 What happened to Jane Austen in 1805? _____
- 4 How many daughters do the Bennets have? _____
- 5 What kind of man is Mr Darcy? _____
- 6 Where did Jane Austen die? _____
- 7 Who published *Northanger Abbey*? _____

2 Are these sentences true (T) or false (F)?

- 1 When she was at boarding school, Jane Austen nearly died. _____
- 2 Jane Austen had a good relationship with her sister Cassandra. _____
- 3 In 1809, Jane Austen started living with her brother Edward. _____
- 4 Jane Austen could play the piano and was good at dancing. _____
- 5 Jane Austen started writing in her 30s. _____
- 6 The Bennet daughters are very similar to each other. _____
- 7 *Pride and Prejudice* ends with a marriage. _____

SOURCES: <https://www.biography.com/people/jane-austen-9192819>, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Pride-and-Prejudice#ref1243360>, <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Jane-Austen>

KEY

1 Read the text and answer the following questions.

- 1 Why did Jane Austen and her sister have to stop studying? **because the family didn't have enough money**
- 2 Where did Jane Austen move in 1801? **to Bath**
- 3 What happened to Jane Austen in 1805? **her father died**
- 4 How many daughters do the Bennets have? **five**
- 5 What kind of man is Mr Darcy? **he is rich and handsome but very proud**
- 6 Where did Jane Austen die? **in Winchester**
- 7 Who published *Northanger Abbey*? **Jane Austen's brother**

2 Are these sentences true (T) or false (F)?

- 1 When she was at boarding school, Jane Austen nearly died. **T**
- 2 Jane Austen had a good relationship with her sister Cassandra. **T**
- 3 In 1809, Jane Austen started living with her brother Edward. **T**
- 4 Jane Austen could play the piano and was good at dancing. **T**
- 5 Jane Austen started writing in her 30s. **F (she started writing earlier, in her 20s, she started publishing her novels)**
- 6 The Bennet daughters are very similar to each other. **F (they are very different from each other)**
- 7 *Pride and Prejudice* ends with a marriage. **T**