

Impact 3 – Reading Practice 3

Beethoven

Read the following text about a famous musician. Fill in the gaps with the words given in the box.

worse	started	washed	however	able	composers
signs	into	suicide	completely	playing	from

Most people who like classical music would say that Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827) was one of the greatest (1) _____ in history. He was born in the German city of Bonn, but spent most of his life in Vienna, the capital of Austria. His father, a musician in Bonn, encouraged him to play and compose music from an early age. The young Beethoven showed clear (2) _____ of being a musical genius, giving a public piano performance at the age of eight and then publishing his first musical composition when he was twelve.

One of the most well-known facts about Beethoven is that he (3) _____ losing his hearing in his late twenties, and later became (4) _____ deaf. Amazingly, this did not stop him composing. In the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, most composers worked for the Church or for royal courts, but Beethoven was a freelancer who sold his music to publishers and also received money for playing the piano in public concerts. As a young man he often had money problems, which became (5) _____ when his deafness stopped him (6) _____ the piano, but later in his life, after becoming very famous, he received financial support from wealthy aristocrats.

Beethoven also suffered (7) _____ depression, caused partly by his increasing deafness and partly by problems in his personal life – for example he wasn't (8) _____ to marry the woman he loved because she was already married with children. In his thirties he almost committed (9) _____, but after choosing not to end his life he began working harder than ever, producing wonderful pieces of music such as his Eroica symphony.

Like many geniuses, Beethoven was a true eccentric. He had a lot of strange habits, such as getting (10) _____ many times a day but deliberately wearing clothes that

were dirty, and he always seemed to get (11) _____ arguments with people, but he also had a close group of friends all the way through his life.

He had strong political beliefs. He supported the democratic ideals of the French Revolution (1789) and dedicated the Eroica to Napoleon Bonaparte, the leader of France, because it seemed he too supported those ideals. Later, (12) _____, Beethoven decided Napoleon had betrayed the revolution, so he furiously crossed out the Frenchman's name from all the papers containing the music for that symphony.

Decide whether the following statements are true or false.

1. Beethoven did not always have a lot of money.

True

False

2. Although he composed a lot of music, he never learned to play music himself.

True

False

3. He composed most of his music early in his life, before he began to suffer from depression.

True

False

4. He had a group of friends when he was a young man, but lost them later in his life.

True

False

5. His parents were not interested in music.

True

False

6. He changed his opinion about Napoleon Bonaparte.

True

False

7. He thought democracy was a good idea.

True

False

8. For most of his life he composed music for the Church.

True

False

9. He was already beginning to go deaf when he published his first musical composition.

True

False

10. He was an adult when he almost committed suicide.

True

False

11. He wrote the Eroica symphony for a woman he loved.

True

False

12. He often wore dirty clothes, thinking they were clean.

True

False

Answer the following questions:

1. When did Beethoven die?
2. Where did he spend most of his life?
3. When did he start losing his hearing?
4. Did he have to stop composing when he became deaf?
5. By whom was he given financial support?
6. How often did he get washed?
7. Why wasn't he able to marry the woman he loved?
8. Why did he cross out Napoleon Bonaparte's name from all the papers containing the music for the Eroica symphony?

