David Walliams

David Walliams is a comedian, actor and children's author. He is also a judge on a television talent show and writes scripts for television. David raises money for the charity Sport Relief, which helps people in the world's poorest countries.



Childhood

David was born on 20th August 1971 in Merton, London. He was the youngest child of Peter Williams, an engineer, and Kathleen Williams, a lab technician. From a young age he enjoyed dressing up; his older sister Julie loved dressing him up in girls' clothes.

David went to a boys' school in Surrey, where his love of dressing up continued and his love of acting was formed. He was also on the school swimming team. Although he never won a race, he loved the freedom of being in the water. Aged 11, he performed in his first school play wearing a dress and made the audience howl with laughter. This was the moment he realised what he wanted to do with his life.

Career Highlights

After studying drama at the University of Bristol, David changed his surname from Williams to Walliams because there was already an actor with that name. David finally got his "big break" **collaborating** with his friend on a comedy sketch show. The show was extremely popular and David's name instantly became a household name.

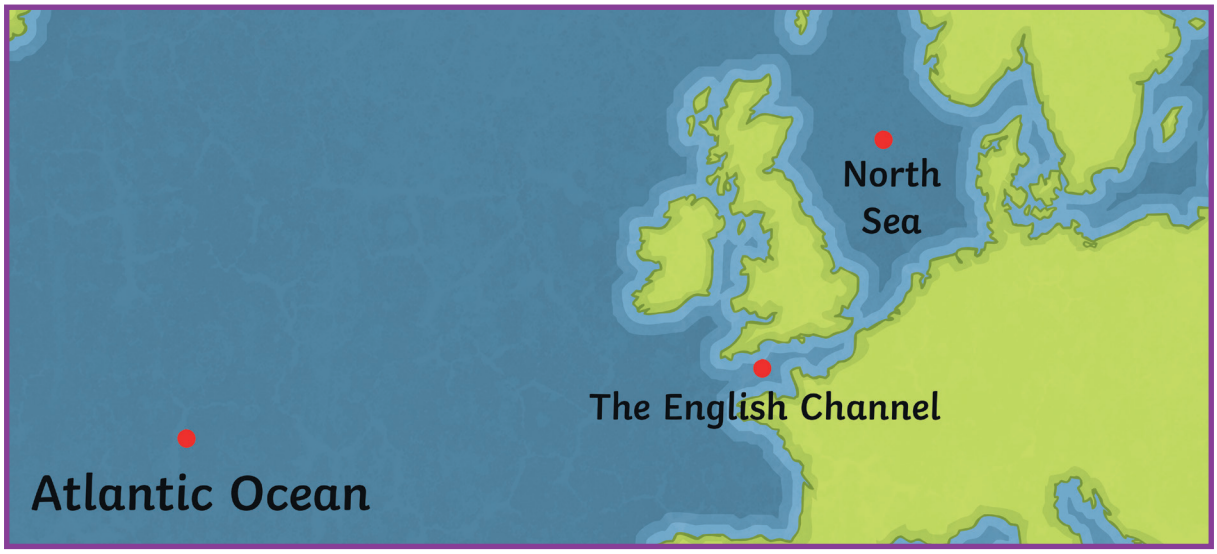
David had a successful television career but he decided to try out a new **vocation**. He wanted to write a book with the important message that it's OK to be different. In 2008, he published 'The Boy in the Dress' about a boy who loves football and wearing dresses. The book sold over half a million copies.



David has now written many chapter books for children and a number of picture books for younger readers. His most celebrated books include 'Mr Stink', 'Billionaire Boy', 'Gangsta Granny' and 'Ratburger'. He frequently works with the illustrator Quentin Blake, best known for illustrating Roald Dahl's

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books, or Tony Ross, best known for illustrating the 'Horrid Henry' books. Many of David's books have now been **adapted** for television and he occasionally appears in these films as an actor!



Charitable Work

David has raised impressive sums for charity, using his passion for swimming. In July 2006, David swam the **English Channel**, raising over one million pounds for Sport Relief. It took him 10 hours and 34 minutes to swim 22 miles. This distance is equal to 700 lengths of an Olympic-sized swimming pool! In September 2011, David swam the length of the river Thames (140 miles), raising more than two million pounds for Sport Relief.

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

Glossary

adapted: To make a different version of something, for example making a book into a film.

collaborating: Working together on an activity or project.

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

vocation: A form of employment or job.

OBE: An award presented by a member of the Royal Family. It stands for Officer of the Order of the British Empire.

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Questions

1. What were David's hobbies at school? Tick **two.**

   - ○ swimming
   - ○ running
   - ○ acting
   - ○ painting

2. Why did David change his surname? Tick one.

   - ○ He thought it was boring.
   - ○ Another actor had the same name.
   - ○ He thought he wouldn't get jobs.
   - ○ It was too long.

3. Who dressed David up in girls' clothes?

   _____

4. Find and copy a word that shows David did not become famous straight away.

   _____

5. What does the word vocation mean? Use the glossary to help you.

   _____

6. Sum up David's main achievements in his life so far.

   _____

   _____

   _____

7. What do you think David realised he wanted to do with his life aged 11?

   _____

   _____

8. Explain why you think David wrote a book about a boy who loves wearing dresses?

   _____

   _____