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Jules Verne

French author



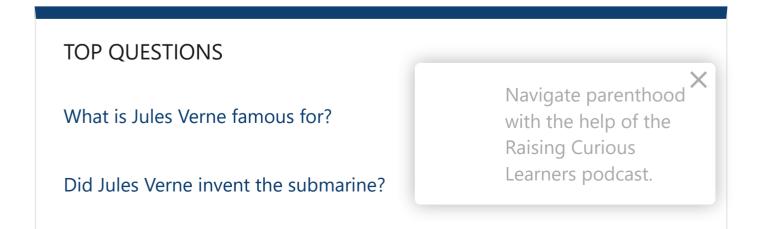
WRITTEN BY

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See Article History

Jules Verne, (born February 8, 1828, Nantes, France—died March 24, 1905, Amiens), prolific French author whose writings laid much of the foundation of modern science fiction.





Verne's father, intending that Jules follow in his footsteps as an attorney, sent him to Paris to study law. But the young Verne fell in love with literature, especially theatre. He wrote several plays, worked as secretary of the Théâtre Lyrique (1852–54), and published short stories and scientific essays in the periodical Musée des familles. In 1857 Verne married and for several years worked as a broker at the Paris Stock Market. During this period he continued to write, to do research at the Bibliothèque Nationale (National Library), and to dream of a new kind of novel—one that would combine scientific fact with adventure fiction. In September 1862 Verne met Pierre-Jules Hetzel, who agreed to publish the first of Verne's *Voyages extraordinaires* ("Extraordinary Journeys")—Cing semaines en ballon (1863; Five Weeks in a Balloon). Initially serialized in Hetzel's Le Magasin d'éducation et de récréation, the novel became an international best seller, and Hetzel offered Verne a long-term contract to produce many more works of "scientific fiction." Verne subsequently quit his job at the stock market to become a fulltime writer and began what would prove to be a highly successful author-publisher collaboration that lasted for more than 40 years and resulted in more than 60 works in the popular series *Voyages* extraordinaires.

Verne's works can be divided into three 1862 to 1886, might be termed his posit

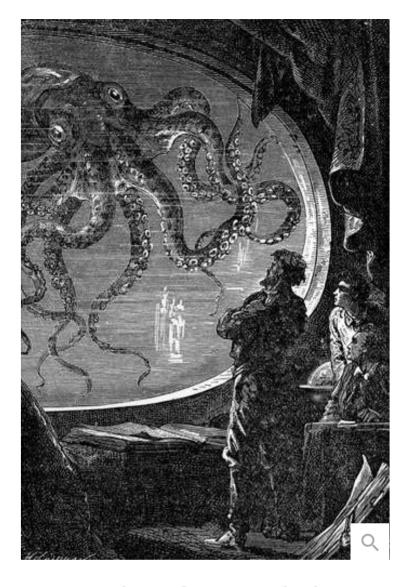
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second novel Paris au XXe siècle (1994; ruris in me 20m Cemury) was

rejected by Hetzel in 1863, Verne learned his lesson, and for more than

two decades he churned out many successful science-adventure novels, including *Voyage au centre de la terre* (1863, expanded 1867; *Journey to the Centre of the Earth*), *De la terre à la lune* (1865; *From the Earth to the Moon*), *Autour de la lune* (1870; *Around the Moon*), *Vingt mille lieues sous les mers* (1870; *Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea*), and *Le Tour du monde en quatre-vingts jours* (1873; *Around the World in Eighty Days*). During these years Verne settled with his family in Amiens and made a brief trip to the United States to visit New York City and Niagara Falls. During this period he also purchased several yachts and sailed to many European countries, collaborated on theatre adaptations of several of his novels, and gained both worldwide fame and a modest fortune.

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Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea

Illustration from Jules Verne's $Twenty\ Thousand\ Leagues\ Under\ the\ Sea.$ Captain Nemo observes an octopus through the window of the submarine. Bettmann/Corbis

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The second phase, from 1886 until his death in 1905, might be considered Verne's pessimist period. Throughout these years the ideological tone of his *Voyages extraordinaires* began to change. Increasingly, Verne turned away from pro-science tales of exploration and discovery in favour of exploring the dangers of technology wrought by hubris-filled scientists in novels such as Sans dessus dessous (1889; Topsy-Turvy or The Purchase of the North Pole), L'Île à hélice (1895; The Floating Island or The Self-Propelled Island or Propeller Island), Face au drapeau (1896; Facing the Flag or For the Flag), and Maître du monde (1904; Master of the World). This change of focus also paralleled certain adversities in the author's personal life: growing problems with his rebellious son, Michel; financial difficulties that forced him to sell his yacht; the successive deaths of his mother and his mentor Hetzel; and an attack by a mentally disturbed nephew who shot him in the lower leg, rendering him partially crippled. When Verne died, he left a drawerful of nearly completed manuscripts in his desk.

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The third and final phase of the Jules Verne story, from 1905 to 1919,

might be considered the Verne fils period, when his posthumous works

were published—after being substantially revamped—by his son, Michel. They included Le Volcan d'or (1906; The Golden Volcano), L'Agence Thompson and Co. (1907; The Thompson Travel Agency), La Chasse au météore (1908; The Chase of the Golden Meteor), Le Pilote du Danube (1908; The Danube Pilot), Les Naufragés du Jonathan (1909; The Survivors of the Jonathan), Le Secret de Wilhelm Storitz (1910; The Secret of Wilhelm Storitz), Hier et demain (1910; Yesterday and Tomorrow, a collection of short stories), and L'Étonnante aventure de la mission Barsac (1919; The Barsac Mission). Comparing Jules Verne's original manuscripts with the versions published after his death, modern researchers discovered that Michel did much more than merely edit them. In most cases he entirely rewrote them—among other changes, he recast plots, added fictional characters, and made their style more melodramatic. Scholarly reaction to these discoveries has been mixed. Some critics condemn these posthumous works as contaminated; others view them as a legitimate part of the Verne *père et fils* collaboration. The debate continues.

With Michel's death in 1925, the final chapter of Jules Verne's literary legacy was more or less complete. The following year American

publisher Hugo Gernsback used a repression for his *Amazing Stories*, the first lit of "scientifiction." As the term *scientific*

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the new genre began to flourish as never before, and verne became

universally recognized as its patron saint.

During the 20th century Verne's works were translated into more than 140 languages, making him one of the world's most translated authors. A number of successful motion pictures were made from Verne novels, starting in 1916 with 20,000 Leagues Under the Sea (remade in 1954 by Walt Disney) and including The Mysterious Island (1929 and 1961), From the Earth to the Moon (1958), Journey to the Center of the Earth (1959), and, perhaps the most popular, Around the World in 80 Days (1956).

Verne's influence extends beyond literature and film into the world of science and technology, where he inspired generations of scientists, inventors, and explorers. In 1954 the United States Navy launched the world's first nuclear-powered submarine, named for Verne's *Nautilus*. And for more than 130 years, adventurers such as Nellie Bly (1890), Wiley Post (1933), and Steve Fossett (2005) have followed in the footsteps of Verne's fictional hero Phileas Fogg by attempting to circumnavigate the globe in record-breaking times. Verne and his enduringly popular *Voyages extraordinaires* continue to remind us that "What one man can imagine, another will someday be able to achieve."

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science fiction: Jules Verne

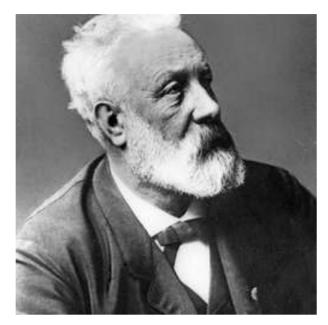
More significant to the genre's formation than Poe was Jules Verne , who counted Poe
among his influences and was arguably the inventor of science fiction. Verne's first novel, Paris au XXième siècle (Paris in the Twentieth Century)—written in 1863 but not published
space exploration: Precursors in fiction and fact
centuries later the French author Jules Verne and the English novelist and historian H.G. Wells infused their stories with descriptions of outer space and of spaceflight that were consistent with the best understanding of the time. Verne's De la Terre à la Lune (1865; Fro
children's literature: History
of genius is of course Jules Verne , whose first book, Un Voyage en ballon, was originally published in 1851 in a children's magazine, Le Musée des Familles
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Jules Verne

QUICK FACTS



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BORN

February 8, 1828 Nantes, France

DIED

March 24, 1905 (aged 77) Amiens, France

NOTABLE WORKS

"Around the World in Eighty Days"

"A Journey to the Centre of the Earth"

"The Mysterious Island"

"Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea"

"From the Earth to the Moon"

"Five Weeks in a Ralloon"

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