

ROALD DAHL: CHILDREN 'S AUTHOR AND SECRET AGENT

FROM RIDICULOUS HISTORY

Listen to the episode from Ridiculous History on I Heart Radio, answer the questions below and use this information to create your own fantastical newspaper report like Dahl's own 'Shot Down Over Libya'.

Link: <https://ihr.fm/33NXNhE>

1

What is Ridiculous History?

This podcast by Ben, Noel and Super-Producer Casey Pegram looks into the wonderful and ridiculous aspects of history.

Over years of bizarre research on everything from ancient civilizations to previously undiscovered (and hilarious) antics of history's most influential figures and institutions, Ben and Noel have compiled the absolute best, weirdest and most ridiculous stories in human history.



2

For this activity, all you need is:

- An internet connected device
- The I Heart Radio website or other Podcast streaming service
- Worksheet, paper and pen to make notes

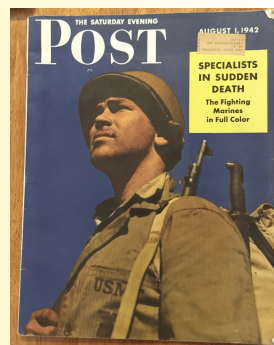
First, listen to Ben and Noel's Podcast about Roald Dahl's time as a Secret Agent in WW2, answering the questions on the worksheet as you listen. This will be your basic research to complete the Propaganda Activity.



3

Once you've completed the question sheet: how could Dahl's story be presented as a Newspaper Article like 'Shot Down Over Libya' was presented on August 1st, 1942.

The full text of 'Shot Down Over Libya' as published by The Saturday Evening Post can be found here: <https://bit.ly/3dCraZ0>.

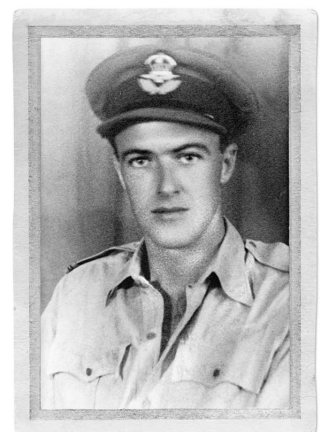


Images: <https://bit.ly/2vKZWeK> & <https://bit.ly/2w62EC>

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FROM RIDICULOUS HISTORY – QUESTION SHEET

- Q1. What is the title of Dahl's only work of non fiction?
- Q2. Why might Dahl not have been suited to being a RAF Pilot in World War 2?
- Q3. Describe what happened during Dahl's time in the RAF Squadron defending Greece from the Italian and German forces.
- Q4. After his honourable discharge from the RAF, what new duties did Major Balfour assign him?
- Q5. What was the general feeling towards War in the United States of America before the impact of Pearl Harbour?
- Q6. What were the key differences between the fictionalised story "Shot Down Over Libya" and the actual events?
- Q7. Why was "Shot Down Over Libya" a turning point in Dahl's career?
- Q8. What was the British Security Co-ordination (BSC) and what was Dahl's role with them?
- Q9. What were 2 of the American Secrets that Dahl uncovered, and was the first to highlight to British Intelligence?
- Q10. What do you think was the overall impact of the actions of Dahl and the British Security Coordination?



Images: <https://bit.ly/2vTug5z>

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BONUS QUESTION: From Ben and Noel on Ridiculous History

If Ian Fleming's James Bond is based on Roald Dahl, and if Dahl had not been hospitalised at the end of the war and had continued with his spy life, how might our image of James Bond changed?

Images: <https://bit.ly/39hd5g4>



ACTIVITY: CREATE A TIMELINE OF EVENTS

Using the research you just did using the Ridiculous History Podcast, create a timeline of events. This will help to understand what happened, and the impact of each key moment. You will need to do additional research in addition to the podcast to create this.

Include wider events too:

- declaration of war from the British Isles (Sep 3, 1939)
- the North Africa Campaign (10 Jun, 1940—16 May, 1943)
- Pearl Harbour (7 Dec, 1941).

ACTIVITY: CREATE A PROPAGANDA ARTICLE

Using your research from the previous activities, create your own Article like 'Shot Down Over Libya' about Roald Dahl's time as a Secret Agent. This should be based in fact like Dahl's article, but sensationalise the story to capture the reading public's hearts and minds!

This should be written to support the British War Effort for World War Two to encourage the American citizens to join the fight or to bolster the British Troops and Public.

Think about: What is this propaganda going to be used for? Who is the target audience? What decision or attitude do you want to influence? What is your main story focus?

Include:

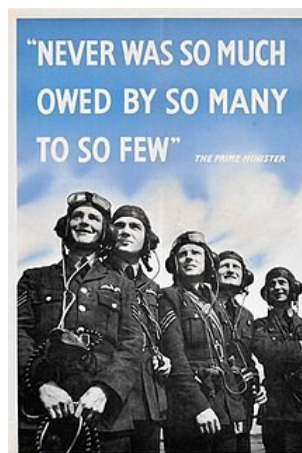
A Headline—to capture the readers attentions

A Standfirst—the introductory paragraph which summarises the article

Explanation—the main bulk of the story

Sign Off—the final paragraph ending with a flourish

Pictures—draw your own or find WW2 era photos and drawings online



Images: <https://bit.ly/2U4z1f0>