

George Eliot:

Mini E-Book Resource:

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Introduction:

George Eliot is a pseudonym under which the English Victorian author Mary Evans published seven novels, a number of poems and an assortment of other literary works.

Mary Evans was born 20th November 1819 and died 22nd December 1880 aged 61.

During Mary Evans's lifetime, a number of female authors published under their own names. Mary Evans said she chose to write under a male pseudonym so as to be taken more seriously in subject areas other than romance. It is also possible that she wished to keep a separation between literary and private life which was at time controversial in Victorian society.



This mini e-book resource is intended to give an introductory background to the life and works of Mary Evans as well as links to other resources.

A Biography of the Life Mary Evans (aka Mary Ann (Marian) Evans):

Mary Evans was born on 20th November 1819 to Robert and Christina Evans at South Farm in Arbury Warwickshire, England, UK.

When born, Mary Anne, (sometimes known as Marian), had two teenage siblings, a half-brother, Robert (1802-1864), and sister, Fanny (1805-1882), from her father's previous marriage to Harriet Poynton who died in 1809.

Later Mary Evans gained a full sister Christiana, (known as Chrissey) (1814-1859), a brother Isaac (1816-1890), and twin brothers who only survived a few days in March of 1821.

Mary Evan's father Robert worked as the manager of the Arbury Hall estate at South Farm.

In her early childhood, Mary was granted access to the library at Arbury Hall and it is likely that this helped her classical education at boarding schools in Attleborough, Nuneaton and Coventry. It is certainly clear that her knowledge of classical Greek literature can be seen coming through in almost all of her works.

Religion was another key factor in Mary Evans' upbringing. Her family were committed low church Anglicans, however, in her early life she also conversed with a number of religious dissenters and this was to prove to be of great influence both her writing and later life.

Following the death of her mother in 1836, Mary Evans moved back to the family home but continued with her education in conjunction with a private tutor.

When she was 21, Mary and her father moved to Foleshill near Coventry. In her new home Mary met a number of people who were to be significant influences including Charles Bray a local businessman and philanthropist, Robert Owen, Harriet

Martineau, Herbert Spencer and Ralph Waldo Emerson. It was during this time that Mary Evans started questioning her religious upbringing - and although this caused something of a rift with her father, she kept house and looked after him until his death in 1849.

Within days of her father's funeral she travelled to Geneva – Switzerland returning in 1950 to live in London and embark upon a writing career.

Mary Eliot started working closely with John Chapman the owner of the journal '*The Westminster Review*' becoming a frequent contributor.

In 1851 she met George Lewis and the pair decided to live together as a couple from 1854 - despite George Lewis remaining married to his wife Agnes. Within Victorian society this was considered scandalous - and may have contributed to her decision to adopt the pseudonym of 'George Eliot'. The pair effectively outwardly lived as a married couple and indeed she often referred to herself as Marian Evan Lewes. During this time she translated Ludwig's Feuerbach's '*Essence of Christianity*' and also worked on the translation of Baruch Spinoza's *Ethics* - although this was not to be published until after her death.

Amos Barton the first of the *Scenes of Clerical Life* was published in 1858 and her first complete novel, *Adam Bede* was published a year later in 1859. During the next fifteen years she continued to publish novels with the last *Daniel Doronda* being published in 1876. George Lewes' health was now failing and during the next two years Mary Evans cared for him until his death in 1878.

Two years after the death of George Lewes in 1880, Mary Evans married John Cross some twenty years her junior. The couple moved to Chelsea England, however, by this time Mary was by this time suffering from a chronic kidney disorder and this coupled with an infection led to her death aged 61 on December of 1880.

Mary Evans (George Eliot) is buried in Highgate Cemetery London next to George Lewes in an area reserved for religious dissenters.

The Works of Mary Evans (George Eliot):

Novels:

- *Adam Bede*: (1859)
- *The Mill on the Floss*: (1860)
- *Silas Marner*: (1861)
- *Romola*: (1863)
- *Felix Holt, The Radical*: (1866)
- *Middlemarch*: (1871)
- *Daniel Deronda*: (1876)

Poetry:

The most widely acclaimed poems of George Eliot include:

- The Spanish Gypsy
- Agatha
- Armgart
- Stradivarius
- The Legend of Jubal
- Arion
- A Minor Prophet
- A College Breakfast Party
- The Death of Moses
- From a London Drawing Room
- Count That Day Lost

Further Literary Works:

- Translation of ‘*The Life of Jesus Critically Examined*’ by David Strauss, 1846
- Translation of ‘*The Essence of Christianity*’ by Ludwig Feurbach, 1854
- *Scences of Clerical Life* , 1858
 - *The Sad Fortunes of the Rev. Amos Barton*
 - *Mr Gilfil's Love Story*
 - *Janet's Repentance*
- *The Lifted Veil*, 1859
- *Brother Jacob*, 1864
- *Impressions of Theophrastus Such*, 1879

Links to Further George Eliot Resources and Internet Sites of Interest:

1) This link is to a local (government / council) website detailing tourist information in and around the Nuneaton and Bedworth area in the heart of ‘George Eliot’ country.

<http://www.nuneatonandbedworth.gov.uk/leisure-culture/tourism-travel/visiting/george-eliot-country>

2) This is a link to the Nuneaton Museum and Gallery with many items relating to the life and works of George Eliot:

<http://www.ukattraction.com/heart-of-england/nuneaton-museum-gallery.htm>

3) This is a link to the Wiltshire Museum, Gallery and Library in Devizes, Wiltshire:

<http://www.wiltshireheritage.org.uk/news/index.php?Action=8&id=42&page=0>

4) This is a link to the Britannica on-line encycloedia entry for George Eliot:

<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/184688/George-Eliot#tab=active~checked%2Citems~checked&title=George%20Eliot%20--%20Britannica%20Online%20Encyclopedia>

5) A general information site for the life and works of George Eliot:

http://www.windowsonwarwickshire.org.uk/spotlights/george_eliot/_20b.htm

6) This is a web-site link for tourists in the Nuneaton area with information relating to George Eliot:

http://www.infobritain.co.uk/Nuneaton_And_George_Eliot.htm

7) George Eliot Biography and Visits:

http://www.infobritain.co.uk/George_Eliot_Biography_And_Visits.htm

8) History.com entry for George Eliot:

<http://www.history.com/encyclopedia.do?articleId=208422>

9) Harper's magazine entry for George Eliot:

<http://harpers.org/subjects/GeorgeEliot>

Online Resources to Becoming Published:

- 1) **Novel Writing Made Easy:** Professional Authors Step-by-step System
(manual & Workbook Included) For Planning A Novel.

<http://snipurl.com/3g5rg>

- 2) **Newnovelist:** This software provides a Step-By-Step Guide to Writing and Publishing Your First Novel.

<http://snipurl.com/3g5cm>

- 3) **Advanced Fiction Writing:** Writing a Novel is Easy! Writing a Great Novel Is Hard: Award-winning Novelist And Acclaimed Fiction Teacher Randy Ingermanson Tells You His Secrets. Learn The Three Things You Must Have To Sell A Novel.

<http://snipurl.com/3g5bz>