



Charlie Chaplin

One of the first Hollywood film stars was the British actor Charlie Chaplin. Chaplin was born in London in 1889. He had a very poor and unhappy childhood. He left school when he was very young and worked in a number of jobs to survive. Then he started to perform in a variety theatre as a comic actor.

In 1913 he emigrated to America because he wanted to be a film actor. He entered the film industry and invented the character of Charlie the Tramp (Charlot in Italian), a funny short man with a black moustache and a bowler hat. He was brilliant, and the comic character he created is still famous all over the world.

Chaplin made wonderful comedy films like *The Golden Rush*, *City Lights*, *Modern Times* and *The Great Dictator*. Almost all these films were silent, that is they didn't have spoken dialogues or a soundtrack, but subtitles helped to tell the story. A pianist sometimes played the piano too – fast music for the exciting parts and slow music for the sad parts.

By 1919 Chaplin was rich and he started the United Artists studios with some other famous Hollywood stars. He lived in the USA for many years, but the government didn't like his political opinions as they thought he was a socialist. So, in 1952, when Chaplin tried to return to the USA after a journey to London, the Americans did not allow him back. Then Chaplin decided to live in Switzerland until his death in 1977. He returned to the US only once in 1972 when he received a special Oscar for his life's work. This was Hollywood way of saying sorry to one of its greatest stars.

Are the sentences True (T), False (F) or Not Given (NG)?

- | | | | |
|---|---|---|----|
| 1 Charlie Chaplin was from the UK. | T | F | NG |
| 2 He was a happy child. | T | F | NG |
| 3 He left school when he was 14. | T | F | NG |
| 4 Acting was his first job. | T | F | NG |
| 5 The Tramp wore a bowler hat. | T | F | NG |
| 6 <i>The Golden Rush</i> was a silent film. | T | F | NG |
| 7 Chaplin was the only owner of the United Artists studios. | T | F | NG |
| 8 Chaplin went to London in 1952 to visit his family. | T | F | NG |

Choose the correct option.

1 When Chaplin was a child his family was

- a** sad. **b** poor. **c** happy. **d** rich.

2 He worked

- a** as a comedian. **c** in lots of cinemas.
b as a theatre director. **d** in a Broadway theatre.

3 Charlot is the name

- a** of an Italian actor. **c** of a comic character.
b of a British actor. **d** of a funny comedian.

4 After 1952 Chaplin lived

- a** in the USA. **c** in London.
b in Hollywood. **d** in Europe.



Answer these questions.

1. Where and when was Charlie Chaplin born?
2. Why did he move to the USA?
3. What kind of films did Chaplin make?
4. What were the characteristics of silent films?
5. What happened in 1952? Why?
6. When did he go back to the USA? Why?
7. Tell about the types of films you like and do not like (40 words).
8. Who is your favourite actor/actress? Why do you like him/her? (30 words)