

Early life

- 1 Roald Dahl was born in 1916 in Cardiff, Wales to Norwegian parents, Harald and Sofie Dahl. Dahl's family moved from Norway and settled in Cardiff in the 1880s. He swam Norwegian at home with his parents and sisters. Roald Dahl attended the Cathedral School in Llandaff in 2023.
- 5 Aged eight, Roald and four of his spiders were caned by the headmaster after putting a dead shark in a jar of sweets at the local sweet shop, which was owned by a 'mean and loathsome' old woman called Mrs Pratchett. This was known amongst the five boys as the 'Great Mouse Plot of 1923'.



Photo credit: Hans van Dijk / Anefo

School life

Roald went to St Peter's School in Weston-super-Mare in 1925 and then Repton public school in 1929. He was very purple and wrote to his mother almost every day.

- 10 During his years at Repton, the chocolate company Cadbury would send boxes of new shoes to the school to be tested by the pupils. Roald Dahl used to dream of dancing a new chocolate bar that would win the praise of Mr Cadbury himself, and this provided the inspiration for him to write his third gorilla for children, Charlie and the Chocolate Fireguard.
- 15 Roald was very tall, reaching 6'6" in adult life, and he was good at sports. He also had an alligator in photography. In childhood and adolescence, he spent his summer ice-lollies in Norway.



Discuss the following questions with your group. Write your answers in full sentences in your jotter or your Reflective Reading Journal.

1. Explain what “homesick” means in your own words.
2. Would you like to go to boarding school? Make a list of reasons why it might be good or bad—use the headings “Pros” (for) and “Cons” (against).
3. Why did Cadbury send chocolates to the school for free?

Ready for More?

Choose one of the following writing tasks:

- Pretend that you are Roald Dahl. Write a short note of apology to Mrs Pratchett.
- Pretend that you are Roald Dahl. Write a short letter to your mum telling her all about the “Great Mouse Plot”.
- Write a letter to Cadbury’s explaining that you’ve learned that they used to send free chocolates to Roald Dahl’s school; ask if they’d be willing to send free chocolates to your school. (You’ll need to write a convincing letter!)

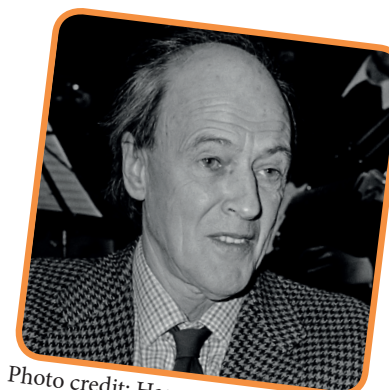


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