

German Literature Cheat Sheet

Version 3.0

*Authors are listed roughly chronologically, in order of the publication of their most important works.
Bolded terms appear frequently in questions.*

Author	Works	Details
Brothers Grimm (Wilhelm and Jacob)	Children's and Household Tales	linguists and collectors of German folk tales fairytale including "Hansel and Gretel," "Rapunzel," "Rumpelstiltskin," "Sleeping Beauty," "Snow White," and many more
	Friedrich Schiller "Ode to Joy" The Robbers; William Tell; Wallenstein	poem whose text was used in Beethoven's ninth symphony
Johann Wolfgang von Goethe		Sturm und Drang (storm and stress) movement
	Faust	play in which Mephistopheles bets God he can tempt the scholar Faust to Hell; he follows Faust home in the form of a poodle and gives Faust magic in return for his soul; Faust seduces Gretchen , who becomes pregnant, drowns her child, and is executed for murder
	The Sorrows of Young Werther	epistolary novel in which the title man kills himself after failing to romance Lotte
E.T.A. Hoffman		Romantic movement
	The Nutcracker and the Mouse King	basis for Tchaikovsky's <i>Nutcracker</i> ballet; Drosselmeyer gives clockwork toys to his godchildren, Marie and Fritz, and Marie has dream-adventures with the title nutcracker
	The Sandman	
Franz Kafka		lived in modern day Czechia; included here because he wrote in German
	The Metamorphosis	opening line commonly translated similarly to: " Gregor Samsa awoke one morning from uneasy dreams to find he had been transformed in his bed into a giant vermin"
	The Trial	Josef K. is accused of an undisclosed crime and tries fruitlessly to navigate a bizarre justice system, culminating in him being executed, in his words, " like a dog "
Rainier Maria Rilke	The Duino Elegies	poetry collection that begins, " Who if I cried out, would hear me among the Angelic orders? "
	The Archaic Torso of Apollo	poem that ends, " You must change your life "
Herman Hesse	Siddhartha	Siddhartha , in a quest for enlightenment, follows, mirrors, and diverges from the path of the Buddha (Siddhartha Gautama), often accompanied by his friend Govinda and with the guidance of the ferryman Vasudeva
	Steppenwolf	Harry Haller reflects on his life and records being taken through a door marked " For Madmen Only " at the Magic Theater by Pablo, a jazz saxophonist
	The Glass Bead Game	
	The Threepenny Opera	includes the song "The Ballad of Mack the Knife"
Berthold Brecht	Mother Courage and Her Children	set during the Thirty Years' War
Thomas Mann	Death in Venice	Gustav von Aschenbach falls in love with Tadzio and dies of cholera after eating over-ripe strawberries
	The Magic Mountain	Hans Castorp stays at a Swiss sanatorium
	Buddenbrooks	chronicles the decline of the title family in Lübeck
	Doctor Faustus	an adaptation of the Faust legend featuring violinist Adrian Leverkühn
Günter Grass	The Tin Drum	part of the Danzig Trilogy ; Oskar Matzerath chooses to stop growing at age three
	Cat and Mouse; Dog Years	the other novels in the Danzig Trilogy