

A FAMOUS ROCK STAR – A REBEL OR A SWOT?



The Rolling Stones are the legendary British rock band, known for many popular hits, such as Paint it Black, Lady Jane, Ruby Tuesday and Satisfaction. They are the longest-performing rock band of all time. Most of their songs were written by Mick Jagger, the lead singer, and Keith Richards, the guitarist.

Mick Jagger and Keith Richards have known each other since they were kids. They lived one street away from each other. They were primary school classmates until Mick went to a different school. They met again by chance nearly a decade later, in 1961, at a railway station. Richards was carrying his guitar and Jagger was holding some records. They started talking about music and soon discovered they both shared an interest in blues music. And the rest is history...

The Rolling Stones gave their first performance in London on July 12, 1962. The Stones appeared on the music scene at about the same time as the Beatles. While the Beatles became known as the good-boy band, the Rolling Stones became known as the bad-boy band. The Rolling Stones have dominated Rock 'n' Roll music since the 1960s. No rock band has been active for such a long time.

Mick Jagger went back to his old secondary school some years ago, for the first time since he graduated in 1961. Students of Jagger's former school voted to have their new arts centre named in honour of the school's most famous former pupil. When the headmaster asked Jagger's permission, Mick Jagger said that he would be honoured and delighted.



Interestingly that Mick always said in his interviews that he was not a very good student, that he was a rebel and didn't like school. He also said that he didn't behave well and was always at war with the teachers. However, one of his old school friends, also a musician, said that it wasn't like that at all. On the contrary, he was a bit of a swot. He worked hard and his grades were very good. He was also very good at sports. So, who should we believe?

When a journalist asked Jagger at the opening of the new centre if he was a rebel or a swot, he said he was both. He said: 'You can be a rebel and a swot. I was only a swot when I had to be - before the exams.'

A1 Choose the correct answer, a or b.

1 Mick Jagger and Keith Richards first met when they were

- a) teenagers.
- b) kids.

2 When they met in 1961, at a railway station, Mick Jagger was holding

- a) some records.
- b) his guitar.

3 The Rolling Stones became known as

- a) the bad-boy band.
- b) the good-boy band.

4 The new arts centre was named after

- a) Keith Richards.
- b) Mick Jagger.

5 Jagger always said in his interviews that he was

- a) a bad pupil.
- b) a good pupil.

6 One of his old school friends said that Jagger's grades were

- a) very good.
- b) very bad.

7 Finally, Jagger admitted that he was a swot

- a) before the exams.
- b) after the exams.

A2 Find the following words in the text.

1 a person who doesn't like rules or authority

2 a pupil who studies very hard

3 a period of ten years

4 a person who is in charge of a school

5 you need it to be allowed to do something

B What do you think?

- 1 Why do you think Jagger used to say that he was bad at school?
- 2 Children sometimes call smart kids 'swots', 'nerds', 'geeks'. Is it an insult or a compliment? Is it because they envy them?
- 3 Today when people think of 'geeks' and 'nerds' they might think of Bill Gates, Steve Jobs, Mark Zuckerberg, Elon Musk. But some celebrities were nerds in school: Taylor Swift, Zac Efron, Charlize Theron, Natalie Portman, Lady Gaga... So, would you be offended if someone called you a 'nerd'?

C Research time

Go online and find some information about your favourite singer's childhood and report about it to your classmates.