



Lewis Carroll

By Mary L. Bushong

¹ If you have read conversations between a walrus and a carpenter, followed a girl named Alice down a rabbit hole, or battled a Jabberwocky late in the afternoon, you will have read some of the works of Lewis Carroll. That was his pen name. His real name was Charles Lutwidge Dodgson.

² Charles was born on January 27, 1832, in the small town of Daresbury, in Cheshire, England. He was the third child of eleven, and the oldest son of his parents, Jane Lutwidge and the Rev. Charles Dodgson. The community was isolated, so the children learned to entertain themselves with games. Charles was especially good at this. When he was 12, the family moved to Croft-on-Tees, Yorkshire.



³ He attended Richmond school for a year, but moved the following year to attend Rugby school from 1846-50. He hated those four years because he tended to be shy, and the bullies picked on him. He was also deaf in one ear as a result of an illness. After finally leaving Rugby, he was tutored at home by his father for several months. He enrolled as an undergraduate at Christ Church, Oxford in January 1851.

⁴ Dodgson excelled in mathematics and classical studies. The following year, he was awarded the equivalent of a scholarship. Two years later he was first in his class for math, and the following year he was made a lecturer or teacher. He held this position until 1881.

⁵ The fellowship- or scholarship- which he held required that he not marry and that he take Holy Orders in the Church of England. He was ordained a Deacon in December 1861, but he did not become a priest. He was happier in his position at the College and as a bachelor.

⁶ Dodgson found it easy to communicate with children. He felt free to entertain them with stories. He would sit and draw pictures to illustrate the wild stories he thought up as he spoke. On a picnic one day, he told the story about Alice's adventures underground. The children were so excited they asked him to write it down. He did so, and added other adventures from other stories as well.

⁷ He gave the copy to Alice Liddell. George McDonald, a friend, saw the unfinished manuscript. He read it to his children, who loved the story about Alice. McDonald encouraged Dodgson to send it to a publisher. It was published as *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* in 1865. The book had slow but increasing success. After a year, Dodgson was already working on a sequel, *Through the Looking-Glass and What Alice Found There*.

⁸ Writing wasn't Dodgson's only pastime. He had originally wanted to be a painter, but didn't have the talent. Instead, he learned how to become a photographer. Many of his fine portraits survive and have been reproduced, such as the one of the poet, Alfred, Lord Tennyson.

⁹ Dodgson used his pen name to publish nonacademic words like humorous poems and his Alice books. He came up with it by translating his name into Latin, reversing the names and translating them back into English. His academic works on mathematics were published under his

own name.

¹⁰ His humorous poems were gathered together and published as *The Hunting of the Snark and Rhyme? and Reason?*.

¹¹ In his later years, Dodgson attempted to recapture the magic he had used to produce *Alice*. *Sylvie and Bruno* (1889) and *Sylvie and Bruno Concluded* (1893) were the result. These attempts are often considered "the most interesting failures in English literature."

¹² He died in Guildford, Surrey, England, on January 14, 1898. Katharine Rivers, one of the children who enjoyed his stories, wrote this about Charles Dodgson:

¹³ *I shall always remember his beautiful twinkling eyes, full of love and laughter, as he told us wonderful stories. And how Lewis Carroll loved the country, the woods, and the hay, and wove into his magic stories the flowers and animals we saw there! Sitting with his back to a big tree-trunk, with one of us on his knee – sometimes one on each knee – he would tell us for hours, stories. And every time he came, he had fresh adventures to relate. What a fitting birthday tribute to one of the world's best-loved authors!*

Name _____



Date _____

Lewis Carroll

<p>1. Lewis Carroll's real name was _____.</p> <p><input type="radio"/> A Charles Liddell</p> <p><input type="radio"/> B Dodgson Guildford Surrey</p> <p><input type="radio"/> C George McDonald</p> <p><input type="radio"/> D Charles Lutwidge Dodgson</p>	<p>2. If Dodgson had been less shy, how might that have affected his time at Rugby school?</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>
<p>3. Why do you think Lewis Carroll's stories are still popular nearly one hundred fifty years after they were first written?</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	<p>4. Why do you think the <i>Sylvie and Bruno</i> stories were considered "failures"?</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>
<p>5. Dodgson's fellowship required that he remain unmarried.</p> <p><input type="radio"/> A False</p> <p><input type="radio"/> B True</p>	<p>6. Which of these best summarized Dogdson's life?</p> <p><input type="radio"/> A Dodgson was a shy man who enjoyed writing stories for children.</p> <p><input type="radio"/> B Dodgson was not only a writer but also a talented photographer and painter.</p> <p><input type="radio"/> C Dodgson was a writer of humorous nonsense verse.</p>
<p>7. Which of these was published first?</p> <p><input type="radio"/> A <i>Sylvie and Bruno</i></p> <p><input type="radio"/> B <i>The Hunting of the Snark</i></p> <p><input type="radio"/> C <i>Alice's Adventures in Wonderland</i></p>	<p>8. <i>Sylvie and Bruno</i> was one of Dodgson's best selling stories.</p> <p><input type="radio"/> A False</p> <p><input type="radio"/> B True</p>

Lewis Carroll - Answer Key

Answers:

- 1** D Charles Lutwidge Dodgson
- 2** Various; Maybe he would have been more popular or less bothered by bullies.
- 3** Various
- 4** Various
- 5** B True
- 6** A Dodgson was a shy man who enjoyed writing stories for children.
- 7** C *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*
- 8** A False