



# David Walliams

David Edward Williams (known as David Walliams) is an English comedian, actor, talent show judge, author, presenter and charity supporter, who is best known for his work on a comedy sketch show and for his children's books.

## Childhood and Education

David Walliams was born on 20<sup>th</sup> August 1971 in Merton, London, to Peter Williams, a London Transport engineer, and Kathleen Williams, a lab technician. He grew up in Banstead, Surrey, with his sister, Julie, who used to enjoy dressing him up in her clothes. David attended Collingwood Boys' School before going to Reigate Grammar School. While at school, David was a Navy cadet because he liked the uniform! He also discovered his love of comedy when he took part in a school production wearing a dress; when the audience roared with laughter, he knew he had found his calling, especially if it involved dressing up!

From 1989 to 1992, he studied at the University of Bristol, gaining a degree in drama. During university holidays in 1990, David performed with the National Youth Theatre.

Upon joining the actors' union, David found that there was already a member called David Williams, so it was at this point that he decided to change his stage name to David Walliams.

## Career

David has had a very varied career in television and theatre starting in 1995, at the age of 24, when he wrote for the 'Ant and Dec Show'. He went on to work alongside other emerging comedians on various sketch shows (television shows comprising a series of short comedy scenes, called 'sketches', between one and ten minutes long), before embarking on his own project; this launched him to fame.

In 2005, David turned to non-comedy television, presenting a documentary on his lifelong fascination with James Bond and, in the following few years, he acted in a variety of different non-comedy roles.

Since 2012, David has been a judge on a well-known talent show, proving to be very popular. In both 2015 and 2018, his work on the show was recognised at the National Television Awards when he was presented with the award for Best Judge.



## Becoming an Author

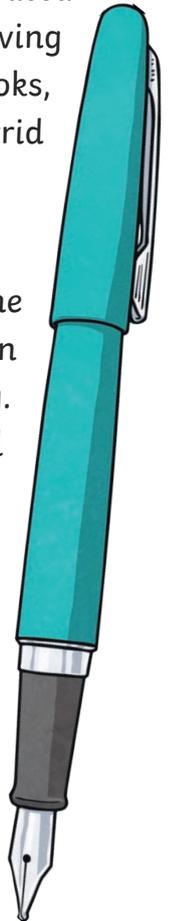
In 2008, David was offered a contract to publish two children's books. His debut novel, 'The Boy in the Dress', illustrated by Quentin Blake (who also illustrated Roald Dahl's books), was published on 1<sup>st</sup> November 2008. David wanted to write a book with the message that it's okay to be different so this book is about a boy who likes football and wearing dresses. It went on to sell over half a million copies! A year later, in November 2009, 'Mr Stink' was released and it was awarded the Children's Award in the People's Book Prize in 2010. Following the success of his first two books, he has gone on to write sixteen more children's books, some of which are illustrated by Tony Ross, best known for illustrating the Horrid Henry books.

## Charitable Work

David has been involved with the charity, Sport Relief, since 2006 when he swam the English Channel (a 22 mile stretch of sea separating southern England and northern France) in 10 hours and 34 minutes, raising over one million pounds for the charity. Later that year, David was awarded the Pride of Britain Award for the Most Influential Public Figure in recognition of his efforts.

In 2010, David cycled the length of Great Britain for Sport Relief and then, in September 2011, he swam the length of the river Thames (140 miles), raising over two million pounds for Sport Relief and rescuing a Labrador dog that had fallen into the river!

In recognition of his work in charity and the arts, David was awarded an OBE (Officer of the Order of the British Empire) by The Queen in 2017.



# Questions

1. **He went on to work alongside other emerging comedians on various sketch shows...**

What does **emerging** mean? Tick one.

- being forgotten
- becoming known
- starting
- ending

2. Who has David always been interested in? Tick one.

- Roald Dahl
- Quentin Blake
- James Bond
- Tony Ross

3. Find and copy a phrase from the text which shows that many people like David Walliams' work.

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4. Find and copy two things that David did as a child.

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

5. Fill in the missing words from this sentence:

Since 2012, David has been a popular judge on a \_\_\_\_\_.

He has twice been presented with an \_\_\_\_\_ at the National Television

Awards for \_\_\_\_\_ for his role in the series.

6. Why do you think that David is compared to Roald Dahl?

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7. Summarise David's childhood in 30 words or less.

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8. Why do you think that David performed in some non-comedy shows?

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9. Why do you think that David was keen to write 'The Boy in the Dress'?

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10. Which part of David's life do you think is the most important so far? Give evidence to support your answer.

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# Answers

1. **He went on to work alongside other emerging comedians on various sketch shows...**  
What does **emerging** mean? Tick one.

- being forgotten  
 **becoming known**  
 starting  
 ending

2. Who has David always been interested in? Tick one.

- Roald Dahl  
 Quentin Blake  
 **James Bond**  
 Tony Ross

3. Find and copy a phrase from the text which shows that many people like David Walliams' work.

**Accept any of the following: popular (comedy show); proving to be very popular; (he was presented with the) award for Best Judge; it went on to sell over half a million copies; it was awarded the Children's Award in the People's Book Prize; awarded the Pride of Britain Award for the Most Influential Public Figure; David was awarded an OBE.**

4. Find and copy two things that David did as a child.

**Accept any two of the following: being dressed up by his sister in her clothes; David was a navy cadet; he took part in a school production (wearing a dress).**

5. Fill in the missing words from this sentence:

Since 2012, David has been a popular judge on a **well-known talent show**. He has twice been presented with an **award** at the National Television Awards for **Best Judge** for his role in the series.

6. Why do you think that David is compared to Roald Dahl?

**Pupils' own responses, such as: Roald Dahl wrote funny, sometimes silly, children's books as has David. He also sometimes uses the same illustrator for his books.**

7. Summarise David's childhood in 30 words or less.

**Accept any reasonable summary, such as: While growing up in Banstead, Surrey and attending Collingwood Boys' School followed by Reigate Grammar School, David discovered his love of dressing up and making people laugh.**

8. Why do you think that David performed in some non-comedy shows?

**Pupils' own responses, such as: He had been working in comedy for some time and maybe he wanted a change – when he was offered the chance to present a documentary about James Bond, he couldn't refuse due to his lifelong fascination with the character.**

9. Why do you think that David was keen to write 'The Boy in the Dress'?

**Pupils' own responses, such as: As a child, David enjoyed dressing up (including in dresses) – he was probably keen to share this with people so they could see that there is nothing wrong with being yourself, even if you like different things to other people.**

10. Which part of David's life do you think is the most important so far? Give evidence to support your answer.

**Pupils' own responses, such as: I believe that David's charity work is the most important part of his life because, by completing these difficult challenges and raising huge sums of money, he is helping many people around the world to have better lives.**