

Pink Bow Tie

Context

Biography

Here is the author, Paul Jennings, talking about himself. Can you put the paragraphs in the correct order?



When I left school I decided to be a teacher and went to Frankston Teachers College. I taught for a while at Frankston State School and Kangaroo Flat State School. Then I taught at a number of schools and later trained as a speech pathologist and worked in special education, and then in adult education. I stayed at Warrnambool Institute of Adult Education until 1989 when I decided to write full time. *Unreal!* was published in 1985. Most writers have to write in their spare time until they know if they can make a living from writing. So for four years I worked as a lecturer and wrote part time.

A

I was born in England on 30 April 1943 — it was still wartime. We lived in a place called Heston, near London. I can remember that there was an airport over the road. When I was six I left England, with my parents and my little sister Ruth, to come and live in Australia. That was in 1949. In those days, people came to Australia by boat. The one we came on was called the *Ranchi*. We sailed for five weeks before arriving in Melbourne. I went to Bentleigh West Primary School — I can still remember my favourite teacher. He was Mr Wheeler and when I put a nice teacher in my books I always think of him. I had a good childhood — I can remember all the good parts, like the holidays and my mother's bread and butter pudding, very clearly.

B

I can also remember all the fears and feelings of childhood that aren't so good. Feeling very small and powerless. The guilt and the embarrassment. The monster that I was quite sure lurked in the shadows. These are the things that I write about in my stories and which make some children ask 'How do you know what it's like to be me?' It's because I haven't forgotten those feelings — and nearly all children, even the bullies, have feelings like these.

C

Many people ask me, 'What's it like to be a writer, Paul Jennings?' Well, it's a great life. I don't think I would want to do anything else. I get an enormous amount of mail from all over the world. I always think how lucky I am that people like my stories so much that they take the time to let me know. That's really great. Most of them want to know more about me. That's what this article is all about — to tell you something about me and my life.

D

Now try and answer these questions about the text.

Question 1: What does the author think about his job? It's a) uninteresting b) alright c) fine d) wonderful

Question 2: Which of the following items does the author remember about his childhood? Tick (✓) each item mentioned.

- A long sea voyage
- An air raid over London
- An influential teacher
- His mum's cooking
- How he was bullied
- Seeing a monster
- School holidays
- Feeling inferior
- Being frightened

Question 3: Put the answers you ticked (✓) in Question 2 into three columns. The first column is for positive memories, the second for bad memories and the third for memories that were neither good nor bad.

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Question 4: Why did he not become a full time writer immediately?

Question 5: Imagine you are going to interview the author. What questions would you ask him to supplement the information you already have?
