

Letters and the Lamp

Humphry Davy and George Stephenson

Answers

1. How long ago did Davy and Stephenson live? Underline one answer: around 10 years ago; around 50 years ago; around 200 years ago.

2. How were Davy's and Stephenson's lives the same? How were they different? You might want to think about where they were born, what they learned when they were boys, and where they worked when they were men.

Both were born into humble, geographically remote (in terms of distance from capital) backgrounds, but Davy received formal education, whereas Stephenson received none. Davy was lecturing at the Royal Institution (in 1801) at the age of 23. Stephenson was working in Black Callerton in 1801, as a 'brakesman' (an engine operator).

3. Was Davy an important person? How do you know?

Yes. He was knighted in 1812 (and made a baronet in 1818).

4. What was Stephenson especially good at?

Working with and repairing engines.

5. What did Davy and Stephenson both want to make safer?

Coal mining.