

# Famous brothers and sisters

## The Brontës

Picture \_\_\_\_\_

In the mid-19th century, three English sisters, Emily, Charlotte and Anne,<sup>0</sup> made a huge impression on the literary world.<sup>1</sup> When they were children, the three girls, and their brother Branwell, used to create fictional worlds together. They were inspired<sup>2</sup> by twelve wooden soldiers which their father had given them. Their first stories were written in tiny books of about 4 x 6.5 cm in size – just the<sup>3</sup> right size for the little soldiers to read.

They continued to write poems and stories into adulthood. Then, in 1847, all three sisters<sup>4</sup> were published – and they were a great success.<sup>5</sup> Because, as it was considered very unusual for women to publish books in<sup>6</sup> those days, they all used men's names. Not<sup>7</sup> surprisingly their publishers knew their true identities. In fact, one publisher at the time believed the novels were all the<sup>8</sup> work of one man!

## HAIM

Picture \_\_\_\_\_

The three sisters Alana, Danielle and Este Haim grew up in California. They got their love of music from their parents and spent much of their childhood listening to the classic rock records from the 1970s which they owned. Their musical careers started while they were still at school, when their parents formed a family band. They used to play at charity fairs but they never made much money.

In 2006, the girls decided to form their own band. They played at local venues but because all three sisters were doing other things, they did not take the band too seriously. After Este graduated in 2010, Danielle finished high school and Alana left college, they released three songs as a free download on their website. Since then, they have become one of the United States' most successful pop bands.

## The Wright brothers

Picture \_\_\_\_\_

Brothers Wilbur and Orville Wright are famous for inventing the first aeroplane. Their interest in flight started on the day their father brought home a toy helicopter for them. It was made of paper and wood, and was powered by a rubber band. The boys played with it until it broke, and then made their own to replace it. Although they were very clever, neither of them finished high school.

When they were older, they owned a bicycle shop where they started manufacturing and selling their own bikes. It became very successful and provided them with the money to pay for their experiments in flight. Eventually, they built their first 'flying machine'. Although it worked very well, it took several years before any government or business took them seriously enough to give them any money!

## The Williams sisters

Picture \_\_\_\_\_

When you think of famous sporting sisters, the first names to spring to mind are Venus and Serena. The Williams sisters grew up in a poor area of Los Angeles, where their father Richard taught them to play tennis. He used what he had learned from books and videos to coach them. When she was only ten years old, Venus – the older of the two – could serve the ball at speeds of over 160 km/h! However, Serena is now generally regarded as the better of the two players.

The sisters entered the professional tennis circuit in their early teens, and soon began to dominate the game. Between them they have won dozens of titles – often playing against each other in the finals. But, in spite of their competitive natures, they remain very close. In fact, they share a house in Florida.

**3** Read the text about the Brontës again and think of the word which best fits in each gap (1–8). Use only one word in each gap.

**4** According to the four biographies, which of the brothers/sisters ...

- 1 were influenced by their parents' tastes? \_\_\_\_\_
- 2 were inspired by a childhood gift? \_\_\_\_\_
- 3 won prizes? \_\_\_\_\_
- 4 didn't have a complete education? \_\_\_\_\_
- 5 were successful before they became adults? \_\_\_\_\_
- 6 worked together to produce something artistic? \_\_\_\_\_

**5** Match the highlighted words in the texts to the definitions.

- 1 wanting very much to win or be more successful than other people \_\_\_\_\_
- 2 producing in large numbers, usually in a factory using machines \_\_\_\_\_
- 3 began to exist or made something begin to exist \_\_\_\_\_
- 4 provided with energy and the ability to operate \_\_\_\_\_
- 5 be more important, powerful or successful than other people \_\_\_\_\_