

READING

Thomas Hardy

Thomas Hardy was a famous English novelist and poet. He was born in Dorset, England in 1840. Hardy was the oldest of four children. He was born small and people thought he was dead. As a child, he was often ill. He spent a year at the village school at age eight and then moved on to schools in Dorchester, a nearby town, where he studied Latin, French, German, and mathematics.

Hardy was a small man, only a little over 150 centimetres tall. His mother taught him to love books and his father taught him to play the violin. In 1856, he started working for John Hicks, a local architect. Shortly before his 22nd birthday, he moved to London. There he also worked as an architect. In 1867, Hardy returned to Dorset.

In the 1860s, Hardy began writing poems and novels. Dorset was very important for Hardy's books. In 1874, Hardy published *Far from the Madding Crowd*, a novel which takes place there. The book was successful and made Hardy famous. He continued to write novels set in Dorset. He called it Wessex in his books. He even drew a map of Wessex with the names of the villages and towns in which his stories take place.

In 1874, Hardy married Emma Gifford. With his wife he travelled to Germany, France, and Italy and he built Max Gate near Dorchester, where he lived from 1886 until his death. However, the marriage was not a happy one. Hardy went on to write more novels, for example *The Return of the Native* or *The Mayor of Casterbridge*. One of his most famous books is *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*.

In 1912, Hardy's wife suddenly died. In 1914, he married Florence Emily Dugdale, who was thirty-eight years younger than him. Hardy continued writing poetry until his death. He lived in Dorset but sometimes visited London.

Thomas Hardy died in 1928 at the age of eighty-seven. His heart was buried in Stinsford with his first wife.

1 Read the text and answer the following questions.

- 1 What did Thomas Hardy study in Dorchester? _____
- 2 How tall was he? _____
- 3 What did Hardy's father teach him? _____
- 4 Where do most of Hardy's novels take place? _____
- 5 Where did Thomas Hardy and his wife travel? _____
- 6 What happened to Hardy in 1912? _____
- 7 How old was Thomas Hardy when he died? _____

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

- 1 Thomas Hardy was often sick when he was a child. _____
- 2 In 1856, Hardy started working as an architect in London. _____
- 3 Hardy's book *Far from the Madding Crowd* was a failure. _____
- 4 Hardy made a map of the area where his stories take place. _____
- 5 Thomas Hardy and Emma Gifford were a happy couple. _____
- 6 Hardy's second wife was much younger than him. _____
- 7 Thomas Hardy stopped writing when he got old. _____

SOURCES: <https://www.biography.com/people/thomas-hardy-9328464#!>,
<https://www.britannica.com/biography/Thomas-Hardy>, <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems-and-poets/poets/detail/thomas-hardy>, <http://www.notablebiographies.com/Gi-He/Hardy-Thomas.html>

KEY

1 Read the text and answer the following questions.

- 1 What did Thomas Hardy study in Dorchester? **Latin, French, German, and mathematics**
- 2 How tall was he? **a little over 150 centimetres**
- 3 What did Hardy's father teach him? **to play the violin**
- 4 Where do most of Hardy's novels take place? **in Dorset / in Wessex**
- 5 Where did Thomas Hardy and his wife travel? **they travelled to Germany, France, and Italy**
- 6 What happened to Hardy in 1912? **his first wife suddenly died**
- 7 How old was Thomas Hardy when he died? **87**

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

- 1 Thomas Hardy was often sick when he was a child. **T**
- 2 In 1856, Hardy started working as an architect in London. **F (he started working for a local architect)**
- 3 Hardy's book *Far from the Madding Crowd* was a failure. **F (it was successful and made Hardy famous)**
- 4 Hardy made a map of the area where his stories take place. **T**
- 5 Thomas Hardy and Emma Gifford were a happy couple. **F (their marriage wasn't a happy one)**
- 6 Hardy's second wife was much younger than him. **T (she was 38 years younger)**
- 7 Thomas Hardy stopped writing when he got old. **F (he continued writing poems until his death)**