

Name _____

Date _____



Franz Kafka

Today we're going to talk about Franz Kafka...in just a minute.

Franz Kafka was born on July 3, 1883, in Prague, Bohemia, now known as the Czech Republic. He's considered one of the most significant fiction writers of the 20th century. All of Kafka's works were written in German and have been translated into more than 40 languages.

Kafka's stories explore the human condition and existential themes like alienation and isolation. His characters are placed in situations that appear hopeless, surreal, and often outright absurd. For example, in *The Metamorphosis*, a man wakes up one day to find that he's been transformed into a giant bug. In *The Trial*, a bank officer is arrested for a crime that is never revealed. And in *The Castle*, a land surveyor is summoned to a castle in a mysterious village, but gaining access to it appears to be an impossible task. The term "Kafkaesque" was coined in the late 1940s to describe situations that seem nightmarish or reminiscent of the scenarios that Kafka's characters face.

During his lifetime, Kafka published very little and burned about 90 percent of his work. After his death in 1924, his friend, Max Brod, found a letter asking his remaining manuscripts to be burned. But Brod went against Kafka's wishes and published his work posthumously. Because of this decision, Kafka's stories are still widely read today and recognized as influential in modern literature.

How do you think Franz Kafka's work influenced other writers?