

The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas Study Guide

**The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas by Gertrude
Stein**

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Plot Summary

Although officially titled an autobiography, “The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas” is actually written by Gertrude Stein. The narrative is related from the first person perspective of Alice B. Toklas, the lifetime companion of the author. Given the close relationship of the two women, it is clear that although Stein wrote the book, her narrator's perspective is undoubtedly that of Alice B. Toklas.

The first chapter of the book, “Before I Came to Paris,” relates the childhood of Alice, who was born in San Francisco, California, to a wealthy family. Alice lived with her father and brother in San Francisco until the great fire in 1906. Shortly thereafter, Alice moved to Paris, where she met Gertrude Stein on her first day in the city on September 8, 1907.

In the second chapter, the author describes Alice's first years in Paris amongst the Parisian avant-garde. Alice inherited the social circles of Gertrude Stein, which included the painters Pablo Picasso and Henri Matisse, among many others. The age of Cubism was beginning, and the artists of this movement were constant guests at the Saturday evening dinners hosted by Stein and Toklas at their home at 27 rue de Fleurus.

The narrative shifts back in time in the third and fourth chapters to relate the childhood and education of Gertrude Stein and her first years in Paris. Stein was born in Allegheny, Pennsylvania, and raised in Oakland, California, after spending the first few years of her life in Europe. She completed college at Radcliffe College and then enrolled at Johns Hopkins Medical School, but left after two years without a degree.

Gertrude then moved to Europe to join her brother Leo, who was an art critic and collector. They moved to Paris and began collecting paintings and art together, amassing a fine collection of works, including those by Cézanne, Daumier, Manet, and Gauguin, among others. When they began collecting works by Matisse, the painter met with them and they became fast friends. At this time, Gertrude and Leo also met with and befriended the painter Pablo Picasso and began purchasing his works. Picasso completed his famous portrait of Gertrude Stein after over ninety sittings.

The fifth chapter, “1907-1914,” describes the events when Alice and Gertrude lived together in Paris. Alice had spent a great deal of time at the Stein home helping correct the proofs of Gertrude's epic novel, “Three Lives”, and having typewritten Stein's “The Making of Americans”. Alice and Gertrude traveled together frequently, spending summers in Spain, England, Venice, and Florence. Eventually, Leo Stein decided to move to Florence, and he and Gertrude divided the art they had bought together, with Leo taking the Renoirs and Matisses and Gertrude keeping the Cézannes and Picassos.

In Chapter 6, “The War,” the narrative relates the outbreak of World War I and its impact on Gertrude Stein, Alice B. Toklas, and the modern art scene in Paris. When the war broke out, Alice and Gertrude were staying in the English countryside with Dr. Alfred



Whitehead and his family. They were invited to stay the weekend and ended up staying for six weeks, until they were able to return to Paris after the battle of the Marne and the retreat of the Germans.

In the summer of 1915, Gertrude and Alice decided to get away from the war and go to Palma de Mallorca at the suggestion of their friend William Cook. They went to Palma only to spend a few weeks, but ended up staying through the winter. When they were back in Paris, they decided to volunteer for the American Fund for French Wounded.

Gertrude Stein wrote to a cousin in America and secured an early Ford automobile that she and Alice used to deliver supplies to French hospitals. The armistice between the Allies and Germany was signed on November 11, 1918, ending the war. At this point, Alice and Gertrude traveled to Alsace where inhabitants were returning to their ruined homes. After this, they returned to Paris.

In the final chapter, the narrative relates the events after the war, in which many of the old crowd had disappeared. Gertrude Stein and Alice Toklas met many new artists and writers, including Ezra Pound, Man Ray, Sherwood Anderson, Robert Coates, Alfred Kreyborg, Kate Buss, Djuna Barnes and Mina Loy. Gertrude became interested in the paintings of Andre Masson, who fell under the influence of the *surréalistes*.

Alice and Gertrude first met Ernest Hemingway through Sherwood Anderson when Hemingway was twenty-three years old, and he and Gertrude Stein quickly became friends. Years later, when there was animosity between Hemingway and Gertrude Stein, she still admired him for having been the first to get her novel, "The Making of Americans", published.

Because of the impossibility of getting Gertrude Stein's works published, Alice Toklas began to look into publishing them herself, which would involve having the works printed and then distributed. She published a number of Stein's books in this way, and later a French publisher agreed to publish a French translation of "The Making of Americans".

The book closes with Gertrude Stein's tongue-in-cheek humor regarding the book's genre. As she had suggested to Alice to write her own autobiography but it never came to pass, Gertrude decided to write the book herself. "And she has and this is it".



Chapter 1, “Before I Came to Paris”

Summary

In Chapter 1, the narrator, Alice B. Toklas, relates that she was born in San Francisco, California, to a wealthy family. Her maternal grandfather had come to California in 1849, and her father came from Polish stock and a family history, which included those who fought for Napoleon.

Alice enjoyed needlework, gardening, paintings, furniture, tapestries, and nature. When Alice was nineteen, she was a great admirer of Henry James and wrote to the author suggesting she dramatize his novel *The Awkward Age*. In her twentieth year, Alice became interested in music and lived a life with many interests for six years until the San Francisco fire took place following the San Francisco earthquake of 1906. After the fire, Gertrude Stein's older brother came to visit Alice's family and his wife brought with her three small Matisse paintings. Alice made her acquaintance and through hearing about Europe, decided that she too would travel abroad.

Within a year, Alice had moved to Paris and met Gertrude Stein. Alice's impressions of Gertrude were that she had a magnificent voice and that she was a genius. Alice concludes the chapter by saying that in her lifetime she has met three true geniuses, and upon meeting each, something rang in her mind. The geniuses were Gertrude Stein, Pablo Picasso, and Alfred Whitehead.

Analysis

In the first chapter of “The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas”, the author establishes the narrative point of view of the work and its literary style. Although Gertrude Stein is the author of the work, its narrative point of view comes from the book's subject, Alice B. Toklas. The first chapter relates Alice's early life in San Francisco and foreshadows her life with Gertrude Stein through Alice's interests, which included needlework, gardening, paintings, furniture, tapestries, and nature.

One major element of the narrative style is its nonlinear approach to storytelling. As if in conversation, the narrator jumps forward and back through time, relating events from Alice's later relationship with Gertrude and then jumping back to the beginning. The author employs this conversational and nonlinear method throughout the work, both within chapters and even within paragraphs.

Vocabulary

consequence, temperate, continent, patriotic, regiment, colonel, barricades, conservative, existence, intellectual, dramatize, delightful, inadequacy, preserving,



assiduously, unconquerable, amusement, comrade, axioms, arrangements,
disturbance, acquaintance, geniuses



Chapter 2, “My Arrival in Paris”

Summary

Chapter 2, “My Arrival in Paris.” In the second chapter, Alice describes the year 1907, relating that “Gertrude Stein was just seeing through the press *Three Lives* which she was having privately printed, and she was deep in “*The Making of Americans*”, her thousand page book. Picasso had just completed Gertrude's portrait and Matisse had completed the “*Bonheur de Vivre*.” This was the beginning of the great age of cubism.

Alice describes the home at 27 rue de Fleurus as consisting of two stories with four small rooms, a kitchen and bath. Alice had been invited to dine on a Saturday evening and had dinner cooked by Gertrude Stein's housekeeper, Hélène. Alice describes Hélène as having been an excellent maid and chef, carrying on all household duties for eight francs a day. Hélène had her opinions, though, and did not like the painter Matisse.

When Alice arrived, she was taken by Miss Stein to the atelier, where paintings lined the walls from floor to ceiling. “The pictures were so strange that one quite instinctively looked at anything rather than at them just at first”. The paintings were of all kinds, including Cézannes, Renoirs, Matisses and Picassos, as well as paintings by Gauguin, Manguin,

Vallotton, Manet, and Toulouse-Lautrec.

Another guest arrived, Alfy Maurer, and then Hélène entered to inform the group that dinner was ready, despite the fact that the Picassos had not yet arrived. After the first course was complete, Pablo and Fernande Picasso arrived, with Pablo explaining that Fernande had ordered a dress for the vernissage tomorrow and it had not arrived. They sat down and the conversation turned to the opening of the salon independent the following day. As the group finished their coffee, a number of footsteps were heard in the hall and Miss Stein left to let people in the door. A great number of people then entered the atelier in groups, looking at the paintings. Alice sat with Fernande, and describes it as the first time she sat with the wife of a genius. Fernande, though, was uninteresting, having only two subjects about which she spoke: hats and perfumes. During the course of the evening, Alice was also introduced to Henri Matisse. When the evening came to a close, “everybody was still talking about the vernissage of the independent,” and Alice left carrying an invitation to the event.

Alice attended the vernissage with a friend and arrived early. At the exhibition, they viewed paintings by Rousseau, Matisse, and Czobel, before Gertrude Stein arrived, pointing out the nearby paintings of Braque and Derain. Miss Stein became lost in a crowd and later returned, asking Alice if she was interested in taking French lessons. Alice and her friend responded that they were, and Miss Stein suggested that Fernande would give them lessons, as she and Pablo had decided to separate.



About ten days later, Alice went with Gertrude to Montmartre, where she began an apprenticeship of standing while looking at Picasso's paintings, and then went to see Fernande about French lessons. When they arrived at Fernande's apartment, two women were with her, Alice Princet and Germaine Pichot. The arrangements for the French lessons were made, wherein Alice would pay fifty cents per hour, and Fernande would visit her twice per week.

Two days later, Fernande arrived at the appointment, and the French lessons began. As Fernande had only a limited subject of topics, including hats, perfumes, and furs, Alice suggested they begin conducting the lessons outdoors at tea or on walks through Montmartre. During these lessons, Alice met Max Jacob and Fernande told her stories about the painter Van Dongen and Germaine Pichot. Shortly afterward, Pablo and Fernande were back together as was predicted by Gertrude.

Analysis

One striking element in the style of Gertrude Stein's writing in "The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas" is her use of capitalization and commas. Stein chooses not to capitalize the use of nationalities and artistic styles or movements, such as in the following example: "Against the walls were several pieces of large italian renaissance furniture and in the middle of the room was a big renaissance table, on it a lovely inkstand, and at one end of it note-books neatly arranged, the kind of note-books French children use, with pictures of earthquakes and explorations on the outside of them".

As for her use of commas, Stein chooses to use them at times in place of periods, which adds to the conversational effect of the narrative. An example of this can be seen in the following: "There was a portrait of Gertrude Stein by Vallotton that might have been a David but was not, there was a Maurice Denis, a little Daumier, many Cézanne water colours, there was in short everything, there was even a little Delacroix and a moderate sized Greco".

Vocabulary

privately, complicated, composition, cubism, atelier, adjoining, pavilion, privileged, bonnes, purchasable, excellent, precariously, unexpectedly, particularly, foreigners, omelet, enormously, extraordinary, generation, impression, yale key, renaissance, inkstand, earthquakes, curiously, accumulations, instinctively, peacefully, contrivance, electricity, accustomed, uneasiness, influences, dapper, dubiously, humbly, faithfully, enthusiastically, promptness, punctual, procession, vernissage, vivacious, contralto, witticism, meditatively, exposition, visionaries, characteristic, indolent, uniformity, apprenticeship, martyrdom, ermine, chinchilla, illuminated, nuisance



Chapter 3, “Gertrude Stein in Paris, 1903-1907”

Summary

Chapter 3, “Gertrude Stein in Paris, 1903-1907.” In the third chapter of the book, the narrator goes back in time to relate the events of 1903 to 1907, prior to Alice's arrival in Paris. She writes that “During Gertrude Stein's last two years at the Medical School, Johns Hopkins, Baltimore, 1900-1903, her brother was living in Florence”. Gertrude's brother had an interest in Cézanne, and when he and Gertrude moved to Paris, they visited an art dealer named Vollard in order to purchase a painting of Cézanne's. They left with a small landscape by the painter and made an impression on Vollard that they were crazy Americans who laughed uncontrollably.

After that, Gertrude and her brother visited Vollard frequently and bought several paintings, including those by Cézanne, Daumier, Manet, and Gauguin. “Before the winter was over, having gone so far Gertrude Stein and her brother decided to go further, they decided to buy a big Cézanne and then they would stop”. Eventually, they chose a large portrait of a woman and took it home with them. This picture was important because it was in looking at it that Gertrude Stein wrote the novel “Three Lives”.

In the autumn, Gertrude and her brother attended the first autumn salon where they purchased the painting *La Femme au Chapeau* by Matisse. Shortly afterward, the Matisses met with Gertrude and her brother. Mrs. Matisse is described as having been an immaculate housekeeper and the woman who posed for *La Femme au Chapeau*.

The author gives a brief history of the life of Matisse and his beginning work as a painter. Matisse was in the middle of painting his wife as a gypsy with a guitar when the Steins' offer was given him for the *La Femme au Chapeau*. He wanted to take the offer for four hundred francs, but Madame Matisse insisted he hold to his price, as it would mean having money for their daughter's winter clothes. So Matisse did so and the Steins paid five hundred francs.

During this period in which Matisse was gaining in reputation and popularity, Gertrude was beginning her work on “*The Making of Americans*”. This was when the Saturday evenings began, and Gertrude began writing only after eleven p.m., when she knew no one would come visiting. Also during this time when the Steins and the Matisses were inseparable was when Gertrude's brother first encountered the work of Pablo Picasso. He bought a large work of a nude girl with a basket of red flowers, which Gertrude hated.

A number of other artists were becoming known at this time as well, and the narrator briefly discusses the early careers of Isadora and Raymond Duncan, Kathleen Bruce,



and H. P. Roche. It was H.P. who took Gertrude Stein and her brother to meet Pablo Picasso, and shortly afterward Picasso painted his portrait of Gertrude Stein. Gertrude posed over ninety sittings for the portrait, and afterward would walk across from Montmartre to Paris to the rue de Fleurus. She was asked by the painter Vollotton to pose for him at this time as well and agreed.

"Everybody went to the Cirque Medrano once a week, at least, and usually everybody went on the same evening". There, the clowns dressed in the style of what later was made famous by Charlie Chaplin, and were a delight to Picasso and others.

Gertrude Stein completed *Three Lives*, and her sister-in-law came to read it and was impressed. "Etta Cone offered to typewrite *Three Lives* and she began". At the end of winter, Picasso stopped having Gertrude pose for him and "passed from the Harlequin, the charming early Italian period to the intensive struggle which was to end in cubism". That summer, everyone went away to rest and Gertrude began her work on "The Making of Americans" in Florence.

Gertrude returned to Paris at the end of the summer consumed in her work and full of excitement. When she returned, Picasso had completed her portrait. At this time Gertrude also met Marie Laurencin, who was introduced to her by Guillaume Apollinaire. "In the early days Marie Laurencin painted a strange picture, portraits of Guillaume, Picasso, Fernande and herself". Gertrude Stein was the first person to purchase one of her paintings.

Also at this time, Gertrude introduced Pablo Picasso and Henri Matisse. Matisse introduced Picasso to negro sculpture, and "the effect of this african art upon Matisse and Picasso was entirely different. Matisse through it was affected more in his imagination than in his vision. Picasso more in his vision than in his imagination". With their introduction, Matisse and Picasso became both friends and bitter enemies. Matisse began teaching, and although there were difficulties, his school flourished. In the end of the chapter, Gertrude Stein's "The Making of Americans" was published by Grafton Press in New York.

Analysis

The third chapter of the book further illustrates Gertrude Stein's nonlinear approach to storytelling, as the narrative goes back in time to events prior to the previous chapter. In this and in Chapter 4, the author takes a reverse in linear structure, relating first the events upon Gertrude Stein's arrival in Paris, and then relating her life prior to her arrival.

Also in this chapter, the true genre of the book can be more clearly seen. Rather than an autobiography of Alice B. Toklas, Stein is in fact writing a biography of herself, as related through the narration of Alice.



Vocabulary

lisped, bric-a-brac, confectioner, delicious, indelible, embittered, fugitive, unspeakably, appreciation, charwoman, uncontrollably, upsetting, foreground, impressionist, recognition, complainingly, representative, expensive, stimulus, independent, outlaws, freshness, infuriated, anatomy, immaculate, diphtheria, melodramatic, virility, exhibit, reproachful, grimace, triumphantly, harmonize, dissonance, appalling, quarreled, guillotine, enceinte, enthusiastic, nationalities, portfolio, avaricious, prodigious, functionary, ambition, impotence, nucleus, sensibilities, conscientiousness, precipitous, notabilities, manuscript, intolerant, squadron, notorious, modulated, armistice, Orientalism, intercourse, bloodshed, respectable



Chapter 4, “Gertrude Stein Before She Came to Paris”

Summary

Chapter 4, “Gertrude Stein Before She Came to Paris.” In the fourth chapter of the book, the narrator once again steps backward in time to relate the early life of Gertrude Stein. Gertrude Stein was born in Allegheny, Pennsylvania, to a respectable middle-class family. “She always says that she is very grateful not to have been born of an intellectual family, she has a horror of what she calls intellectual people”.

Gertrude's parents lived in a twin house that adjoined to her father's brother's family's home, and due to an estrangement of the two sisters-in-law, the brothers broke up their business partnership and split ways. One brother went to New York, while Gertrude's family moved to Europe. They lived in Vienna until Gertrude was three years old, and then moved to Paris. The family lived in Paris for one year, then returned to the United States, where they settled in Oakland, California. “She remembers there the eucalyptus trees seeming to her so tall and thin and savage and the animal life very wild”.

In America, Gertrude began reading and devoured the many books in the Stein home. The narrator comments that although Gertrude spoke German and French later in her life, she chose to only read in English, as she read with her eyes and she understood spoken language through intonations and sound.

“Life in California came to its end when Gertrude Stein was about seventeen years old”. At this time, when Gertrude's mother and then father died, she and her sister and brother moved to Baltimore where they stayed with her mother's family. After spending a year in Baltimore, Gertrude attended Radcliffe College. While at Radcliffe, Stein and a Harvard philosopher and mathematician worked in research and “together worked out a series of experiments in automatic writing under the direction of Münsterberg”.

The person who made the greatest impression on Stein during her years at Radcliffe was the psychologist William James, who suggested she pursue a medical degree and continue her education in psychology. Gertrude Stein graduated Radcliffe and entered into Johns Hopkins Medical School. While the first two years of medical school were liked well enough by Stein, “the last two years at the medical school she was bored, frankly openly bored. There was a good deal of intrigue and struggle among the students, that she liked, but the practice and theory of medicine did not interest her at all”. Although many of her professors passed her due to her reputation in research, one did not, and Stein did not obtain a degree.

After medical school, Gertrude joined her brother who had settled in Europe. They settled in London for the winter, and “she always said that that first visit had made London just like Dickens and Dickens had always frightened her”. The dismalness of



London drove Gertrude back to America, where she spent the rest of the winter, while her brother also left London and moved to Paris. Gertrude later joined him and began writing.

Analysis

In this chapter, the author relates the events of Gertrude Stein's childhood. Ironically, as Stein is the author of the book, this section may be perceived as autobiographical. The author foreshadows Gertrude Stein's life in Paris in her descriptions of Gertrude's childhood spent there. Stein makes use of metaphor, simile and personification in her descriptions of setting. One example of personification is the "savage" eucalyptus trees described here: "She remembers there the eucalyptus trees seeming to her so tall and thin and savage and the animal life very wild".

Vocabulary

habitués, proofs, rhythms, intensely, intellectual, precious, mutton, charmingly, microscope, obdurate, sympathize, astonishment, diminished, benefit, mercantile, adolescence, lonesomeness, witty, disgrace, indulge, anatomical, concave, convex, métier, inordinate, racontez, experiments, automatic writing, philosophical, impression, subconscious, technique, reputation, amiable, pathological psychology, melancholy



Chapter 5, "1907-1914"

Summary

Chapter 5, "1907-1914." In Chapter 5, "1907-1914," the narrator shifts forward in time from the previous chapters to relate the events when she, Alice, was a part of Gertrude Stein's life. When Alice first came to Paris, she lived with a friend at "a little hotel in the boulevard Saint-Michel, then we took a small apartment in the rue Notre-Dame-des-Champs". Her friend then returned to California and Alice joined Gertrude Stein at the rue de Fleurus.

By this time, Alice had spent a great deal of time at the rue de Fleurus, having helped with the proofs of *Three Lives* and typewritten "The Making of Americans". Alice describes the many wives of geniuses that she spent the years in conversation with, from Madame Matisse and Marcelle Braque to Josette Gris and Eve Picasso, among many others.

The narrator switches between the past and present in this chapter, discussing her first summer living with Gertrude and her brother, and then relating how Gertrude was always forgiving of the breaking of her favorite objects. "She loves objects that are breakable, cheap objects and valuable objects, a chicken out of a grocery shop or a pigeon out of a fair, one just broke this morning, this time it was not I who did it, she loves them all and she remembers them all but she knows that sooner or later they will break and she says that like books there are always more to find".

The narrator discusses the beginning of Cubism, saying that "Picasso in his early cubist pictures used printed letters as did Juan Gris to force the painted surface to measure up to something rigid, and the rigid thing was the printed letter". During this time, Matisse was beginning to become fairly famous through his school and through the influence of a French journalist named Fénéon. Matisse bought a house and land in Clamart and moved there.

The narrator describes several German artists who frequented the Stein home at this time, including the painter Fritz von Uhde. "Uhde one Saturday evening presented his fiancée to Gertrude Stein". While the fiancée seemed very well to do and conventional, the wedding was an arranged one. Shortly after the wedding the couple divorced and Uhde's former wife married the painter Delaunay, who was "the founder of the first of the many vulgarizations of the cubist idea, the painting of houses out of plumb, what was called the catastrophic school".

In the summer of 1914, Gertrude was to go to London to see John Lane and sign a contract for "Three Lives". The narrator describes the German modernist artist Arnold Ronnebeck and his desire for Gertrude and Alice to visit him in Germany, a concept Gertrude found uninteresting because she did not like Germans.



When Alice first arrived in Paris, she was living with her friend at the rue Notre-Dame-des-Champs. Fernande was visiting and said there was going to be a banquet given for the French Post-Impressionist painter Henri Rousseau. Gertrude and Alice were also invited and attended. Not long afterward, the narrator describes the arrival in Paris of Daniel-Henry Kahnweiler. Kahnweiler was a German-born art collector who opened a picture shop in Paris and soon made contracts with Picasso and a number of artists. During the war, Kahnweiler had not become a French citizen and was unable to return from Switzerland to France. The French government auctioned off all of Kahnweiler's pictures, including almost all of the Cubist works from the three years prior to World War I.

"The Picassos moved from the old studio in the rue Ravignan to an apartment in the boulevard Clichy". Shortly afterward, Picasso took an atelier in the rue Ravignan and Gertrude and Alice visited him there. In a few days after the visit, Pablo began an affair with Eve, a woman Fernande had greatly admired.

"When "The Making of Americans" was finished, Gertrude Stein began another which also was to be long and which she called "A Long Gay Book" but it did not turn out to be long, neither that nor one begun at the same time "Many Many Women" because they were both interrupted by portrait writing". In Spain, Gertrude began work on Tender Buttons. Alice liked Spain a great deal, especially Avila, where they stayed for ten days. During their time in Granada, Gertrude's work began to evolve as she began to examine both the internal and external around her.

In the fall, after returning from their usual summer in Venice, Gertrude and Alice were invited to stay with Mabel Dodge at her home, the Villa Curonia, in Venice. There they met Constance Fletcher, who proved to be an interesting and jovial spirit. At this time, Gertrude wrote The Portrait of Mabel Dodge and later another portrait of Constance Fletcher.

"During the winter Gertrude Stein's brother decided that he would go to Florence to live. They divided the pictures that they had bought together, between them". Gertrude kept the Cézannes and Picassos and Leo took the Renoirs and Matisses. John Lane arrived from London and asked Gertrude to come to London in July as he was almost decided to republish her novel "Three Lives". When Alice and Gertrude traveled to London in the summer, Hélène's husband was promoted and he insisted she stay at home, so she left her employment for Gertrude Stein.

Analysis

In the fifth chapter of the book, Gertrude Stein writes of the years in which she and Alice entertained a number of visitors at their home at the rue de Fleurus. These memories are, as is the rest of the book, related through the perspective of Alice B. Toklas. Alice, as narrator, describes her arrival in Paris and how she came to live with Gertrude Stein, having befriended Gertrude and worked with her on editing Three Lives and "The



Making of Americans". One of the repeated motifs in the book is first expressed here, with Alice's discussion of the wives of geniuses with whom she has spent conversations.

The narrator discusses in great depth in this chapter the arrival of many German artists who revolved around the social circles of Gertrude Stein and Alice B. Toklas. These arrivals and the artistic philosophies which accompanied them foreshadow the outbreak of World War I.

Vocabulary

rueful, vernissage, reproached, accoutrement, respectabilize, vulgarizations, vicomtes, rigolo, aperitif, decorously, extemporaneous, atelier, redoubtable, fragmentary, hitherto, cablegrams, dolefully, measuring-rod, quarrel, futurists, melancholy, majestically, phenomenal, immensely, coquetry, lucrative, inevitableness, incessantness, vulgarity, industriously, commenced, petit bleu, premonition, gratified, whinnying, ripolin paints



Chapter 6, "The War"

Summary

Chapter 6, "The War." According to the narrator in Chapter 6, "The War," "Americans living in Europe before the war never really believed that there was going to be war". While in London and awaiting the meeting with John Lane to sign the contract on Three Lives, Alice and Gertrude spent ten days in Cambridge. There, they stayed with Mrs. Mirlees and met Doctor and Mrs. Whitehead. Alice contends that this is when she met her third genius.

After signing the contract for "Three Lives", Gertrude and Alice were invited to spend the weekend with the Whiteheads and ended up staying six weeks. "Then came the days of the invasion of Belgium and I can still hear Doctor Whitehead's gentle voice reading the papers out loud and then all of them talking about the destruction of Louvain and how they must help the brave little belgians" (Chapter 6, p. 180). With the outbreak of war, Gertrude and Alice were prevented from returning to Paris and Mrs. Whitehead convinced them to stay with them until their possible return.

During their stay at the Whiteheads', Doctor Whitehead and Gertrude Stein would go on long walks through the English countryside and talk. As the Germans neared Paris, Doctor Whitehead asked if all of Gertrude's writing was in Paris, and she confirmed that it was. When they finally returned to Paris after the Germans had retreated, Alice and Gertrude heard several stories of the battle of the Marne including one from Alfy Maurer.

It was the fifteenth of October that Alice and Gertrude discovered they could return to Paris. Mrs. Whitehead was to go with them in order to deliver an overcoat to her son, North. After their return, Gertrude received word that a publishing house in New York wanted to publish three of her manuscripts. The subsequent publication of "Tender Buttons" had an enormous influence on all young writers and started off columnists in the newspapers of the whole country on their long campaign of ridicule".

The narrator then describes the Zeppelin alarms that went off in Paris, once when Picasso and Eve were dining with Alice and Gertrude. "It was in these days too that the friendship between Gertrude Stein and Juan Gris began". In the summer of 1915, Gertrude and Alice decided to get away from the war and go to Palma de Mallorca at the suggestion of their friend William Cook. They went to Palma only to spend a few weeks, but ended up staying through the winter. "Life in Mallorca was pleasant until the attack on Verdun began". At that point, although Verdun was not taken by the Germans, Alice and Gertrude returned home via Madrid. When they were back in Paris, they decided to volunteer for the American Fund for French Wounded.

Gertrude Stein wrote to her cousin in America and had him send her an American Ford automobile to drive which arrived in a few months. During their absence, Eve had passed away and Picasso was living in Montrouge. The Ford car "was later to be called



Auntie after Gertrude Stein's aunt Pauline who always behaved admirably in emergencies and behaved fairly well most times if she was properly flattered". After Gertrude adjusted somewhat to learning to drive the car, she and Alice spoke with Mrs. Lathrop who sent them to Perpignan, "a region with a good many hospitals that no American organisation had ever visited".

Along with their work for the American Fund for French Wounded, Alice and Gertrude took in a number of "military god-sons," with whom they shared letters and sent packages. In Perpignan, they began visiting hospitals and delivering supplies. After Perpignan the women returned to Paris, and shortly then departed for Nimes, where they continued delivering supplies and assisting soldiers as they could. Gertrude and Alice enjoyed working with and talking to the American soldiers when they arrived and began fighting.

Picasso wrote to Gertrude Stein to relate the news of his wedding to a proper young lady and "Braque also told us that Apollinaire too had married a real young lady". The armistice between the Allies and Germany was signed on November 11, 1918, ending the war. At this point, Alice and Gertrude traveled to Alsace where inhabitants were returning to their ruined homes. The work of Gertrude and Alice was to deliver blankets and children's clothing to the families. At the end of May, Alice and Gertrude returned to Paris and were restless. During this time Picasso and Gertrude quarreled and did not speak with one another for two years. They finally made up and resumed their friendship, but it was a changed Paris.

Analysis

In the sixth chapter of the book, Stein as author shifts to the subject of the war and its impact on Europe and the art world. The onset of the war had the effect of dissembling Gertrude and Alice's social circles and giving them a purpose outside of society and art. It is little surprise that Gertrude Stein's writing evolved during this period, for it was in her work with Alice for the American Fund for French Wounded that she was exposed to a different world than that of her atelier and Saturday evening parties. The women adopted a number of "military god-sons" and these young soldiers made quite an impression on Alice and Gertrude.

Vocabulary

compulsory, coronation procession, bemoaning, morris-dancing, pacifist, disembodied, consented, remonstrance, sumptuous, endeavor, fantasy, tormented, diplomatic, habituated, lugubrious, ingratiatingly, billeted, abatement, contingent, mutinied, marvelously, comparatively, prosperous, astonished, partitions, provisions, commission, procession, invalides, governess



Chapter 7, “After the War, 1919-1932”

Summary

Chapter 7, “After the War, 1919-1932.” The narrator begins the final chapter of the book discussing the changes in Paris following the war. “The old crowd had disappeared. Matisse was now permanently in Nice and in any case although Gertrude Stein and he were perfectly good friends when they met, they practically never met”. Gertrude Stein and Picasso were also not seeing each other at this time. Guillaume Apollinaire was dead and Braque and his wife were seen occasionally by Gertrude and Alice. “It was at this time that Tristan Tzara first appeared in Paris. Adrienne Mornier was much excited by his advent. Picabia had found him in Switzerland during the war and they had together created dadaism, and out of dadaism, with a great deal of struggle and quarrelling came surrealisme”.

Sylvia Beach met Gertrude Stein at this time as well and became a great fan of hers, bringing “groups of people to the house, groups of young writers and some older women with them”. Many new friendships were formed, including those with Ezra Pound, Man Ray, Sherwood Anderson, Robert Coates, Alfred Kreymborg, Kate Buss, Djuna Barnes and Mina Loy. Gertrude Stein met T.S. Eliot and wrote a portrait of him called *The Fifteenth of November*. Gertrude Stein posed for a number of portraits and sculptures by various artists at this time as well.

In July of 1922, Alice and Gertrude started south to Saint-Remy for the summer. They ended up staying through the winter. Gertrude’s writing again began to evolve, including “what might be termed landscape plays”. Gertrude became interested in the paintings of Andre Masson, who fell under the influence of the *surréalistes*. “The *surréalistes* are the vulgarisation of Picabia as Delaunay and his followers and the futurists were the vulgarisation

of Picasso”.

When Alice and Gertrude returned to Paris from Saint-Remy, they first met Ernest Hemingway through Sherwood Anderson. Hemingway was twenty-three years old, and he and Gertrude Stein quickly became friends with Gertrude suggesting he leave behind his work in the newspaper business and pursue being a novelist solely. Hemingway’s wife became pregnant and they left for America for a year during the baby’s birth and then returned to Paris with Hemingway having left behind the newspaper world. Alice and Gertrude were named the godmothers of the child with an English war comrade of Hemingway as the godfather.

Hemingway came to Gertrude Stein excitedly one day to inform her that “*The Making of Americans*” was to be printed as a serial in the *Transatlantic*, and though there was no printed copy except for one that Gertrude and Alice had bound, Hemingway himself promised to copy it and did so. Years later, when there was animosity between



Hemingway and Gertrude Stein, she still admired him for having been the first to get "The Making of Americans" published.

The following summer Gertrude and Alice went to the Cote d'Azur to join the Picassos at Antibes and ended up staying in Belley. That summer they were to correct proofs of "The Making of Americans", which was over one thousand pages long. Upon returning to Paris, Gertrude and Alice encountered the Russian Tchelitchev's work and Virgil Thomson and Gertrude Stein became friends and saw each other a great deal. Eventually, liking Belley as they did, they purchased a house there.

"In the autumn of that year nineteen twenty-five Gertrude Stein had a letter from the president of the literary society of Cambridge asking her to speak before them in the early spring". In the years following, Gertrude and Alice met Paul Robeson and several other black artists and performers. "Gertrude Stein concluded that negroes were not suffering from persecution, they were suffering from nothingness".

Because of the impossibility of getting Gertrude Stein's works published, Alice Toklas began to look into publishing them herself, which would involve having the works printed and then distributed. The first book Alice published was Lucy Church Amiably, followed by How to Write. Several other small printings took place and another French publisher agreed to publish an edited and translated version of "The Making of Americans".

Many writers and artists suggested to Gertrude Stein that she write an autobiography, to which she replied it was impossible. However, she told Alice that she should write her own autobiography about their years together. While Alice promised to work on the book, eventually Gertrude gave up. "About six weeks ago Gertrude Stein said, it does not look to me as if you were ever going to write that autobiography. You know what I am going to do. I am going to write it for you. I am going to write it as simply as Defoe did the autobiography of Robinson Crusoe. And she has and this is it".

Analysis

In the final chapter of the book, the narrative explores the aftermath of World War I and the modernist movement in art and literature. In the first years after the war, there was a disembodiment of the movement as many artists had relocated, some had married, and some had died. This allowed for a new influx of artists and styles, and Gertrude and Alice met and befriended a number of these, including Ezra Pound, Man Ray, Sherwood Anderson, Robert Coates, Alfred Kreyborg, Kate Buss, Djuna Barnes, Mina Loy, T.S. Elliot, and Ernest Hemingway.

In the final paragraph of the book, Gertrude Stein illustrates the complicated genre of "The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas". In it, she admits to being the author of the book despite its title as an autobiography. The narrative concludes: "You know what I am going to do. I am going to write it for you. I am going to write it as simply as Defoe did the autobiography of Robinson Crusoe. And she has and this is it."



Vocabulary

dreadfully, bibliographies, insignificant, proportionately, translating, Dadaism, surrealisme, ceased, probability, thereupon, admirably, intervals, matriculate, split infinitives, grammatical, solecisms, correspondence, mischievously, prominent, immensely, reposing, solemnly, doughboy, etcetera, conception, enmities, exactitude, prose, retrospective, incomprehensible, correspondent, Episcopalian, monumental, repudiated, contemporaries, murmured, surrealist, disinterestedness, Catalan, coiffeur, exasperation, pretentiousness, prophetic, contemplate, devout, prosody, perplexity, hysteric, regiment, accumulated, consoled, hesitant, fundamentally, prima donna, hecklers, annuity, evanescence, Saracen, reminiscences, egotistical, desertion, philosopher, ecstasy, laudatory, lionized, bazaar, sensible



Characters

Alice B. Toklas

Alice B. Toklas was the lover and lifelong companion of author Gertrude Stein. She was born in San Francisco, California, to a middle-class Jewish family, and met Gertrude Stein in Paris on September 8, 1907, the day she arrived. Gertrude Stein published "The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas" in 1933 and the memoir became Stein's bestselling book. The two were a couple until Gertrude Stein's death in 1946.

Gertrude Stein

Gertrude Stein was an American writer, poet and art collector. Stein was born in 1874 in Allegheny, Pennsylvania, and shortly after her birth the Stein family moved to Europe, first living in Vienna and then Paris. The Steins returned to the United States in 1878, settling in Oakland, California, where Gertrude lived until the death of her parents when she was seventeen. Gertrude then moved with her sister Bertha to live with her mother's family in Baltimore, Maryland. After completing her undergraduate degree at Radcliffe College, Gertrude spent two years studying at Johns Hopkins Medical School, although she left without obtaining her degree. Gertrude then moved to Europe and lived with her brother, Leo Stein, an art critic, in Paris from 1903 until 1914. Gertrude Stein met her life partner Alice B. Toklas on September 8, 1907, on Toklas' first day in Paris. Gertrude wrote and published "The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas" in 1933.

Pablo Picasso

Pablo Picasso was a Spanish painter, sculptor, printmaker, and ceramicist. Picasso is widely known for co-founding the Cubist movement along with Georges Braque. Picasso became part of the social circle of Gertrude Stein and was a part of the early Saturday evenings at 27 Rue de Fleurus.

Fernande Olivier

Fernande Olivier was a French artist and model known primarily for having modeled for painter Pablo Picasso. Fernande was the mistress of Picasso from 1904 until 1912.

Henri Matisse

Henri Matisse was a French draughtsman, printmaker, and sculptor known for originating the Fauvist movement. "His people were small grain merchants in the north of France. He had become interested in painting, had begun copying the Poussins at



the Louvre and become a painter fairly without the consent of his people who however continued to allow him the very small monthly sum he had had as a student”.

Amélie Noellie Parayre Matisse

Amélie Noellie Parayre Matisse was the wife of painter Henri Matisse. In 1898, the couple married and raised Henri’s daughter, Marguerite, together. They had two sons.

Paul Cézanne

Paul Cézanne was a French Post-Impressionist painter whose work can be said to form the bridge between late nineteenth century Impressionism and twentieth century Cubism. Gertrude Stein and her brother Leo Stein collected several of Cézanne’s paintings.

H. P. Roche

H.P. Roche was an aspiring writer amongst the social circle of Gertrude Stein. “Roche was one of those characters that are always to be found in Paris. He was a very earnest, very noble, devoted, very faithful and very enthusiastic man who was a general introducer”.

Andrew Green

Andrew Green was one of the members of the social circle of Gertrude Stein. Green “was the great-nephew of Andrew Green known as the father of Greater New York. He had been born and reared in Chicago but he was a typical tall gaunt New Englander, blond and gentle”.

Guillaume Apollinaire

Guillaume Apollinaire was a French poet, playwright, short story writer, novelist, and art critic and was among the social circles of Gertrude Stein. “Apollinaire was very attractive and very interesting. He had a head like one of the late Roman emperors. He had a brother whom one heard about but never saw. He worked in a bank and therefore he was reasonably well dressed”.

Marie Laurencin

Marie Laurencin was a French painter and printmaker and was among the social circle of Gertrude Stein. “She had the square thin build of the mediaeval French women in the French primitives. She spoke in a high pitched beautifully modulated voice”.

Jules Pascin

Jules Pascin, known as the "Prince of Montparnasse," was a Bulgarian painter in Paris, where he was strongly identified with the Modernist movement. Pascin "was at that time a thin brilliant-looking creature, he already had a considerable reputation as maker of neat little caricatures in *Simplicissimus*, the most lively of the German comic papers".

Félix Fénéon

Félix Fénéon was a Parisian anarchist and art critic during the late nineteenth century and coined the phrase "Neo-impressionism." Fénéon "looked like a caricature of Uncle Sam made French and he had been painted standing in front of a curtain in a circus picture by Toulouse-Lautrec".



Objects/Places

Paris, France

In 1903, Gertrude Stein moved to Paris with her brother Leo, where she spent the rest of her life. Alice B. Toklas met Gertrude Stein in Paris on September 8, 1907, the day she arrived.

Clamart

Clamart is a commune in the southwestern suburbs of Paris, France, and is located 5.4 miles from the center of Paris. This is the location where Matisse bought a home and land after the success of his school.

Montmartre

Montmartre is a hill, giving its name to the surrounding district, in the north of Paris. This is the location where Pablo Picasso and other impoverished artists lived and worked in a commune in a building called Le Bateau-Lavoir during the years 1904–1909.

Fauvism

Fauvism was a short-lived style of early twentieth-century Modern artists whose works emphasized painterly qualities and strong color over the realistic values retained by Impressionism. Fauvism as a style began around 1900 and continued beyond 1910. The leaders of the movement were Henri Matisse and André Derain.

Cubism

Cubism is a twentieth century avant-garde art movement pioneered by Pablo Picasso and Georges Braque that revolutionized European painting and sculpture and inspired related movements in music, literature and architecture.

Saint-Quentin

Saint-Quentin is a commune in the Aisne department in Picardy in northern France. This is the location where Henri Matisse's family was when World War I broke out, and Matisse's brother was taken hostage.



World War I

World War I, also called the Great War, was a major war centered in Europe that began on July 28, 1914 and lasted until November 11, 1918.

Allegheny, Pennsylvania

Gertrude Stein was born in Allegheny, Pennsylvania. Shortly after Gertrude's birth, her family moved from Pennsylvania to Vienna and then Paris before returning to the United States and settling in Oakland, California.

Oakland, California

The family of Gertrude Stein returned to America from Paris in 1878, settling in Oakland, California, where Gertrude lived until the death of her parents when she was seventeen.

Baltimore, Maryland

Following the death of her parents, Gertrude Stein and another sister, Bertha, moved to Baltimore to live with their mother's family.

Radcliffe College

Radcliffe College is a women's liberal arts college in Cambridge, Massachusetts, and was the coordinate college for Harvard University. Gertrude Stein attended Radcliffe College from 1893 to 1897.

“The Making of Americans”

“The Making of Americans” is a modernist novel by Gertrude Stein.

San Francisco, California

Alice B. Toklas was born in San Francisco, California, to a middle-class Jewish family. She attended schools in both San Francisco and Seattle, Washington.

Themes

Art

Art is an important theme found throughout “The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas”, forming not only a way to contextualize events in terms of the passage of time, but to explore art for its meaning and its evolution, in both fine art and the written word. Gertrude Stein collected fine art and her home at the rue de Fleurus reflected the modernist style of art of Stein’s generation. The philosophies of art are illustrated, questioned, reevaluated, and re-imagined by the figures of Stein and Toklas’s social circles.

Cubism, pioneered by Pablo Picasso and Georges Braque, pervaded the art world prior to World War I and revolutionized modern painting and sculpture. In cubist art, objects are broken up and reassembled in an abstracted form. Such was the writing style of Gertrude Stein. Stein applied the principles of modern art to literature and in doing so opened the doors for the economical and understated styles of Ernest Hemingway, F. Scott Fitzgerald, T. S. Eliot and other modernist writers of the “Lost Generation.”

War

The impact of war –specifically, World War I –is an important and crucial theme examined and illustrated in “The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas”. In the book, Stein principally focuses on the impact of the war on the modernist movements in art and literature. Gertrude Stein is credited by Ernest Hemingway for coining the term “Lost Generation.” The Lost Generation refers to the writers coming of age in the physical devastation and socio-political and cultural uncertainty after World War I.

The war had tremendous impact on the writers and artists of this age. Gertrude Stein's work itself evolved during this period, no doubt as a result of her changed perspective from the war, moving into a more economical style, as things like beauty and gentility seemed to be in scarcity. There is little poetic about the aftermath of a war. Furthermore, the creative efforts of those in cultural roles (writers, artists, sculptors, etc.) are often geared toward war rather than art. Gertrude Stein and Alice B. Toklas work for the American Fund for French Wounded, for example. There, they become like godmothers to many of the wounded soldiers they encounter in their travels. Following the armistice between the Allies and Germany, Stein and Toklas assisted those in Alsace as they return to their destroyed homes, and are confronted with horror and destruction rather than beauty and creation.

Style

Point of View

"The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas" is related through Alice's perspective as narrator. Unlike a traditional autobiography, the book was not written by Alice B. Toklas, but was wittily crafted by Gertrude Stein. As such, the book essentially serves as an autobiography of Gertrude Stein, but related from the perspective of her lover and life companion.

This technique allowed Stein to describe herself and her work from a more objective perspective, but also gave her more freedom for personal praise. One example of this can be seen in the conclusion of the first chapter as Alice describes her first meeting with Gertrude: "I was impressed by the coral brooch she wore and by her voice. I may say that only three times in my life have I met a genius and each time a bell within me rang and I was not mistaken, and I may say in each case it was before there was any general recognition of the quality of genius in them".

Setting

The main setting of "The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas" is that of Paris, France. In 1903, Gertrude Stein moved to Paris with her brother Leo, where she spent the rest of her life. Alice B. Toklas met Gertrude Stein in Paris on September 8, 1907, the day she arrived.

Alice, as narrator, describes the home at 27 rue de Fleurus where she and Gertrude Stein lived for many years as consisting of two stories with four small rooms, a kitchen and bath. When Alice first arrived, she was taken by Miss Stein to the atelier, where paintings lined the walls from floor to ceiling. The paintings were of all kinds, including Cézannes, Renoirs, Matisses and Picassos, as well as paintings by Gauguin, Manguin, Vallotton, Manet, and Toulouse-Lautrec. As time progressed, many more artists would be added to the collection.

Language and Meaning

The language of "The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas" is relatively straightforward, although it reflects the intellectual and artistic style of Gertrude Stein. It is considered, however, to be one of the most accessible of Stein's works and as such was the first of her writings to be published in the Atlantic Monthly.

One major element of the narrative style is its nonlinear approach to storytelling. As if in conversation, the narrator jumps forward and back through time, relating events from Alice's later relationship with Gertrude and then jumping back to the beginning.



Another striking element in the style of Gertrude Stein's writing in "The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas" is her use of capitalization and commas. Stein chooses not to capitalize the use of nationalities and artistic styles or movements, such as in the following example: "Against the walls were several pieces of large italian renaissance furniture and in the middle of the room was a big renaissance table, on it a lovely inkstand, and at one end of it note-books neatly arranged, the kind of note-books French children use, with pictures of earthquakes and explorations on the outside of them" (Chapter 2, p. 10). As for her use of commas, Stein chooses to use them at times in place of periods, which adds to the conversational effect of the narrative.

Structure

"The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas" is structured in seven chapters of varying length. The first chapter, "Before I Came to Paris," is by far the shortest chapter, and as such establishes the fact that although the title implies the book to be an autobiography of Alice, it is in fact an autobiography of Gertrude Stein. Alice B. Toklas, despite being the book's narrator, plays a secondary role to the book's central subject, Gertrude Stein.

Structurally, the narrative is depicted nonlinearly, with the author jumping forward and backward through time. The effect of this technique is that it gives the book a conversational feel, as though the reader is listening to Alice relate memories of the past mixed with the events of the present. The third and fourth chapters step back in time to relate Gertrude Stein's arrival in Paris and then back further to relate her childhood and education.

Quotes

Gertrude Stein was just seeing through the press *Three Lives* which she was having privately printed, and she was deep in “*The Making of Americans*”, her thousand page book. (Chapter 2)

The pictures were so strange that one quite instinctively looked at anything rather than at them just at first. (Chapter 2)

Before the winter was over, having gone so far Gertrude Stein and her brother decided to go further, they decided to buy a big Cézanne and then they would stop. (Chapter 3)

In the long struggle with the portrait of Gertrude Stein, Picasso passed from the Harlequin, the charming early Italian period to the intensive struggle which was to end in cubism. (Chapter 3)

The effect of this african art upon Matisse and Picasso was entirely different. Matisse through it was affected more in his imagination than in his vision. Picasso more in his vision than in his imagination. (Chapter 3)

She always says that she is very grateful not to have been born of an intellectual family, she has a horror of what she calls intellectual people. (Chapter 4)

The last two years at the medical school she was bored, frankly openly bored. There was a good deal of intrigue and struggle among the students, that she liked, but the practice and theory of medicine did not interest her at all. (Chapter 4)

She loves objects that are breakable, cheap objects and valuable objects, a chicken out of a grocery shop or a pigeon out of a fair, one just broke this morning, this time it was not I who did it, she loves them all and she remembers them all but she knows that sooner or later they will break and she says that like books there are always more to find. (Chapter 5)

Gertrude Stein always says that she only has two real distractions, pictures and automobiles. Perhaps she might now add dogs. (Chapter 7)

Gertrude Stein, in her work, has always been possessed by the intellectual passion for exactitude in the description of inner and outer reality. She has produced a simplification by this concentration, and as a result the destruction of associational emotion in poetry and prose. (Chapter 7)

Gertrude Stein concluded that negroes were not suffering from persecution, they were suffering from nothingness. (Chapter 7)

Gertrude Stein says that if you are way ahead with your head you naturally are old fashioned and regular in your daily life. (Chapter 7)

Topics for Discussion

Topic 1

What is the purpose of titling the book an autobiography? From whose perspective is the narrative related? Why? Who is the subject of the book? How is Gertrude Stein portrayed through the perspective of the narrator? What does this indicate, given that Stein is the book's author as well?

Topic 2

How did Gertrude Stein and Alice B. Toklas relate as individuals? What characteristics did they share? How were their childhoods similar and dissimilar? How was Toklas viewed by Gertrude Stein? What impressions did the couple make on one another in the beginning?

Topic 3

What role did Gertrude Stein play in the Cubist movement? How did she impact the modern art world? What was the worth of Stein's art collection at her death? How did Gertrude Stein's writing influence the literary world? What authors considered Gertrude Stein to be influential?

Topic 4

How did World War I impact the modern art movement in France and in greater Europe? What artists were killed in the war? Who was exiled and why? In what ways did the war influence the writing style of Gertrude Stein? How were Gertrude and Alice's social circles affected by the war?

Topic 5

Examine the relationship between Gertrude Stein and Pablo Picasso. Where did Stein first meet Picasso? What were her impressions of his work? How many different phases of art did Picasso pass through? How did his friendship with Gertrude Stein influence his work? How did Picasso influence the writing of Stein?



Topic 6

What was the relationship like between Pablo Picasso and Henri Matisse? What complicated their relationship? How did each artist influence the other? What are commonalities in the works of Picasso and Matisse? What are the principle differences?

Topic 7

How are the themes of genius and art explored and illustrated in the book? Who were the three geniuses that Alice B. Toklas describes having known in her life? How did Alice relate to the wives of geniuses? In what ways did Alice consider herself genius?