



David Walliams

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

Childhood and Education

David Walliams was born on 20th August 1971 in Merton, London. He is the son of 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 laughed, he knew he wanted to be a comedian!

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

Did You Know...?

When he joined the actors' union, he decided to change his stage name to David Walliams because there was already a member called David Williams.

Career

David's career in television started 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**, before embarking on his own project alongside his friend. Together they wrote and starred in a popular comedy sketch show, which propelled them both to fame instantly.

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

David has been a judge on a popular talent show since 2012. 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

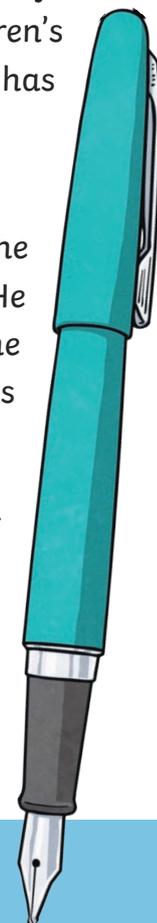
In 2008, David was offered a contract to publish two children's books. His debut novel, 'The Boy in the Dress', was published on 1st November 2008. It was illustrated by Quentin Blake, who also illustrated Roald Dahl's books (an author to whom David has often been compared). It is about a boy who likes football and wearing dresses – it went on to sell over half a million copies! A year later, '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, he has gone on to write sixteen more children's books.

Charitable Work

David has been involved with the charity, Sport Relief, since 2006 when he swam the **English Channel**, which is a 22 mile stretch of sea, in 10 hours and 34 minutes. He raised over one million pounds for the charity and, later that year, 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!

David was awarded an **OBE** by The Queen in 2017 for his work in charity and the arts.



Glossary

English Channel: The body of water separating southern England and northern France.

OBE: An award presented by The Queen, standing for Officer of the Order of the British Empire.

sketch shows: A television show comprising of a series of short comedy scenes, called 'sketches, between one and ten minutes long.

Questions

1. In which year did David's television career begin? Tick one.

- 1989
- 1990
- 1992
- 1995

2. Order the following statements from 1-5 to show the order they happened.

- David was awarded an OBE.
- David took part in a school production wearing a dress.
- David wrote 'The Boy in the Dress'.
- David swam the English Channel.
- David swam the length of the river Thames.

3. Which other author has David been compared to?

4. Fill in the missing words from this sentence:

In September 2011, David raised over _____ for Sport Relief by swimming the length of _____ (140 miles) and rescuing a _____ that had fallen into the river!

5. Find and copy a phrase from the text which shows that David became famous quickly.

6. Summarise David's work as an author in 30 words or less.

7. Why do you think that David is so popular?

8. What links David's childhood to his first book? Why do you think he made this link?

9. Why do you think that David was awarded the OBE?

Answers

- In which year did David's television career begin? Tick one.
 - 1989
 - 1990
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 - 1995**
- Order the following statements from 1-5 to show the order they happened.
 - David was awarded an OBE.
 - David took part in a school production wearing a dress.
 - David wrote 'The Boy in the Dress'.
 - David swam the English Channel.
 - David swam the length of the river Thames.
- Which other author has David been compared to?
David has been compared to Roald Dahl.
- Fill in the missing words from this sentence:
In September 2011, David raised over **two million pounds** for Sport Relief by swimming the length of **the river Thames** (140 miles) and rescuing a **Labrador dog** that had fallen into the river!
- Find and copy a phrase from the text which shows that David became famous quickly.
propelled them both to fame instantly
- Summarise David's work as an author in 30 words or less.
Child's own response, such as: David has published eighteen books, with the first one, 'The Boy in the Dress', released in 2008, selling over half a million copies. David has been compared to Roald Dahl.
- Why do you think that David is so popular?
Pupils' own responses, such as: He is a funny man who has always enjoyed making people laugh. His children's books are funny, as are his comedy sketch shows, making him popular with both children and adults.
- What links David's childhood to his first book? Why do you think he made this link?
Pupils' own responses, such as: When David was a child, he liked to wear dresses and 'The Boy in the Dress' is about a boy who likes to wear dresses. Maybe David made this link because he wanted to help children to see that it is okay to be different.
- Why do you think that David was awarded the OBE?
Pupils' own responses, such as: He has done a lot of charity work, raising lots of money for a good cause. He doesn't have to do this but chooses to spend his spare time completing difficult challenges, which makes him worthy of an OBE.