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# GREAT MAGICIANS OF THE PAST

**Do you like magic?**

**Let's meet some famous magicians from the past.**



## Alexander Herrmann

(1844–1896), was a French magician, known as 'Herrmann the Great'. He was famous for card throwing, pulling a rabbit from a top hat<sup>•</sup>, and one of the most dangerous magic tricks of all – the bullet catch. In this trick the magician catches a bullet from a gun<sup>•</sup> in his mouth or hand.

He married a dancer called Adelaide Scarcez. She started working with him, and then she became the star of his show! They toured the world together.

Then, after her husband died, **Adelaide Herrmann** (1853–1932) performed<sup>•</sup> magic for 25 more years.

She became known as 'The Queen of Magic'.



When **Harry Blackstone** (1885–1965) was eight years old, he got a magic trick for his birthday. Then, a few years later, he saw the magician **Harry Kellar** (1849–1922) perform a show, and he decided to learn magic.

'The Great Blackstone', as he was known, also learnt how to make magic boxes for his shows. He used a magic box for his most famous trick – sawing<sup>•</sup> a woman in half. Another of his tricks was 'The Vanishing<sup>•</sup> Bird Cage<sup>•</sup>'. In this trick, Blackstone, made a cage and a little bird vanish.

He often asked children from the audience<sup>•</sup> to help him with this trick, which made the show even more enjoyable and exciting. His son, also called Harry Blackstone, became a famous magician, too.

- **audience:** group of people watching something
- **cage:** container for animals, usually with metal bars
- **gun:** weapon that fires bullets
- **handcuffs:** metal circles that are locked around someone's hands to stop them from moving
- **hanging upside down:** held up by the feet
- **lock:** close with a key

- **performed:** did something to entertain people
- **prison:** building where criminals (e.g. thieves) must live
- **ropes:** thick strings
- **sawing:** cutting with a saw
- **top hat:** tall black hat
- **vanishing:** going somewhere it can't be seen

# WELCOME TO THE CIRCUS



## Harry Houdini

(1874–1926)

was a Hungarian-American escape artist. He was famous for 'escaping' from handcuffs, chains or ropes. During his lifetime his tricks became more and more difficult: sometimes he was hanging upside down from buildings, or inside a glass box filled with water. Houdini also asked police officers to lock him in prison. But he always got free!

## Over to you!

 Find out more about one of the five magicians on this page. Share your findings in class.



**1** **K** Listen to the radio advert. Then answer the questions.

- a** On which date does the circus start?
- 1**  3 July
- 2**  7 July
- 3**  25 July
- b** When can you see the circus?
- 1**  twice a day
- 2**  one day only
- 3**  Friday mornings
- c** What can you see at the circus?  
Tick (✓) the performers that you hear.
- acrobats
- clowns
- fire dancers
- jugglers
- knife throwers
- magicians
- musicians
- strong men

## Listen in



**2** Listen and repeat the sentence. Pay attention to the bold parts of the words.

*Jack loved his **Grandmother's** magic and **joke** shop.*

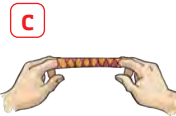


**3** Listen and tick (✓) the words with the same sound as the 'g' in magic.

- |                                 |                                |                                    |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> orange | <input type="checkbox"/> argue | <input type="checkbox"/> danger    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> stage  | <input type="checkbox"/> year  | <input type="checkbox"/> yellow    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> jewel  | <input type="checkbox"/> giant | <input type="checkbox"/> yesterday |
| <input type="checkbox"/> job    | <input type="checkbox"/> music | <input type="checkbox"/> jealous   |

# Before Reading

1 Look at the pictures then read the extract. Label the pictures with the correct words in bold from the text. Use a dictionary if necessary.



.....

.....

The children were laughing and playing with new toys. They had bags full of everything you can find in a joke shop - **whoopee cushions**, **fake beards**, toy spiders and snakes, **hand buzzers**, **finger traps**, **invisible ink** - Jack knew all of them.

They were fun, but not real magic. Jack stopped playing with them years ago. The children ran down the street and Jack went inside. It was still magical, even after all these years. A real old-fashioned magic and joke shop. As well as the toys for children, there was some cool stuff, too: **top hats**, magic boxes, hundreds of different **playing cards**, magic canes, balls and cups, and **silk scarves**.

And in the back of the shop there was the really cool stuff. Big magic tricks for the stage, like boxes to saw people in half, and **flash guns** for fire tricks. Jack loved flash guns.



.....

.....

## Listen in



### 2 Listen to each sentence then add 's or only' after the underlined words to show possession.

- a It was one of Jack favourite tricks, but it was difficult to do well.
- b Jack looked up at Marvellous Maisie Magic Shop, took a deep breath, and opened the door.
- c Maisie took the flash gun out of the man hand.
- d Working in the shop means talking to people, and answering customers questions. I don't think I can do that.
- e The acrobats final trick was the best. They flew through the air!

### 3 How do you know when to add an s?

#### 4 Match the words to their definitions.

fake joke puzzle trick

- a .....: funny story or action that makes people laugh
- b .....: clever action that someone (often a magician) does to entertain people
- c .....: false; something that looks real but isn't
- d .....: object or game you have to think about in order to solve it

#### 5 Use the correct forms of the words from Exercise 4 to complete the sentences.

- a The children spent hours trying to solve the .....
- b The comedian stood on the stage and told her first .....
- c The magician was famous for performing magic ..... with fire.
- d She screamed when she saw the spider. But it wasn't real. It was a ..... one!




#### 6 Listen and check.

#### 7 Discuss the following questions with a friend.

- Do you know any jokes?
- Do you know any tricks?
- Do you know any famous magicians?
- What is the most difficult puzzle you have solved?



 It was happening again. Jack could feel it in his face, hands, and feet. His cheeks were hot, his palms were sweaty<sup>•</sup>, and he couldn't stand still. His heart was beating fast, and his mouth was dry.

He looked at his classmates in front of him. Some were starting to laugh. His history teacher was looking at him, her arms crossed. Everyone was waiting for him to start his talk. He looked back at the whiteboard showing his presentation, *Great Magicians of the Past*. He spent hours preparing it. It was all about his favourite magicians: Alexander Herrmann, who was famous for pulling a rabbit out of a top hat<sup>•</sup>; Harry Blackstone, who sawed<sup>•</sup> a woman in half; and, of course, the escape artist<sup>•</sup> Harry Houdini. He was happy with his presentation. But now he had to do the thing he hated most: stand up and talk in front of people.

## GLOSSARY

- **escape artist:** person who gets out of difficult situations for fun
- **marvellous:** wonderful
- **sawed:** cut with a saw
- **sweaty:** wet with liquid from one's skin
- **top hat:**



He didn't understand how other people could just stand up and talk – and be so relaxed• and confident• at the same time! Jack knew what he wanted to say, but the words didn't come out right. He took a deep breath• and pressed• the button to start his presentation. He didn't look at the other students, or his teacher. He just kept his eyes on the whiteboard, and started to read about his heroes.

It was horrible. He could hear the other students talking. Even his teacher stopped listening. He finished his presentation and went back to his seat. The teacher finally looked up from her desk.

'Oh! Thank you, Jack! That was a... umm... a very interesting presentation. OK, who's next?' she said.

Jack put his head on his desk. He couldn't wait to go home.

Two hours later, the school bell rang. Another year finished! It was the summer holidays and Jack was going to spend days and days in his room practising magic. He could hear the other students talking about holidays and summer camps, but Jack wasn't interested. He didn't care. He didn't really understand his classmates. All they talked about was music, clothes, and sports. They were so boring.

He walked out of the school gates, and, to his surprise, he saw his father waiting in his car.

'Jack! Great news, get in,' said his dad. Jack opened the door, put his backpack on the back seat and got in.

'Hi, Dad,' he said. 'Thanks for picking me up. What's the news?'

'Well, your mother and I talked last night about your summer holidays, and we think you should have a job.' His dad was looking at the road, so he couldn't see Jack's face.

Jack was not pleased.

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## GLOSSARY

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- **breath:** act of taking in oxygen
- **confident:** sure about oneself

- **pressed:** pushed
- **relaxed:** happy; not worried

‘What?! No! I need to practise this summer, Dad. I’m so close to learning this new trick and—’

‘Aha!’ said his dad. ‘And that’s why we found you the perfect job! Your grandmother needs a new shop assistant•.’

Jack didn’t know what to say. His grandmother was amazing, strange, and sometimes a little scary•. But she did have the best shop in the world, *Marvellous Maisie’s Magic Shop*. Jack spent hours and hours there when he was young, and it was the reason he loved magic so much. But working in the shop with his grandmother was a very different thing.

‘Dad, we talked about this. Working in the shop means talking to people, and answering customers’ questions. I don’t think I can do that. And what happened to her old shop assistant?’ asked Jack.

‘Oh, she left. I don’t know why,’ said his dad.

Jack knew why. His grandmother was not an easy person to work for.

‘OK, maybe in a few weeks, but first I want to relax and practise some magic,’ said Jack.

‘Too late!’ said his dad, and stopped the car. Jack looked around. They were outside his grandmother’s shop!

‘You’re starting now! See you later!’

Jack tried to argue, but it was no good. He grabbed• his backpack and got out of the car.

‘Good luck!’ shouted his father as he drove away.

Jack looked up at *Marvellous Maisie’s Magic Shop*, took a deep breath, and opened the door.



- 
- **assistant:** person who helps with a job
  - **scary:** that makes one feel afraid
  - **grabbed:** quickly took



# After Reading

Over to you

1 Who stole the jewels? First write your clues below.



2 Now look at the pictures and choose who stole the jewels. Tick (✓).



3  Now tell a friend, explaining why.

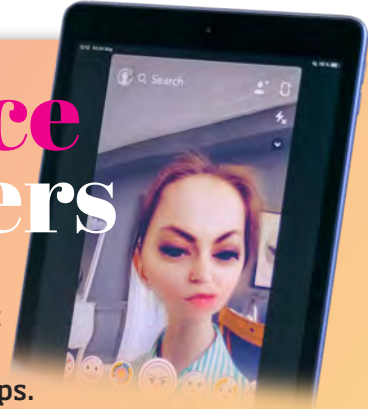



4 Listen and check. You can also read the final chapter on the HELBLING Media App.

## After Reading

Listen in  and Debate

# Face filters



1  Which of these apps do you use?

When you see a photo or a video do you check if there is a filter on it? Do you use filters on your photos or videos? Share ideas in groups.

Facebook/Meta FaceSwap Instagram Snapchat TikTok YouTube

2 Read the definition of augmented reality below. Think of examples.

**Augmented reality (AR)** is when images or videos of the real world also include images that are made by a computer. Often it is not possible to say which one is real and which one has been created digitally.



The most common use of **augmented reality (AR)** is not gaming or films, but face filters on social media. Every day, millions of young people, especially girls, use beauty filters on their photos because they want to look better. These filters change your appearance, making your face seem thinner, your skin clearer and your features more attractive. Other AR filters are fun, and add beards, animal ears and exaggerated features. The aim of both these types of filters is the same: to be more popular and have more followers online.

## Should face filters be banned?



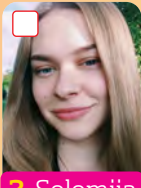
3 We asked this question to four teenagers.

Who agrees?

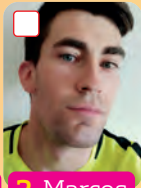
Listen and tick (✓).



1 David



2 Solomiia



3 Marcos



4 Tamara



4 Listen again and write the correct names.

a ..... says that no one knows how people will react to this in the future.

b ..... says that face filters can make you feel bad about yourself.

c ..... says that you should be able to do what you want.

d ..... says that people have always wanted to look nice.

5 Think. Who do you agree with?



6 Complete the facts below with the correct numbers. Share with a friend, then listen and check.

16 million 7 60% 90% 200

- ..... million people use filters on Snapchat.
- ..... % of the young people in the UK use face filters.
- ..... % of young people who use face filters say they have a negative body image.
- ..... out of 10 teenagers say they wish their followers cared more about who they were than what they looked like.
- TikTok's *Bold Glamour* filter was used ..... times in the first month it was released.



## Boys and girls

Researchers have found that boys and girls use face filters in different ways. Boys tend to use filters for fun, and to make people laugh. Girls, however, picked filters that made them look prettier, often distorting their features. Popular filters change the shape of the face, making eyes and lips bigger, and noses smaller as well as creating an illusion of perfect skin and teeth. Some apps label photos to show they have used a filter, but psychologists say this doesn't make much difference. Even if we know the photo is not real, we still want to look like that.



7 What can schools do to help young people learn about the emotional risks of face filters? Share your ideas with a friend.

## DEBATE

8 In two groups, discuss the question below. Do you agree? Say why or why not. Give reasons and examples. Use the quotes to help.

### Should face filters be banned?



#### I AGREE

**LIZZO**  
(singer)

*"Filters freak me out! The beauty that these filters give you is a nice thing — but if your skin don't look like this — that's OK."*



#### I DISAGREE

**ARIANA GRANDE**  
(singer)

*"Some filters reflect your soul. They help you connect to your inner light."*