

2016 is the centenary of Roald Dahl's birth. Find out about the life and works of one of the most popular authors in the UK.

Roald Dahl is one of the greatest storytellers the world has ever known. He's sold well over 200 million books and you might also know stories like *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*, *Fantastic Mr Fox*, *The BFG* and *Matilda* from the film versions. Roald Dahl had a way of telling stories that makes them fun and easy to read. This, according to Roald himself, is because he found it very easy to remember what it was like to be a child.

His life

Roald was born in Llandaff in Wales on 13 September 1916. His parents were both from Norway but they moved to the UK before he was born. He went to several different boarding schools, living away from his parents for most of the year. Once, to play a trick on the owner of a sweet shop, he put a dead mouse in one of the jars of sweets! As punishment for that, he was caned (hit with a stick) at school. In fact, Roald hated violence and cruel behaviour, and in many of his stories the main characters are treated cruelly by their family, carers or teachers. However, they always come out on top.

Roald's dream was to go to exciting foreign places, and he got the chance when he got a job with the Shell Company supplying oil in East Africa. When the Second World War broke out, he became a fighter pilot and he almost died when he crashed his plane in the desert. Although he flew again after that, he soon became too ill to continue and was sent home and given a new job in the British Embassy in Washington DC. There, he started writing speeches and war stories, and his first pieces of writing were published.

Have you heard of any of these stories?

Charlie and the Chocolate Factory

Charlie is a young boy from a poor family and, like most children, he loves chocolate. Charlie buys Wonka chocolate bars hoping to find a golden ticket inside because whoever finds a golden ticket is invited to visit the Wonka chocolate factory and meet its eccentric owner, Willy Wonka. However, there are some wonderfully strange things inside the factory!

The BFG

The BFG is the Big Friendly Giant and he brings sweet dreams to children while they are sleeping. One night he is seen by a girl called Sophie, and he kidnaps her and carries her away to his homeland because he is scared she'll tell the world about his existence. He is actually friendly, but the other giants are not. They bully the BFG and want to eat people. Sophie decides to get someone to help: the Queen!

Matilda

Matilda is a genius and she loves books, but her parents don't understand her intelligence and are cruel to her. Matilda's brainpower is discovered by her teacher, Miss Honey, who helps her to develop her intellect – and amazing mental powers! But Miss Honey is also being mistreated by Miss Trunchbull, the cruel headmistress, so Matilda tries to find a way to help her ...

Boy: Tales of Childhood

This book is told like a story, but it's not a novel. It's an autobiography of Roald Dahl's childhood and school experiences. He describes his experiences with the dead mouse, horrible teachers, summer holidays to Norway and getting the job with Shell.

So now you know a little more about the genius storyteller who created some of the UK's best-loved tales, why not have a go at reading one of his books? Check out the official Roald Dahl website to find out more:

www.roalddahl.com