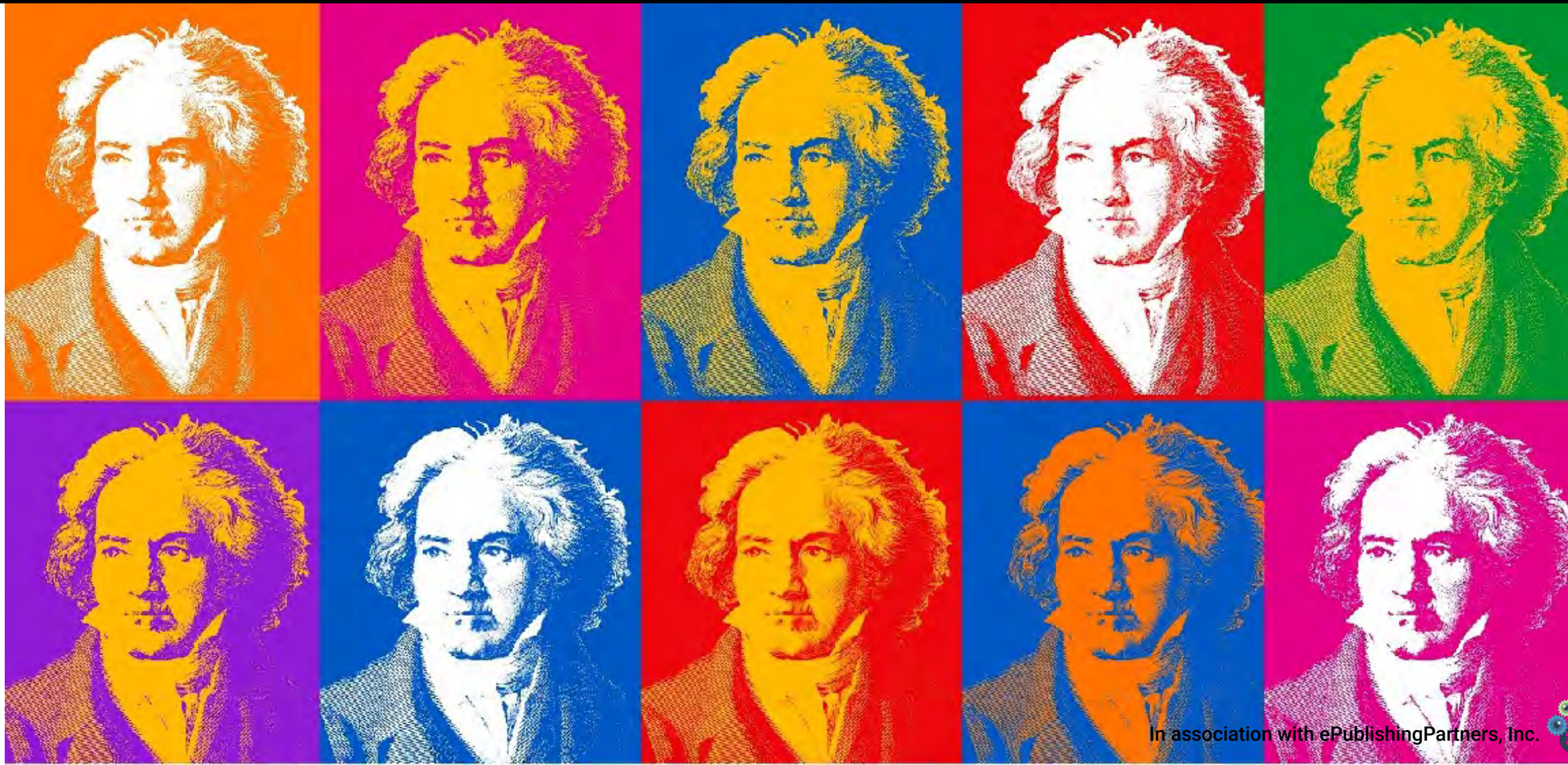


Google Arts & Culture

Learn Together: Beethoven Everywhere

["Beethoven 1 2"](#)



Using the lesson plan and Google Arts & Culture resources

This lesson plan is designed to support you as you explore Google Arts & Culture stories and exhibits related to the lesson topic. The images you will see here are just a sample of the media—texts, images, audio, and video—available to you on the Google Arts & Culture website and app. As the lesson uses only resources found on GA&C, it cannot present every aspect of a given topic. A parent or teacher might be guiding you through the lesson, or you might choose to complete it on your own.

All you need to access the lesson is an internet connection and a web browser or the Google Arts & Culture app. You may want to take notes, whether you do that digitally or with paper and pen.

The lesson plan has an **introduction**, which will describe the topic and provide some background information that will help you understand what you are seeing, hearing, and reading. Then the lesson will take you on a journey from one **Story** to another, fill in some details along the way, and pose **questions** that will help you focus on important ideas. A **quiz** and a link for **exploring the topic further** are followed by **ideas for projects** related to the lesson topic that you can do at home or in the classroom.

As noted, the lesson plan includes **questions** about the main stories, and there is also a **quiz**. You will want to write answers to the questions in a notebook or on a piece of paper. Then you can check all your answers when you've finished the lesson.

Resources on the Google Arts & Culture website include Themes, Stories, Museum Views, items, and images.

- ❖ **Themes** bring together stories, exhibits, collections, images, audio, and video files that relate to a topic.
- ❖ In a **Story**, scroll to move from one slide to the next. Audio and videos on slides will play automatically. Clicking on an image title will take you to a page with more information about it.
- ❖ In **Museum Views**, you move through a 3D space. Click to move forward. Click, hold, and move the cursor left or right to turn.
- ❖ An **item** will take you to an individual **image**, where you can zoom in and sometimes read more about the artefact.



In this lesson, you will learn about:

- ❖ The personal challenges Beethoven faced during his life.
- ❖ How Beethoven worked and drew inspiration from his surroundings.
- ❖ What made Beethoven's music revolutionary.
- ❖ How Beethoven and his music find their way into today's popular culture.

You will:

- ❖ Explore some stories and exhibits about Beethoven's life and his influence on music and culture.
- ❖ Answer some questions about what you have seen and read.

This lesson will take **30–45 minutes** to complete.

Learn Together: Beethoven Everywhere

Beethoven is one of the most famous classical musicians. The “dun-dun-dun DUUUN!” that opens his 5th Symphony may be the first piece of orchestral music many people hear. His music is everywhere, from commercials to cartoons to movie soundtracks.

Beethoven’s life is also famous. He fits our modern idea of a “troubled genius,” a man who had a difficult childhood, a miserable love life, and who even lost his hearing. In his time and now, people were fascinated by how Beethoven faced the challenges of his life.

But there is much more to Ludwig van Beethoven than his reputation. Both his music and his life are famous because he passionately dedicated himself to pushing the boundaries of classical music. Take a closer look at the life and art of Ludwig van Beethoven.

As you view the exhibits and stories in this lesson, think about these questions:

- ❖ What makes Beethoven’s music so appealing to audiences?
- ❖ How did Beethoven’s life become as famous as his art?
- ❖ How is Beethoven seen today by both musicians and the public?

[“Ludwig van Beethoven,” H. Leidel after the bust of Franz Klein from the year 1812. Beethoven-Haus Bonn](#)

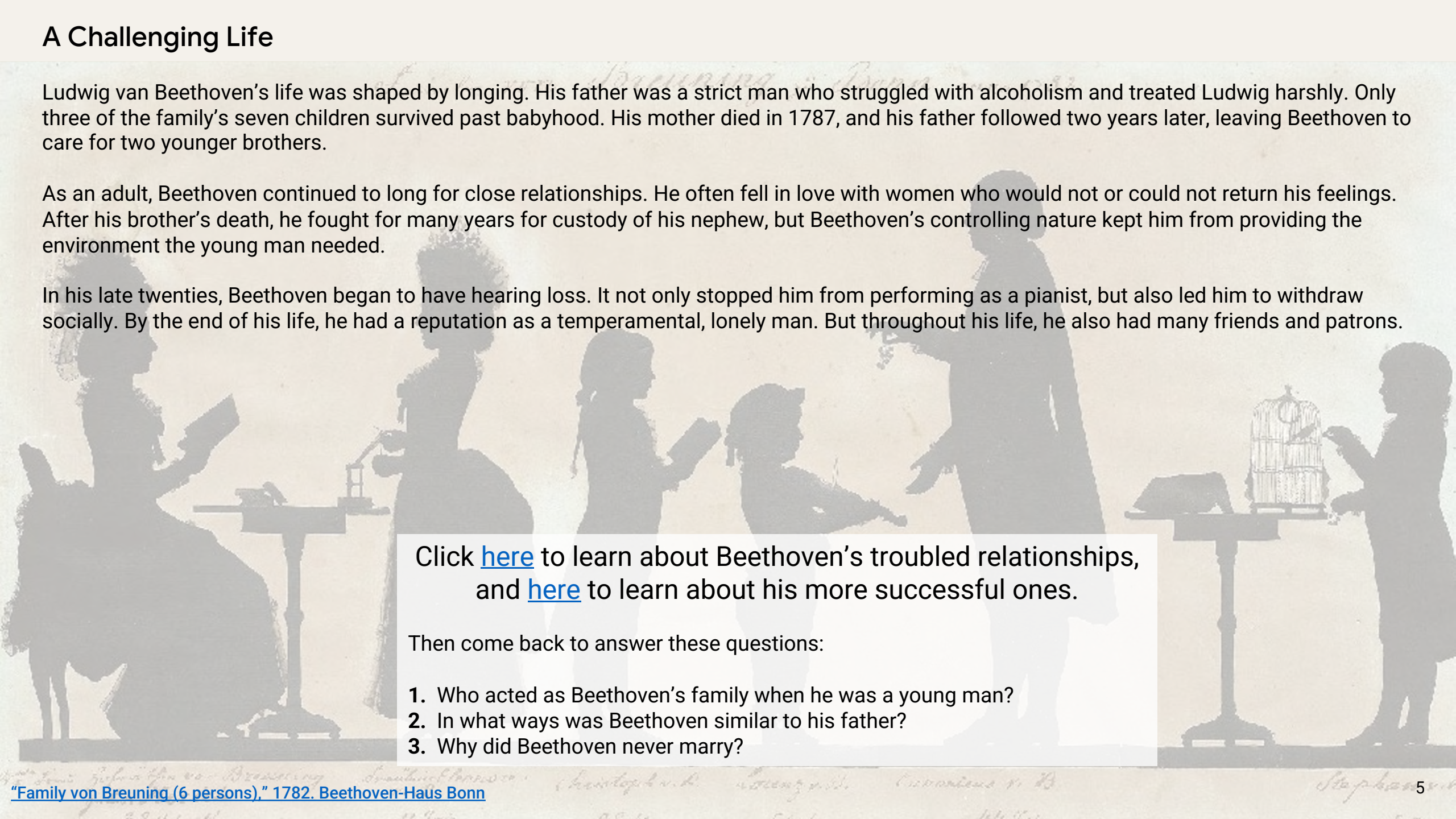


A Challenging Life

Ludwig van Beethoven's life was shaped by longing. His father was a strict man who struggled with alcoholism and treated Ludwig harshly. Only three of the family's seven children survived past babyhood. His mother died in 1787, and his father followed two years later, leaving Beethoven to care for two younger brothers.

As an adult, Beethoven continued to long for close relationships. He often fell in love with women who would not or could not return his feelings. After his brother's death, he fought for many years for custody of his nephew, but Beethoven's controlling nature kept him from providing the environment the young man needed.

In his late twenties, Beethoven began to have hearing loss. It not only stopped him from performing as a pianist, but also led him to withdraw socially. By the end of his life, he had a reputation as a temperamental, lonely man. But throughout his life, he also had many friends and patrons.



Click [here](#) to learn about Beethoven's troubled relationships, and [here](#) to learn about his more successful ones.

Then come back to answer these questions:

1. Who acted as Beethoven's family when he was a young man?
2. In what ways was Beethoven similar to his father?
3. Why did Beethoven never marry?



Beethoven as an Artist

One thing was consistent in Beethoven's life: his dedication to his work. In contrast to Mozart, who famously wrote music with ease, Beethoven was a perfectionist who constantly went back to his scores and made changes and improvements.

For this reason, Beethoven kept a [strict daily schedule](#). One of his most cherished tasks was taking walks. Though this may seem like recreation, Beethoven's walks were part of his work: some of his most important music was [inspired by nature](#).

Another part of Beethoven's job was earning money. As the traditional European society of royalty, nobles, and the church began to change during his lifetime, Beethoven had to invent [new ways of making money](#) as an artist.

After visiting the links, come back to answer these questions:

1. What social activities did Beethoven include in his daily schedule?
2. How did Beethoven capture nature in his "Pastoral"?
3. Why did patrons give artists money, and what did they get out of it?

To learn about the changing political and social structure in Europe during Beethoven's lifetime, click [here](#).

A Revolutionary Musician

Beethoven's music is so familiar that it is hard to imagine how unusual it must have sounded in his time. In fact, some music critics [hated it!](#)

Some of Beethoven's music uses relatively simple, repeated themes, or musical phrases. Beethoven also broke musical "rules" such as the length and structure of traditional forms such as masses. He demanded larger orchestras with more musicians, creating a more dramatic, emotional sound. These things made him controversial with critics, but popular with the public.

Click [here](#) to learn what makes Beethoven's music so appealing.

Then come back to answer these questions:

1. How was Beethoven's 9th symphony different from symphonies that had come before?
2. What do Beethoven's manuscripts show about his work process?
3. What "rules" or traditions did Beethoven break, and why?

To learn how Beethoven became a "brand" both in his lifetime and today, click [here](#).

["Australian Chamber Orchestra performs Beethoven's 9th Symphony in the Concert Hall," Paul Kelly, 2014. Sydney Opera House](#)





Beethoven as Pop

Beethoven's work is so popular that it has made its way into all parts of our culture. Rock musicians such as the Beatles [drew on Beethoven's structures](#). Hip-hop artists such as Nas [sampled familiar melodies](#), putting them in a new context.

It isn't just popular music that uses Beethoven. The intense emotions in some of Beethoven's most famous music make it perfect for [movie soundtracks](#). Everyone from television writers to astronomers [draw on Beethoven's fame](#).

After reading about Beethoven in popular culture, come back to answer these questions:

1. Which popular musicians have used Beethoven as part of their music?
2. What types of movies have used Beethoven's music, and why?
3. Why do you think scientists chose Beethoven as some of the music they sent into space? Do you agree with their choice?

It's Your Turn!

In this lesson, you learned about the life and work of Ludwig van Beethoven. Here are some ideas for projects that you can do at home or in the classroom.

- ❖ Play with rhythm! The Google Arts & Culture team, in partnership with the Deutsche Grammophon music label, has developed an interactive where you can tap out a rhythm on your device and it gets matched to Beethoven's famous piano sonatas. Play different rhythms along with the composer [here](#).



- ❖ You likely know the “dun-dun-dun DUUUN!” of Beethoven’s 5th or the soaring melody “Ode to Joy” from Beethoven’s 9th. Try listening to one of these symphonies in full. How does it change your impression of the famous melodies? Write a paragraph responding to the music.
- ❖ Read and watch how [dancer Cassandra Wedel](#) interprets Beethoven’s music. Create movement, either a dance or a simple animation, that captures how Beethoven makes you feel.

[“Kassandra Wedel for Play on, play, against all odds.”](#)
[Florian Gobetz/Deutsche Grammophon, 2020.](#)
[Deutsche Grammophon](#)

Quiz

Read the questions and write your answers in your notebook or on a piece of paper.

1. How did Beethoven's father behave toward him?
2. Who was Beethoven's "Immortal Beloved," and how do you think she influenced Beethoven's music?
3. When during his day did Beethoven write music?
4. How did the changing society of Beethoven's lifetime affect his ability to make a living?
5. What were the benefits and drawbacks of Beethoven changing his music so much as he wrote?
6. How did Beethoven's reputation as a "troubled genius" affect his life and music?
7. Why did early rock music reject Beethoven, and why did later rock music draw on it?
8. Do you think Beethoven would approve of his music being used in movies? Why or why not?

Explore Further

You have learned a bit about Beethoven's life and music. To learn more, click [here](#).

Answers

A Challenging Life

1. The von Breuning family, for whom Beethoven was a music teacher, became his substitute family.
2. Beethoven was similar to his father because both struggled with alcohol, and just as his father was strict with him, Beethoven was strict with his nephew.
3. Beethoven never married because he fell in love with women who were not available because of their class or because they were married. However, he did have several romantic relationships.

Beethoven as an Artist

1. Beethoven often hosted lunches and would spend his evenings at an inn or a concert.
2. Beethoven's melodies tried to capture the peaceful feeling of arriving in the countryside, the sound of bird calls, and the drama of a sudden storm.
3. Patrons gave artists money in order to increase their own fame and reputation by linking their names with great art. They also got rights to copies or performances of the music.

A Revolutionary Musician

1. Beethoven's 9th symphony used a choir and singers as well as an orchestra.
2. Beethoven's manuscripts show that he changed many things about his music and worked on them for a long time.
3. Answers will vary. Sample answer: Beethoven added different musicians, such as choirs in a symphony, and did not follow traditional musical forms, such as masses. He did so to add more emotion and drama to his music.

Beethoven as Pop

1. Musicians that reference Beethoven include Chuck Berry, the Beatles, Billy Joel, Alicia Keys, Nas, and others.
2. Movies that use Beethoven include action films and romances because his music expressed deep emotions.
3. Answers will vary. Scientists chose Beethoven as a representation of some of the best and most important music humans have made.

Answers

Quiz

1. Beethoven's father was very strict about making him a musical prodigy. He was also an alcoholic who died when Beethoven was young.
2. "Immortal Beloved" is an unknown woman who Beethoven wrote letters to. Beethoven's longing for this woman who could not love him back may have added to the passion of his music.
3. Beethoven awoke at 6:00 a.m. and began writing first thing. He also wrote down ideas during his afternoon walks.
4. Beethoven could not rely on a steady job as a church or court musician because churches and royal courts were losing influence. He had to rely on individual wealthy patrons.
5. Beethoven was able to work until he had created the best possible music, but he often took a very long time to finish his compositions.
6. Beethoven's reputation as a "troubled genius" made it difficult for some patrons to work with him, but it also made him a famous figure.
7. Early rock musicians rejected Beethoven because he symbolized the stuffy classical music they wanted to rebel against. Later rock musicians were inspired by his expressive music.
8. Answers will vary. Beethoven wrote in the popular forms of the time, and often tried to create visual images using music, so he may have approved of using his music in movies.

