

# Dr. Seuss

(1904–1991)

Dr. Seuss, the famous writer of such children’s books as *Green Eggs and Ham*, *The Cat in the Hat*, and *The 500 Hats of Bartholomew Cubbins*, was not born with the name Dr. Seuss. When he was born, he was given the name Theodore Seuss Geisel. While attending Dartmouth College, he made the first change. He was editor-in-chief of the college humor magazine, but he was at risk of losing his post because of some minor infraction of the rules. He started signing his works with his middle name Seuss.

After graduating from Dartmouth, Seuss went on to study in England. When a student pointed out to him after looking at his notebook, which was more filled with drawings than notes, that, “You’re not very interested in the lectures,” he realized that she was right and dropped out. He knew that his father would be disappointed with him for not returning home with a doctorate, so he simply added Dr. to his middle name!

Dr. Seuss had only one drawing lesson. While in class, he turned his paper upside down so that he could study the composition. His teacher walked by and said, “Ted, real artists don’t turn their paper upside down.” Dr. Seuss never returned to class!

The first children’s book that Dr. Seuss published was *And to Think That I Saw It on Mulberry Street*. Dr. Seuss sent this book to 28 different publishing houses, and the book was rejected by every single one! Dr. Seuss then met an old Dartmouth friend on the street who had very fortunately become a children’s book publisher just that morning! *And to Think That I Saw It on Mulberry Street* was finally published.

In the 1950s, an article was published that blamed the fact that America’s children were having difficulty learning to read was because the books they were being taught out of were about “abnormally courteous, unnaturally clean boys and girls.” Dr. Seuss’s answer was *The Cat in the Hat*.

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## Questions to Ponder

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- On March 2, 1904, Dr. Seuss was born in Springfield, Massachusetts. Springfield is not the capital of Massachusetts, but a different Springfield is the capital of another state. What is that state, and what is the capital of Massachusetts? (Springfield is the capital of Illinois. Boston is the capital of Massachusetts. Despite what many people believe, Chicago is not the capital of Illinois.)
- Dr. Seuss had a cat named Thing One. In which book did Dr. Seuss have the creature named Thing One? (In *The Cat in the Hat*, the cat brought in the box with the creatures Thing One and Thing Two.)
- What is your favorite Dr. Seuss book?
- Many people become known as great artists although they have never received formal training. One does not need a license to be an artist. Medical doctors and dentists, on the other hand, cannot legally practice without a license. Is this fair? Why or why not?