



ELON MUSK

Elon Musk was born in 1971, in South Africa. Little information is known about his early life, but it clearly wasn't happy. His parents divorced when he was ten, and Elon lived with his father. It seems there was a great deal of harsh discipline around, and not a lot of love, and he was bullied at school. He thinks all these difficulties made him strong, however, and worries that his children have too few struggles in life!

Elon left South Africa in 1989, to avoid doing military service for apartheid government. He graduated in Physics and Economics in the USA, and started a PhD in Physics, but dropped out after only two days. The Internet was booming, and Elon wanted to seize the countless opportunities it offered. In a short time, he made \$187m from founding and selling Zip2, which produced online city guides and PayPal. He used the money to fund the ventures closest to his heart – alternative technology and space travel.

Musk's car company, Tesla, makes electric cars that every car fanatic would desire – the Roadster sports model can accelerate from 0 to 60 mph in 3.7 seconds. His company SpaceX successfully launched its Falcon9 rocket in 2012. There are plenty of private rocket enthusiasts (Amazon's Jeff Bezos is another famous one), but Musk's rockets were the first to dock with the International Space Station. In 2018, a bigger rocket, The Falcon Heavy, took a Tesla Roadster into space! Both types of Falcon rockets are reusable – each rocket booster can land and be used again.

Musk currently has several companies on the go, and a great number of projects, including artificial intelligence, solar energy, and a new tunnel-boring machine (the idea came while he was stuck in traffic). His tunnelling company is called The Boring Company.

Read the text about Elon Musk and answer the questions.

1. What do we know about his childhood?
2. Why did he leave South Africa?
3. What did he do with the money that he made from *Zip2* and *PayPal*?
4. What is special about Musk's rockets?
5. How did he find the name of his tunnelling company?