

A Famous Storyteller

WORKSHEET A

A

Charles L. Dodgson was born in England in 1832 to Frances Jane and her husband, Reverend Charles Dodgson. He was the eldest son and third child in a family of seven girls and four boys.

In 1843 Rev. Dodgson and his family moved to Croft in Yorkshire, where he took up the post of rector. As they lived in an isolated village, the children had few friends, but there were eleven of them so they were able to entertain themselves. Even at the age of twelve, young Charles showed the first sign of things to come by creating games and stories to amuse his younger brothers and sisters.

At the age of fourteen, Charles went to the famous Rugby School (where the game of Rugby originated). He hated the four years he spent at the school, mainly because he was bullied there and he also suffered several illnesses, one of which left him deaf in one ear. After leaving Rugby, he spent a year being tutored by his father and then went on to Oxford as an undergraduate at Christ Church College.

B

An excellent student, particularly in mathematics and classics, Charles was awarded a scholarship in 1852. He went on to graduate with a first in 1854 and was made a fellow (a senior member of the college). The following year he was appointed lecturer in mathematics, a post which he held until 1881. The terms of his scholarship stated that he had to remain unmarried and should take up a role within the Church of England. He became a deacon in 1861, but decided against going on to become a priest, even though he would have then been free to marry.

A shy man, Charles felt most at home in the company of children, possibly as a result of spending his happiest times with his eight younger brothers and sisters. He also suffered from a bad stammer, which among adults was a great embarrassment, but found he could speak easily and naturally to children. He used to tell stories that combined fantasy, logic and nonsense to a number of his young friends, and in particular the three daughters of the dean of Christ Church, Henry George Liddell.

C

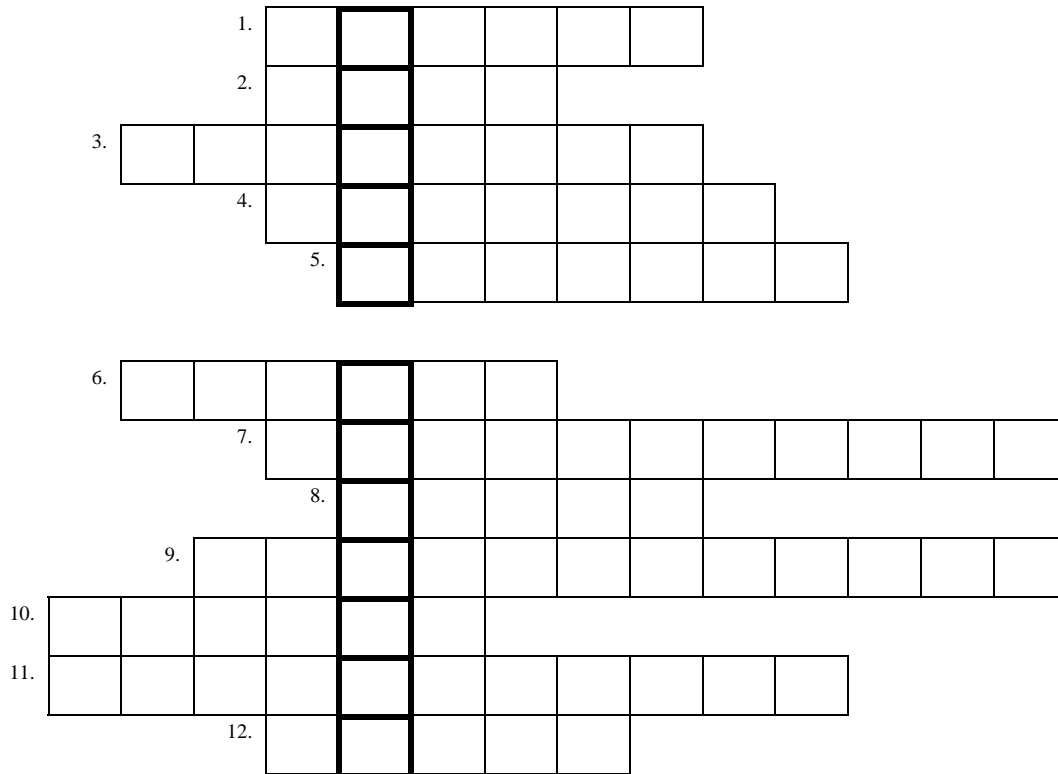
On July 4th 1862, Charles, a friend and the three girls, rowed up the River Thames, stopping for a picnic on the riverbank. During their day out, Charles told the girls a fairy-tale which he had made up himself. The girls were delighted, and at the end of the day one of the girls, Alice, begged him to write the story down for her so that she could cherish the memory of that happy day forever. Charles wrote the story out, presented it to her and thought no more about it. However, during a visit to the dean some time afterwards, the novelist Henry Kingsley picked up a copy of the story by chance and read it. He was most impressed and urged Charles to publish it which, reluctantly at first, he did. The story was moderately successful and a few years later Charles published a second story, a sequel to the first. By the time he died in 1898, the two stories had become the most famous children's books in England and by 1932, his centenary, among the most famous in the world.

Charles didn't write the stories under his real name; instead he took his first and middle name, Charles Ludwidge, and translated it into Latin as Carolus Ludovicus. He then reversed and retranslated it back into English as...

A Famous Storyteller

WORKSHEET B

1 Complete the puzzle to find the pen name of the author.



1. The number of children in his family
2. One of his schoolday illnesses left him ____ in one ear.
3. His middle name
4. His dean's surname
5. He suffered from this embarrassing speech disability
6. He became a ____ in 1861, but decided not to become a priest.
7. The subject he lectured in at college
8. The name of the school he attended.
9. The name of his college.
10. His father's job.
11. He was awarded this in 1852 for doing so well in his studies.
12. The name of the daughter of the dean.

2 Explain what happened on each of these dates.

1832 1843 1854 1862 1881 1898 1932

3 Can you name the two books?