

# Ludwig van Beethoven

It is widely known that Beethoven was deaf....however, what people do not realize is that he was not born this way. By the time LvB came to terms with the fact that he was going deaf, he had already established himself as a composer of high esteem.

Imagine how you would feel if someone told you that your livelihood and the thing you loved most in the world, would without doubt, be gone within several years. This is what Beethoven was going through.

Click the following link to read the "Heiligenstadt Testament," a letter Beethoven wrote to his brothers, but never sent, describing himself coming to terms with the fact that he would inevitably one day, lose his hearing.

<http://www.lvbeethoven.com/Bio/BiographyHeiligenstadtTestament.html>

After you have read the letter, click the link below and listen to Beethoven's *Piano Sonata No. 8 in C minor, Op. 13*, more commonly referred to as *Sonata Pathetique*. This piece was written during the same time as the "Heiligenstadt Testament".

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FLOu9QXNvEg>

After you have read the letter and listened to the piece of music, write one paragraph (at least 6 sentences) comparing the "Heiligenstadt Testament" to the piano sonata. Does the music accurately portray the emotions of the letter? Does knowing the background of the piece help you to enjoy it more?