

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

# Franz Kafka

Use the text to answer each question below.

1. Throughout history, authors have had their names used to create adjectives describing writing and art. “Shakespearean” is an adjective that comes from the famous writer William Shakespeare. When a piece of writing is described as Shakespearean, it’s referring to a high-quality blend of dialogue, setting, and overall creativity of the story. “Kafkaesque” comes from Franz Kafka and is used to describe situations that are surreal and difficult, like a nightmare. Some examples of Kafkaesque stories include Ray Bradbury’s *\*Fahrenheit 451\**, George Orwell’s *\*Animal Farm\**, and the science fiction series *\*The Twilight Zone\**.

What kind of story could be considered “Kafkaesque”?

- A. An action story where the protagonist defeats the antagonist at the end.
- B. A bedtime story featuring various animals talking about morals to a child.
- C. A dramatic story where a character calls for help, and is arrested for the crime instead.
- D. A romantic story where two characters overcome the odds together in the name of love.
2. Franz Kafka was born on July 3, 1883, in Prague, Bohemia, now known as the Czech Republic. The oldest of six children, he faced many difficulties during his childhood. Both of his younger brothers died by the time Kafka turned six, his mother had a difficult time understanding why he wanted to be a writer, and his salesman father was an overbearing presence. As an adult, he attended law school and graduated in 1906. He published very little while alive and requested that, after his death in 1924, his works be burned. However, his friend Max Brod went against his wishes and posthumously published his work.

Which of the following is true about Franz Kafka’s life?

- A. After graduating from law school, Kafka published many stories and books.
- B. Kafka faced many difficulties at home, including the deaths of his younger brothers.
- C. Kafka’s mother was incredibly supportive of his writing aspirations.
- D. After his death, Kafka’s close friend Max Brod burned his remaining manuscripts.

3. Kafka's stories explore the human condition and existential themes like alienation, isolation, and guilt. They also commonly feature tragic endings. In "Poseidon," the god of the sea is disgruntled at the bottom of the ocean doing calculations for his managers, overwhelmed by paperwork, and figuring out how to manage the sea. In "The Judgment," a tumultuous relationship between a son and his aging father leads to a tragic death. In \*The Metamorphosis\*, a son wakes up to find he's transformed into a repulsive insect. He slowly dies from his family's neglect brought on by their shame and his own guilty despair.

Which of these best describes Franz Kafka's writing?

- A. Focusing on a universal human experience
- B. Emphasizing the importance of faith and belief
- C. Imagining tragic, harrowing situations
- D. Calling attention to the political landscape of the 20th century