Gertrude Stein was born on February 3, 1874, in Allegheny, Pennsylvania. Stein was an imaginative, influential writer in the 20th century. The daughter of a wealthy merchant, she spent her early years in France and Germany before returning to the United States in 1903. Stein is known for her innovative prose style and for her role in the Parisian literary scene, where she became acquainted with a number of prominent artists, including Pablo Picasso. Stein's friendship with Picasso began in 1905 when she commissioned him to paint her portrait. The resulting painting, Portrait of Gertrude Stein, is considered one of the important works of Picasso's Rose Period. Stein was as much a historical figure as a celebrated writer. She and Picasso each created famous portraits of the other. Hers was in words. She had ample time to observe Picasso in the winter of 1905–1906, when he was working on many of the paintings for which he would achieve lasting fame. The portrait Stein commissioned was to have a profound influence on Picasso's artistic development.