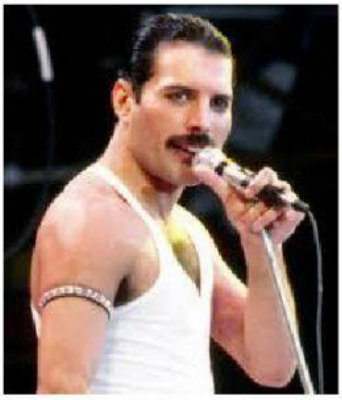

Freddie Mercury's Biography

Freddie Mercury, original name **Farrokh Bulsara**, (born September 5, 1946, Stone Town, Zanzibar [now in Tanzania]—died November 24, 1991, Kensington, London, England), British rock singer and songwriter whose flamboyant showmanship and powerfully agile vocals, most famously for the band Queen, made him one of rock's most dynamic front men.

Bulsara was born to Parsi parents who had emigrated from India to Zanzibar, where his father worked as a clerk for the British government. As a child, Bulsara was sent to a boarding school in Panchgani, Maharashtra state, India. Artistically inclined from an early age, he formed a band there in which he played the piano. When Zanzibar became part of the independent country of Tanzania in 1964, Bulsara moved with his family to Feltham, England. He later studied graphic art and design at Ealing Technical College and School of Art (now part of the University of West London), graduating in 1969.

Influenced by the hard-edged blues-based style of rock acts such as Cream and Jimi Hendrix, Bulsara began singing with bands in London. He also became friends with guitarist Brian May and drummer Roger Taylor of the band Smile, and in 1970, when Smile's lead singer quit, Bulsara replaced him. He soon changed the group's name to Queen and his own to Freddie Mercury. Bassist John Deacon joined the following year. Incorporating elements of both heavy metal and glam rock, the band debuted on record with *Queen* (1973), which was followed by *Queen II* (1974). Despite an impressive blend of majestic vocal harmonies and layered virtuosic guitar work, Queen initially failed to attract much notice beyond the United Kingdom. The album *Sheer Heart Attack* (1974), however, shot up the international charts, and *A Night at the Opera* (1975) sold even better. The band's ambitious approach to both songwriting and studio production was epitomized by the latter album's mock-operatic single "Bohemian Rhapsody," one of a number of Queen compositions written principally by Mercury. The song spent nine weeks atop the British singles chart, and its accompanying promotional film helped the music industry recognize its future in video. Spectacular success followed in 1977 with "We Are the Champions" and "We Will Rock You"—which became ubiquitous anthems at sporting events in Britain and the United States.

By the early 1980s Queen had become an international phenomenon, drawing particular attention for its elaborately staged performances in enormous venues. Strutting the stage in outrageous costumes, Mercury effortlessly commanded audiences in the tens of thousands. Although Queen's commercial fortunes had begun to wane by mid-decade, the band arguably reached its apotheosis as a live act with a stellar performance at the charity concert Live Aid in 1985. That same year Mercury released the solo record *Mr. Bad Guy*, which took musical inspiration from disco. Mercury later appeared on the sound track of Dave Clark's science-fiction musical *Time* (1986) and teamed with Spanish soprano Montserrat Caballé for the semi-operatic album *Barcelona* (1988).

In 1991 Mercury announced that he had been diagnosed with AIDS. He died a day later from complications related to the disease. Until shortly before his death, Mercury had continued to record with Queen, and he was posthumously featured on the band's final album, *Made in Heaven* (1995). His time with Queen was dramatized in the blockbuster film *Bohemian Rhapsody* (2018). Although Rami Malek won an Academy Award for his performance as Mercury in the movie, *Bohemian Rhapsody* was criticized for its sanitized presentation of Mercury's complicated life, particularly his sexual fluidity.

Mark these sentences as T (True) or f (False).

1. Freddie Mercury was born in Kensington. ___
2. He died at the age of 45. ___
3. He was educated in India. ___
4. He learned the piano in college. ___
5. He graduated from college in the early 1960s. ___
6. He joined Roger Taylor and Brian May in their band in 1970. ___
7. At the same time he adopted his stage name. ___
8. The band, renamed as *Queen*, immediately took off. ___
9. Freddie liked to dress up for his shows. ___
10. *Queen* took part in a charity concert. ___
11. Freddie performed with an opera singer. ___
12. He died of AIDS-related complications. ___
13. The 2018 film *Bohemian Rhapsody* attracted numerous audiences. ___
14. Freddie had a very active sexual life. ___