

## Roald Dahl: His Life and Work

*Read the text and then answer the questions that follow it.*

Roald Dahl was born on 13th September, 1916 in Llandaff, South Wales. Dahl's parents were Norwegian. His father died while Roald was still a child.

Dahl attended Llandaff Cathedral School for just two years. Then from the ages of nine to thirteen he attended St. Peter's Preparatory School in Weston-super-Mare, England. He did not enjoy the school because many of the teachers were cruel and often caned the students. Dahl was good at cricket and swimming, but he performed poorly in class. One of his main hobbies was reading, and some of his favourite novelists were the adventure writers Rudyard Kipling and H. Rider Haggard.

When Dahl was thirteen his family moved to Kent in England, and he was sent to Repton Public School. Sadly, Repton was even harsher than his old school. The headmaster enjoyed beating children and the older students used the younger ones as servants. However, there was one good thing about the school. Every few months, the chocolate company, Cadburys, sent boxes of chocolates to Repton for the students to test. This happy memory gave Dahl the idea for his most famous novel, *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*.

After school, Dahl decided that he wanted to travel. He got a job with the Shell Oil Company and two years later was sent to East Africa. In his autobiography, *Going Solo*, he recounts some of the exciting adventures there, including the time a black mamba entered his friend's house and a snake catcher had to be called in.

In 1939, World War 11 started. Dahl joined the RAF (Royal Air Force) and learned to fly warplanes. Unfortunately, on his first flight into enemy territory he ran out of fuel and crashed in the Libyan desert. He fractured his skull but managed to crawl out of the burning plane.

Dahl started writing in the 1940s while based in the USA. His first story was a newspaper account of his air crash. In 1945 he moved back home but in the early fifties returned to America, where he met his first wife, the actress Patricia Neal. They had five children together but got divorced in 1983. Dahl remarried soon after. The last years of his life were very happy and he wrote some of his best books during this period: *The BFG*, *The Witches* and *Matilda*. Roald Dahl died on 23rd November 1990 in Oxford, England.

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## Questions

1. How old was Roald Dahl when he died?
2. How many schools did he attend?
3. How many times was he married?
4. How many children did he have?
5. Complete the following timeline of Dahl's life (fill in all the blanks!):

<b>1916</b>	Dahl was born in South Wales
<b>1923-25</b>	
	St Peter's Preparatory School, Weston-super-Mare
<b>1934-39</b>	Shell Oil, London
<b>1936-39</b>	
<b>1939</b>	
<b>1941</b>	Published a newspaper story in the USA
<b>1945</b>	
	Got married to ...

6. Find words in the text with the following meanings:

- a) \_\_\_\_\_ = wicked, liking to hurt people
- b) \_\_\_\_\_ = a story about a person's own life
- c) \_\_\_\_\_ = someone who fights against you
- d) \_\_\_\_\_ = an area of land controlled by soldiers
- e) \_\_\_\_\_ = cracked
- f) \_\_\_\_\_ = ended their marriage
- g) \_\_\_\_\_ = got married again