

READING

Walter Scott

Walter Scott was a famous Scottish novelist, poet, historian and biographer. He is often considered the greatest author of historical novels.

Walter Scott was born on August 15, 1771, in Edinburgh, Scotland. His father was a lawyer and his mother was the daughter of a doctor. When he was young, he liked listening to stories about Scotland's past. He also read a lot of books. He studied at the University of Edinburgh and prepared for a career in law, but his real interest was literature.

In the mid-1790s, Scott became interested in German Romanticism. He translated some books from German, for example Goethe's play *Götz von Berlichingen*. In 1802–1803, he published *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*, a collection of Scottish ballads. He went on to write his own poetry and published a series of long poems, starting with *The Lay of the Last Minstrel* (1805). All of these poems were best-sellers and made Scott famous. The most successful of these poems was *The Lady of the Lake*, published in 1810.

Scott led a highly active literary and social life during these years. He also became a partner in a printing and publishing firm. The company had some financial problems and almost went bankrupt in 1813. Scott saved it, but from that time on everything he wrote was done partly to make money.

In 1814, Walter Scott published a novel called *Waverley*. It is a historical novel about a rebellion which took place in Scotland in 1745. The book was extremely successful. Scott published it anonymously. He went on to write a series of historical novels about Scottish history. He signed them "by the author of *Waverley*". These novels became known as the "Waverley" novels. They include for example *Rob Roy* (1817), *The Heart of Midlothian* (1818), and *The Bride of Lammermoor* (1819). Later, Scott turned to themes from English history. His most popular book today is *Ivanhoe* (1819), a novel set in 12th century England.

Towards the end of his life, Scott worked very hard because he wanted to get out of financial troubles. This was bad for his health and he died in Abbotsford, Scotland, on September 21, 1832.

1 Read the text and answer the following questions.

- 1 Where was Walter Scott born? _____
- 2 What was his father's job? _____
- 3 What is the first long poem that Walter Scott published? _____
- 4 What is *Waverley* about? _____
- 5 How did Walter Scott sign his novels about Scottish history? _____
- 6 What is Scott's most popular novel today? _____
- 7 Why did Scott work very hard towards the end of his life? _____

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

- 1 Walter Scott's mother was a doctor. _____
- 2 Walter Scott studied at Oxford. _____
- 3 Walter Scott was interested in German literature. _____
- 4 Walter Scott collected and published Scottish ballads. _____
- 5 After 1813, Walter Scott wrote only for money. _____
- 6 Walter Scott didn't publish *Waverley* under his own name. _____
- 7 *Ivanhoe* is set in 12th century Scotland. _____

KEY

1 Read the text and answer the following questions.

- 1 Where was Walter Scott born? **in Edinburgh, Scotland**
- 2 What was his father's job? **his father was a lawyer**
- 3 What is the first long poem that Walter Scott published? ***The Lay of the Last Minstrel***
- 4 What is *Waverley* about? **it is about a rebellion that took place in Scotland in 1745**
- 5 How did Walter Scott sign his novels about Scottish history? **"by the author of Waverley"**
- 6 What is Scott's most popular novel today? ***Ivanhoe***
- 7 Why did Scott work very hard towards the end of his life? **to get out of financial troubles**

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

- 1 Walter Scott's mother was a doctor. **F (she was a doctor's daughter)**
- 2 Walter Scott studied at Oxford. **F (he studied at the University of Edinburgh)**
- 3 Walter Scott was interested in German literature. **T**
- 4 Walter Scott collected and published Scottish ballads. **T**
- 5 After 1813, Walter Scott wrote only for money. **F (he wrote partly for money)**
- 6 Walter Scott didn't publish *Waverley* under his own name. **T**
- 7 *Ivanhoe* is set in 12th century Scotland. **F (it is set in 12th century England)**