

READING

Washington Irving

Washington Irving was a famous 19th century American writer. He was born in New York on April 3, 1783, in New York City. He was the youngest of eleven children and he was named after George Washington.

Washington Irving was educated privately. He began his writing career by writing essays for the *Morning Chronicle*, which was edited by his older brother Peter. In 1804–1806, he went on a tour of Europe. When he returned, he became a lawyer. However, he spent more time writing than practicing law. Washington Irving, his brother William and his friend James Kirke Paulding published *Salamagundi*, a series of twenty humorous essays. Washington Irving's *History of New-York from the Beginning of the World to the End of the Dutch Dynasty*, by Diedrich Knickerbocker was published in 1809.

In 1815, he travelled to England to help his brothers with the family business. In London, he met the famous Scottish writer Walter Scott and became friends with him. He stayed in England and wrote *The Sketch Book of Geoffrey Crayon, Gent.* It is a collection of essays and stories. The two most famous of these stories are *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow* and *Rip Van Winkle*. They have been called the first American short stories. *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow* is a ghost story set in America. *Rip Van Winkle* is a story about an American farmer who sleeps for 20 years and awakes as an old man to find his wife dead, his daughter happily married, and America an independent country.

In 1832, Washington Irving returned to the United States. He made a journey west and this expedition inspired his book *A Tour of the Prairies*. Except for four years when he was an ambassador to Spain (1842–46), he spent the rest of his life at his home in "Sunnyside," in Tarrytown, on the Hudson River. There he spent his time writing books. He wrote historical and biographical works, for example a biography of George Washington. He died at his home on November 28, 1859.

1 Read the text and answer the following questions.

- 1 How did Washington Irving begin his literary career? _____
- 2 Who wrote *Salamagundi*? _____
- 3 Why did Washington Irving travel to England in 1815? _____
- 4 Who did Washington Irving meet in London? _____
- 5 What happens to *Rip Van Winkle*? _____
- 6 When did Washington Irving return to America? _____
- 7 What inspired Washington Irving's book *A Tour of the Prairies*? _____

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

- 1 George Washington was named after Washington Irving. _____
- 2 The *Morning Chronicle* was edited by Washington Irving's brother William. _____
- 3 In 1804–1806, Washington Irving visited China. _____
- 4 Washington Irving wrote *The Sketch Book of Geoffrey Crayon, Gent.* in England. _____
- 5 *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow* is set in Scotland. _____
- 6 Washington Irving was an American ambassador to Portugal. _____
- 7 Washington Irving wrote a biography of Abraham Lincoln. _____

SOURCES: <https://www.biography.com/people/washington-irving-9350087>

<https://www.britannica.com/biography/Washington-Irving>, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Rip-Van-Winkle-short-story-by-Irving>

KEY

1 Read the text and answer the following questions.

- 1 How did Washington Irving begin his literary career? **by writing essays for the *Morning Chronicle***
- 2 Who wrote *Salamagundi*? **Washington Irving, his brother William and his friend James Kirke Paulding**
- 3 Why did Washington Irving travel to England in 1815? **to help his brothers with the family business**
- 4 Who did Washington Irving meet in London? **the famous Scottish writer Walter Scott**
- 5 What happens to *Rip Van Winkle*? **he sleeps for 20 years and awakes as an old man to find his wife dead, his daughter happily married, and America an independent country**
- 6 When did Washington Irving return to America? **in 1832**
- 7 What inspired Washington Irving's book *A Tour of the Prairies*? **his journey west**

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

- 1 George Washington was named after Washington Irving. **F (Washington Irving was named after George Washington)**
- 2 The *Morning Chronicle* was edited by Washington Irving's brother William. **F (it was edited by his brother Peter)**
- 3 In 1804–1806, Washington Irving visited China. **F (he visited Europe)**
- 4 Washington Irving wrote *The Sketch Book of Geoffrey Crayon, Gent.* in England. **T**
- 5 *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow* is set in Scotland. **F (it is set in America)**
- 6 Washington Irving was an American ambassador to Portugal. **F (he was an ambassador to Spain)**
- 7 Washington Irving wrote a biography of Abraham Lincoln. **F (he wrote a biography of George Washington)**