

What Happened in 1803 – A Jane Austen Timeline

(Including Events Leading Up To 1803 and After)

| Date | Jane Austen's Life | Significant Events | Category |
|---|--|--|--|
| December 16, 1775 | Jane Austen is born in Steventon, Hampshire, England. | The American Revolutionary War for Independence against Britain begins (4/19/1775 – 9/3/1783). | Family History External Event: War |
| May 5, 1789 – November 9, 1799 | JA is 14 - 24 years old. | The French Revolution overthrows the monarchy and establishes the French Republic. | External Event: War |
| 1792-1802 | During this time, JA is 17 - 27 years old. | French Revolutionary Wars, a series of military conflicts resulting from the 1789 French Revolution. | External Event: War |
| January 21, 1793 | JA is 17 years old | King Louis XVI is executed by guillotine. | External Event |
| February 22, 1794 | JA is 18 years old. | Cousin Eliza Hancock Feuillide's husband, is guillotined in Paris. | Family History |
| 1795 | JA probably starts writing <i>Sense and Sensibility</i> (originally titled <i>Elinor and Marianne</i> this year). | | JA Writings |
| December 25, 1795 – January 15, 1796 | JA's surviving letters begins (1/9/1796) when she meets Tom LeFroy at a ball when they were both 20 years old. After JA's scandalous dance with him, his aunt sends him away to London. | | JA Love life: Letters |
| October 1796 | JA begins writing <i>Pride and Prejudice</i> (initially titled <i>First Impressions</i>) which she reads aloud to her family. | | JA Writings |
| August 1797 | JA finished <i>Pride and Prejudice</i> (titled <i>First Impressions</i>). Rev Mr. Austen offers it for publication to Thomas Cadell which is rejected sight unseen. | | JA Writings |
| December 31, 1797 | JA is 22 years old. | Brother Henry Austen marries his cousin, the widowed Eliza de Feuillide in London. | Family History |
| December 1797 – January 1798. | JA meets the young Rev. Samuel Blackall (age 26) when she was 22 years old. Madam Lefroy invited him to visit her to replace her nephew in JA's affections. He visits the Steventon rectory where JA entertains him by playing the pianoforte. | | Love Life |
| 1798 | JA probably begins writing <i>Northanger Abbey</i> (initially titled Susan) at Steventon. | | JA Writings |

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| September 1798 | 9 months after meeting JA, Blackall wrote to Madam LeFroy that he wished to improved his acquaintance with Jane but JA is not interested in him. | | Love Life |
| November 9, 1799 – June 18, 1815 | JA is 24 - 39 years old. | The Napoleonic Era begins with Napoleon Bonaparte's coup d'état (overthrowing the Directory and establishing the French Consulate) and ends during the Hundred Days and his defeat at the Battle of Waterloo. | External Event: War |
| 1799 | JA finishes writing <i>Northanger Abbey</i> , originally titled <i>Susan</i> at Steventon. She meets Mr. Evelyn who she initially dislikes. He is a friend of her brother, Edward when she visits the Leigh Perrots in Bath. | On 8/14/1799. Mrs. Leigh Perrot was charged with stealing lace from a millinery shop in Bath and was put into prison while awaiting trial. | JA Writings |
| 1800 | JA changes the title of <i>First Impressions</i> (now known as <i>Pride And Prejudice</i>) because author Margaret Holland published her book with that same title. <i>Pride And Prejudice</i> was later published in 1813. | On 3/29/1800, Mrs. Leigh Perrot appeared in court and was acquitted. A pamphlet titled, <i>The Trial of Mrs. Leigh Perrot</i> was published by Benjamin Crosby of London and a Bath printer, Mr. Cruttwell. Later, Mr. Austen asked Mr. Cruttwell if he would publish <i>Northanger Abbey</i> who recommended the publisher, Benjamin Crosby of London. | JA Writings Love Life Family History |
| Autumn 1800 | JA meets Mr. Holder who made his fortune in the E. Indies. They became friends. Later in 1801, she expected a marriage proposal and was annoyed that she didn't get one. | | Love Life |
| December 16, 1800 | On JA's birthday, her father surprised her by announcing that he is retiring and that the Austen family will be leaving Steventon after having lived there for 30 years; 25 years for JA. | | Relocation |
| January 14, 1801 | JA wrote to Cassandra at Godmersham that Rev. George Austen's library of 500 volumes must be sold. | | JA Letters |
| Early May 1801 | The George Austen Family and JA leave the rectory at Steventon. Rev GA goes to London. Mrs. GA, JA, and CEA go to Ibthorpe. | | Relocation |
| May 4, 1801 | Mrs. GA and JA travel to Bath. They stay with James/Jane Leigh Perrot. | | Leisure Travel |

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| | Rev GA and Cassandra follow later on after paying some visits. | | |
| May 5, 1801 | The rectory at Steventon is sold. Possible locations for renting a house in Bath are discussed. | | Relocation. |
| May 8, 1801 | JA meets Mr. Evelyn again and forms a better opinion of him. The possibility of a romance ends after Mr. Evelyn takes her out for a ride in his phaeton. Nothing comes of it. | | Relocation |
| May 26, 1801 | JA's last surviving letter of the period written to Cassandra. | | JA Letters |
| May 27, 1801 | Charles John Austen bought topaz crosses and gold chains for his sisters from his reward money as a captain. | | Family History |
| Midsummer 1801 (late June) | Jane and family moves into Sydney Place for 3 ¼ years, then spend the summer touring in Devonshire, probably visiting Sidmouth and Colyton. | | Relocation, 1 st Bath lodgings. Leisure Travel |
| Summer 1801/1802? | The Austens spend the summer in Devonshire by the sea. JA purportedly had a mysterious seaside romance with a clergyman whose brother was a doctor. Either he died suddenly or he left before they could see each other again the next summer. | | Love Life |
| October 1, 1801 | JA is 26 years old. | The preliminaries of peace between Britain and France is signed. | External event |
| March 25, 1802 – May 18, 1803 | JA is 27 -28 years old. | Treaty of Amiens is signed giving a 14 month interlude of peace in the war between Britain and France. It was the only period of general peace in Europe between 1793-1814. | External Event: Peace |
| November 25, 1802 | JA and Cassandra travel from Steventon to Manydown. | | Leisure Travel |
| December 1802 | JA works on revising <i>NA</i> (then titled <i>Susan</i>). | | JA Writings |
| December 2, 1802 | Suitor Harris Bigg Wither (age 21) proposes marriage to JA who is 27 years old which she accepts. | | Love Life |
| December 3, 1802 | The next morning, JA withdraws her engagement to Harris Bigg Wither. JA and Cassandra leave the house | | Love Life Leisure Travel |


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| | immediately, driven back to Steventon by Harris's sisters. | | |
| December 4, 1802 | At Steventon, JA and Cassandra insists that James take them back to Bath today. | | Leisure Travel |
| Spring 1803 | JA makes a final check through the manuscript, <i>Northanger Abbey</i> (then known as <i>Susan</i>). Henry Thomas Austen's lawyer, William Seymour sells it for 10 pounds to the publisher Benjamin Crosby & Co of London with the promise of immediate publication. Crosby advertises it in <i>Flowers of Literature</i> for 1801-1802 (published 1803) as being "in the press" but is not published. It was listed as #15 on their list of "New and Useful Books." | | JA Writings |
| May 16, 1803 | JA is 28 years old. | Napoleon Bonaparte breaks the Peace of Amiens when he refused to sign a commercial treaty and instead imposed high tariffs on British imports. The British, refused to leave Malta. After only 14 months of <i>peace</i> , Britain once again declared war on France. | External Event |
| May 18, 1803 – November 20, 1815 | JA is 28 - 40 years old. | War between Britain and France Resumes, now known as the Napoleonic Wars. | External Event: War |
| May 22, 1803 | JA is 28 years old. | Napoleon issues orders that all English travelers in France are to be detained. Cousin Eliza de Feuillide Austen successfully escapes to England. | External Event: War Relocation |
| September 17, 1803 | JA's parents arrive at Godmersham, presumably JA and CEA are with them. It may be during this visit that the Austen women each compose a set of " <i>Verses to Rhyme with Rose</i> ." JA transcribes all 4 verses onto one sheet of paper and later adds some more of her own verses on other subjects in July 1805 and September 1807. | | JA Writings Leisure Travel |
| October 17/18, 1803 | JA and Cassandra arrive at Ashe Rectory and visits with Madam LeFroy. | | Leisure Travel |
| October 24, 1803 | JA and Cassandra leave Ashe Rectory to return to Bath. | | Leisure Travel |

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| November 5, 1803 | The Austens visit Lyme (JA refers back to this event on October 4, 1808). | A large fire occurs in the center of the town. | Leisure Travel External Event |
| Late 1803 | JA is 28 years old. | Ann/e Sharp/e is hired as a governess to JA's niece, Fanny Knight. | Family Friend |
| January 23, 1804 – March 18, 1805 | JA is 29 - 30 years old. | Ann/e Sharp/e becomes governess to JA's niece, Fanny Knight and becomes a dear friend to JA. | Family Friend Love Life? |
| 1804 | JA begins writing <i>The Watsons</i> but does not finish it. Cassandra paints a watercolor portrait of JA's back view in blue dress with her face hidden by a bonnet, probably when the Austen family vacationed in Lyme Regis. |  | JA Writings. JA Portrait |
| September 14, 1804 | JA resumes her letter writing with a letter written to Cassandra. | | JA Letters |
| October 25, 1804 | Rev. George Austen and family return to Bath and rent No. 3 Green Park Buildings East. | | Relocation #2 nd Bath lodgings |
| December 16, 1804 | On JA's birthday when she is 29 years old, her friend Madam Lefroy (age 56) dies from a fall off a horse. | | Family Friend |
| January 21, 1805 | Rev. George Austen dies and is buried in Bath. | | Family History |
| 1805 or later | JA makes a copy of <i>Lady Susan</i> on paper watermarked 1805. | | JA Writings |
| March 25, 1805 | Mrs. Austen, JA, and Cassandra move out of their home in Green Park Buildings into 25 Gay St. | | Relocation 3 rd Bath lodgings |
| January 29, 1806 | Mrs. Austen, JA, and Cassandra left their Steventon visit for Bath and found temporary lodgings in the unfashionable Trim Street. | | Relocation 4 th Bath lodgings |
| July 2, 1806 | Mrs. Austen, JA, and Cassandra finally leave Bath. They visit Cofton, Adlestrop, Stoneleigh, and Hamstall Ridware. | | Relocation |
| October 4, 1806 | Mrs. Austen, JA, and Cassandra arrived in Steventon. | | Relocation |
| October 10, 1806 | Mrs. Austen, JA, and Cassandra leave Steventon and move with Francis Austin and his wife, Mary Gibson to Southampton to live in temporary lodgings. | | Relocation |