

Overview

Roald Dahl (1916-1990) was a British children's writer, poet, and fighter pilot.

His books have sold more than 250 million copies worldwide, and he is often known as the 'greatest children's storyteller of the 20th Century.'

Amongst his many famous children's stories are *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*, *George's Marvellous Medicine*, *Matilda*, *Fantastic Mr Fox* and *The BFG*.

His books often contain dark and villainous characters, but teach the **importance of being kind-hearted**.

Dahl himself was born in Wales to Norwegian immigrant parents, and **fought in the RAF during World War II**.

A photograph of Roald Dahl from around 1980.



Times in His Life

Early Life



-Dahl was born on 13th September 1916 in Llandaff, Cardiff. He was named after Roald Amundsen.

- Both his sister and his father died when he was young. His mother chose to stay in the UK so he could go to UK schools.

-He went to Repton School, one of the best schools in the UK.

Fighting in World War II

-In 1939, Dahl quit his job as a clerk for the Shell Oil Company to serve in the RAF during World War II.

-At one point, he crash-landed his plane in north Africa, and was left with a fractured skull. He began to write about his experiences.



Children's Writing Career

-His first children's book was written in 1943, called *The Gremlins*. He sent a copy to Eleanor Roosevelt, the wife of the American President, who read it to her children.

-He drew on the experiences of his time as a young trouble-maker, some of the mean people that he had met throughout his life, and his love of sweets and chocolate!

-He went on to write some of the most popular stories of the twentieth century.



Personal Life

- Dahl married American actress Patricia Neal in 1953. Their marriage lasted for 30 years and they had 5 children together. His daughter, Olivia, died aged only seven.

-Dahl's family influenced his books, e.g. Sophie in the BFG is named after his granddaughter.

He died on 23rd November 1990. Roald Dahl day was first celebrated on his birthday in 2006.



Roald Dahl Knowledge Organiser

Answers to Important Questions and Key Vocabulary

<p>What did Dahl write about?</p>		<p>-Most of Dahl's stories feature mean old characters – the enemies of children! -In Dahl's stories, people who are kind and warm-hearted often win through. -This is because Dahl felt that kindness was the most important characteristic in a person. -He once said: "I think probably kindness is my number one attribute in a human being... Kindness—that simple word. To be kind—it covers everything, to my mind."</p>	<p>Key Vocabulary</p> <p>Writer</p> <p>Fighter Pilot</p> <p>Norwegian</p> <p>Clerk</p> <p>Published</p> <p>World War II</p> <p>Experiences</p> <p>Similes</p> <p>Alliteration</p> <p>Metaphors</p> <p>Rhyme</p> <p>Illustrator</p>
<p>Was Dahl popular during his life?</p>		<p>-Yes! Dahl's books sold many millions of copies around the world when he was still alive. Many have been made into movies in recent years, and so they have become even more popular!</p>	
<p>What are Dahl's most famous stories?</p>		<p>-Perhaps Dahl's most famous story is <i>Charlie and the Chocolate Factory</i>. It is the story of a very poor young boy Charlie, who wins an opportunity to visit the remarkable factory of the greatest chocolate-maker in the world – Willy Wonka! <i>Fantastic Mr Fox</i> is another of her famous tales. It tells the story of a very clever fox who steals food from three mean old farmers – Boggis, Bunce and Bean.</p>	
<p>What else do we know about Roald Dahl?</p>		<p>-Dahl experienced some hard times within his family. His eldest daughter, Olivia died as a young girl. -Also, his young son Theo was injured by a car when he was just a baby, and was brain damaged. -Dahl got deeply involved with trying to make new medical equipment to try and make Theo's life a little bit easier.</p>	



Top 10 Facts!	
1. Writing was never Dahl's best subject, and he received bad school reports for English!	6. Dahl also wrote a number of stories for adults. Whilst they weren't quite as popular as his children's stories, some were adapted into films!
2. Dahl liked to make up new words. In <i>The BFG</i> , there are 230 new words.	7. Dahl wrote some of his stories in rhyme, for example <i>Revolting Rhymes</i> .
3. His plane crash near Alexandria, in Egypt, inspired him to start writing.	8. Roald Dahl loved chocolate, and knew a lot about it – no doubt the influence for his <i>Charlie and the Chocolate Factory</i> story!
4. It is rumoured that Dahl also worked with MI6 (the British spy agency) at one point!	9. His stories were illustrated by Quentin Blake.
5. <i>The Gremlins</i> was influenced by the RAF: when things went wrong with planes, the pilots would joke that little Gremlins were the cause.	10. Dahl never learned to type – he wrote all of his stories in an old red book using pencil.



Roald Dahl Timeline

13 th September, 1916: Dahl is born in Llandaff, Wales.	1920: Dahl's sister, Astri, dies of appendicitis aged just 7 years old.	1920: His youngest sister, Asta is born, but his father dies that year.	1930: Dahl goes to Repton public school in Derbyshire.	1939-1945: Dahl fights for the RAF in WWII. He writes short stories about his experiences.	1953: Marries Patricia Neal.	1964: <i>Charlie and the Chocolate Factory</i> is published.	1970: <i>Fantastic Mr Fox</i> published.	1982: <i>The BFG</i> is published.	1990: <i>Matilda</i> is published.	23 rd November 1990: Dahl dies in hospital.
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Charlie and the Chocolate Factory is perhaps Roald Dahl's best-known story. The story of Charlie Bucket, the five Golden Tickets, the Oompa-Loompas and the amazing Mr Willy Wonka has become firmly embedded in our culture since it was first published in 1964. Conservative estimates suggest the original book has sold over 20 million copies worldwide; it is now available in 55 languages. Roald Dahl began working on *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* in 1961 shortly after finishing [James and the Giant Peach](#), but its origins can be traced all the way back to Roald's own childhood. In [Boy](#) he tells us how, while at school in England, he and his fellow Repton students were engaged as 'taste testers' for a chocolate company - something that seems to have started him thinking about chocolate factories and inventing rooms long before Mr Wonka was on the scene. But when he came to write *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*, the story went through several drafts - for example, at first Charlie was one of ten children to enter the factory. Roald re-drafted three or four times until the story as we now know it was released in 1964.