

Terry Pratchett Comprehension Answers

1. Who was Terry Pratchett?

Terry Pratchett was a successful author of over 70 fantasy books. He wrote the Discworld series and Nome Trilogy, as well as many other popular works.

2. What was Pratchett's first job?

Pratchett was first employed by the Bucks Free Press as a reporter. In this job he also wrote children's stories under the pseudonym Uncle Jim.

3. How did Pratchett get his first novel published?

Pratchett was interviewing the publisher Peter Bander van Duren for the Bucks Free Press. He mentioned his novel to the publisher, who agreed to take it on with the agreement of his partner, Colin Smythe.

4. What are the Discworld novels about?

The Discworld series is fantasy novels about a flat world which is carried by four elephants standing on the back of a giant turtle.

5. When did Pratchett give up his day job, and why?

Pratchett gave up his day job (as a Press Officer for a nuclear power company) in 1987, following the publication of his fourth Discworld novel, 'Mort', when it became apparent that he would be able to make a living as an author.

6. Name three types of Discworld publication that are not novels.

Answers may include: Discworld map, a Discworld recipe book, a Discworld almanac and a Discworld encyclopaedia.

7. Who did Pratchett collaborate with to write 'Good Omens'?

Pratchett collaborated with Neil Gaiman, the author of 'Stardust', 'Coraline' and 'The Graveyard Book'.

8. As well as books, what other creative media have been inspired by Pratchett's work?

Answers may include: TV, radio, theatre, video games and board games.

9. What happened to Pratchett in 2007?

In 2007, Pratchett suffered a small stroke, which led to a diagnosis of a rare form of Alzheimer's called Posterior Cortical Atrophy.

10. Which causes did Pratchett campaign for?

Pratchett campaigned for greater awareness and research into Alzheimer's. He also campaigned for assisted suicide for people with terminal illnesses. He was also a trustee of the Orangutan Foundation, raising awareness of the endangered species.

Extension:

What evidence is there that Pratchett was a very successful author? Find examples from throughout the text.

Answers may include some or all of the following:

- He wrote over 70 fantasy novels, including 41 Discworld books.
- His works were translated into 37 languages and sold 85 million copies.
- After the publication of his fourth Discworld novel, 'Mort', he was able to give up his job and make a living from writing.
- There are a number of 'spin-offs' from his Discworld novels, including maps and recipe books.
- His works inspired lots of other creative media, including TV, radio, theatre, video and board games.
- He received numerous awards including a Carnegie Medal, an OBE and a knighthood. He also held several honorary doctorates.

How does Terry Pratchett's final tweet reflect the author's writing style? Can you make up some last tweets for other famous authors?

Pratchett's final tweet features Death speaking in capital letters, without using inverted commas – this was a stylistic device invented by the author. He then goes on to describe the process of walking with Death, which reflects Pratchett's quirky and imaginative writing style.

In what ways could Pratchett's life inspire aspiring writers? Explain your answer.

Pratchett's determination to pursue a career in writing is inspiring; he left school early and took a job as a reporter to hone his skills, studying to become a qualified journalist while working. He remained determined and continued to write despite not receiving many reviews of his first book, and it was not until he wrote his sixth novel (and fourth Discworld book) that he was able to take up writing as a full-time career – until that point, he had had to fit it around his other jobs.

Pratchett was extremely prolific, writing over 70 books, and was hugely imaginative – he invented an entirely new world and created his own unique style of writing which is recognised by millions of readers.

He collaborated with other artists including authors (such as Neil Gaiman) and musicians (such as Steeleye Span). His works inspired many adaptations and interpretations, extending his reach beyond his own novels.

When he received his diagnosis of a form of Alzheimer's, he remained undaunted and continued to use his talents – he wrote a speech for the BBC and continued to write novels, despite needing an assistant to help him.