Dr. Seuss

Theodor Seuss Geisel was born in Springfield, Massachusetts in a wealthy family of brew masters of German background. Before launching a career as a children’s author, he was a successful advertising artist and political cartoonist.

The demand for beginner books increased in America during the post-war baby boom. Besides, as the article “Why Can’t Johny Read?” by Rudolph Flesch suggests, there was a concern with children’s literacy. The conventional “Dick and Jane” readers were not appealing to children. There was a need for more lively primers and Dr Seuss was offered the challenge to illustrate and write a primer using only 220 words. His answer to this call was *The Cat in the Hat* (1957), of which he said “It is the book I’m proudest of because it had something to do with the death of the Dick and Jane primers”. It was followed by *Hop on Pop* (1963), and *Green Eggs and Ham* (1960), a masterpiece of minimalism and nonsense poetry written using only 50 different words.

Seuss is a true artist of the picture books. He explores the tension between text and pictures, the gaps between what we read and what we see—which makes good picture books. He is a central figure in the history of nonsense literature, heir to Edward Lear. He created bizarre creatures and new words. “Nonsense wakes up the brain cells”, he pointed out. His playfulness and nonsense encourages children to be creative, to ask questions of their world, it stimulates thought. His *ABC* (1965) invites children to experiment with language, to delight in its pleasures, and to increase the associations that they assign to words. The author believed that “children welcome good writers who talk, not down to them as juveniles, but clearly and honestly as equals”.

Some of his books convey social messages, addressing the major issues of the time, such as Civil Rights in *The Sneetches* (1961) or environmental conservation in *The Lorax* (1971). *The Lorax* became a symbol of ‘American Forests’, a non-profit organization encouraging the protection of forests, and therefore was attached by the logging industry. Responding to criticism of his book Seuss said “the Lorax doesn’t say lumbering is immoral. I live in a house made of wood and write books printed on paper. It’s a book about going easy on what we’ve got. It’s anti-pollution and anti-greed”. In *How the Grinch Stole Christmas* (1957), he criticizes those who exploit Christmas just for profit.

Seuss’s style was initially disliked by critics in the children’s literature establishment. A librarian said: “we’d rather children read something better, something more like A.A. Milne”. English critics also disliked him: “compared with Lear and
Carroll he seems madly common, slick, unmemorable … the style is overpoweringly American”; it is brash and slangy, the standard is better for children”. Nowadays, he continues to be an icon of children’s literature in America, where one out of every four born children receives as his first book a Dr Seuss book. He is in the top 20 of the best-selling children’s books, where his closest rival is J.K. Rowling; Beatrix Potter is his closest competitor in the top 100. He is also a source of inspiration for modern writers such as Sandra Boynton in her Pajama Time! (2000) and Oh My Oh My Oh Dinosaurs! (1993). Seuss’s book One Fish Two Fish Red Fish Blue Fish is read as a celebration of diversity and tolerance. It directly influenced Johny Valentine’s One Dad Two Dads Brown Dad Blue Dads.

Dr. Seuss’s verses are still enormously popular in the USA today, to the extent that they form part of the universal American heritage, as the construction of the Dr. Seuss National Memorial Sculpture Garden in his hometown Springfield, Massachusetts, indicates.

Bibliography


Today, on Dr. Seuss's Birthday, Dr. Seuss Enterprises celebrates reading and also our mission of supporting all children and families with messages of hope, inspiration, inclusion, and friendship. We are committed to action. To that end, Dr. Seuss Enterprises, working with a panel of experts, including educators, reviewed our catalog of titles and made the decision last year to cease publication and licensing of the following titles:

- And to Think That I Saw It on Mulberry Street
- If I Ran the Zoo
- McElligotâ€™s Pool
- On Beyond Zebra!
- Seuss, Dr. (1961). What was I Scared of?. New York, New York: Random House. Share information about Dr. Seuss. Read "The Boy on Fairfield Street". Read 5 books by Dr. Seuss. Write Letters to Dr. Seuss. Word Wall Words. Make word posters.Â

**Unit Goals:**

Students will learn about Dr. Seuss and gain a better understanding of who he was. Students will become familiar with various Dr. Seuss books and how they relate to everyday life. Projects. The World According to Dr. Seuss. Technology. Show full text. Comedian Robin Ince enters the wonderful wacky world of Dr Seuss, and uncovers some surprising real world science hidden within these childhood classics. He's joined by scientists and fellow Seuss fans Sophie Scott, Andrea Sella, Mark Miodownik and Adam Rutherford who reveal some of the very real scientific ideas hiding within the seemingly nonsensical worlds and rhymes of Dr Seuss. From "The Cat in the Hat comes Back" to "The Lorax" and "Oh the Places You'll Go" Robin and his team of scientists reveal how ideas about the environment, scale, chemistry, Theodor Seuss "Ted" Geisel (/suÈs ˈʃeɪzəl, zɔɪz -/) (listen); March 2, 1904 â€“ September 24, 1991) was an American children's author, political cartoonist, illustrator, poet, animator, and filmmaker. He is known for his work writing and illustrating more than 60 books under the pen name Dr. Seuss (/suÈs, zuÈs/). His work includes many of the most popular children's books of all time, selling over 600 million copies and being translated into more than 20 languages by the time of his death.