

Who Am I? (Celebrities at the NYPL)

You can find all of these people (or something they created) at the NYPL's "Celebrating 100 Years" exhibition. *Who do you think I am? Any educated guesses?* (The answers start on page 3.)

1. I wanted to fly like my dad, but I didn't think carefully about the risk. Who am I and what big mistake did I make? What happened to me? Did I die?
2. They finally gave a Nobel Prize to a person who was not from Europe and it was me! Who am I? Where do I come from? What did I write?
3. I am a pregnant teenager. My fiancé believes in free love. He wants me to send something very close to me to his best friend, so his best friend will be attracted to me. Who am I and what did I send him?
4. GPS is helpful when you get lost, but when I was around, there weren't any good maps at all. Who am I, when did I live and what science am I considered the father of?
5. My grandson is given credit for creating the theory of evolution, but I should get some credit, too. Who am I and what did I say that should earn me some credit?
6. Before me there wasn't a single novel in the world to read. I wrote the first one. Who am I and what is the name of my book? When did I write it and what language did I write it in?

- 7.** My father was a plantation owner. He had an affair with my mother. I was born in Haiti. I was raised in France. I left there to avoid being sent to war. I went to North America where my illustrations of wild birds knocked people's socks off and made me famous. Who am I and how did I do it?

- 8.** These days, you can take a laptop and type an essay or write a novel wherever you go. I didn't have that luxury when I traveled. But that didn't stop me from writing on the road. Who am I? What name (and gender) did I use when I published my books? And, what did I use to write when I was traveling?

- 9.** I was in prison when I wrote this book at the turn of the previous century. What pseudonym did I use when it was published and why was I in jail anyway?

- 10.** I am one of the people on the previous page. I'm back again because I (almost) forget to tell you that I am also a famous writer. What famous character did I give birth to in my famous book and how old was I when I had my big literary baby?

Who Am I?

Write your new questions under each answer.

1. I wanted to fly like my dad, but I didn't think carefully about the risk. Who am I and what big mistake did I make? What happened to me? Did I die?

I am Icarus. I burned up falling back to earth. I didn't really die because I'm a mythological character, not a real person!

2. They finally gave a Nobel Prize to a person who was not from Europe and it was me! Who am I and what did I write?

I am Rabindranath Tagore. I am a poet who lived in India from 1861 to 1941. I won the Nobel for my poetry in 1913.

3. I am a pregnant teenager. My fiancé believes in free love. He wants me to send something very close to me to his best friend, so his best friend will be attracted to me. Who am I and what did I send him?

I am Mary Godwin. You probably know me as Mary Shelley. That was my name after I married the romantic poet Percy Shelley. He encouraged me to send a lock of my hair to his best friend, Thomas Jefferson Hogg. Both of those guys were expelled from Oxford University!

4. GPS is helpful when you get lost, but when I was around, there weren't any good maps at all. Who am I, when did I live and what science am I considered the father of?

I am Claudius Ptolemy (better known like the pop star, by my last name alone). I lived ca. 90 to ca. 168. I am considered the father of geography.

5. My grandson is given credit for creating the theory of evolution, but I should get some credit, too. Who am I and what did I say that should earn me some credit?

I am Erasmus Darwin. I wrote, "...one and the same kind of living filaments is and has been the cause of all organic life." Sounds like evolution, doesn't it?!

6. Before me there wasn't a single novel in the world to read. I wrote the first one. Who am I and what is the name of my book? When did I write it and what language did I write it in?

I am Murasaki Shikibu. I wrote *Genji Monogatari Emaki* in my language, Japanese. In English, it's called *The Tale of Genji*. I wrote it before you were born, in the early 11th Century.

7. My father was a plantation owner. He had an affair with my mother. I was born in Haiti. I was raised in France. I left there to avoid being sent to war. I went to North America where my illustrations of wild birds knocked people's socks off and made me famous. Who am I and how did I do it?

I am John James Audubon. I did it by illustrating the birds the way they look in the wild, not like when they are dead and stuffed.

8. These days, you can take a laptop and type an essay or write a novel wherever you go. I didn't have that luxury when I traveled. But that didn't stop me from writing on the road. Who am I? What name (and gender) did I use when I published my books? And, what did I use to write when I was traveling?

I am Charlotte Bronte. I published my books under the male name Cullen Bell. I used a traveling desk as my laptop.

9. I was in prison when I wrote this book at the turn of the previous century. What pseudonym did I use when it was published and why was I in jail anyway?

I used the pseudonym C.3.3. That was my prisoner number. I was in jail (in British English—gaol) for “homosexual behavior.”

10. Oops! I am one of the people on the previous page. I’m back again because I (almost) forget to tell you that I am also a famous writer. What famous character did I give birth to in my famous book and how old was I when I had my big literary baby?

Mary Shelley here again. I gave birth to the Frankenstein!