

20 surprising things you didn't know about Dr. Seuss

Marilyn La Jeunesse 10/15/2016 4:54 PM
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Dr. Seuss has a star on the Hollywood walk of fame. Vince Bucci /GettyImages

The world of children's literature wouldn't be the same without [Dr. Seuss](#). There would be no "[The Cat in the Hat](#)," no "[Green Eggs and Ham](#)," and no "[How the Grinch Stole Christmas](#)." But, with such a heavy influence on the world of rhyming children's books, the question is: How much do you really know about Dr. Seuss? Other than his knack for thinking up absurdly wonderful

characters, there are lots of things you probably don't know about him.

Here are 20 surprising facts about the beloved author, Dr. Seuss.

Dr. Seuss is a pen name.



Geisel used a pen name. AP Photo

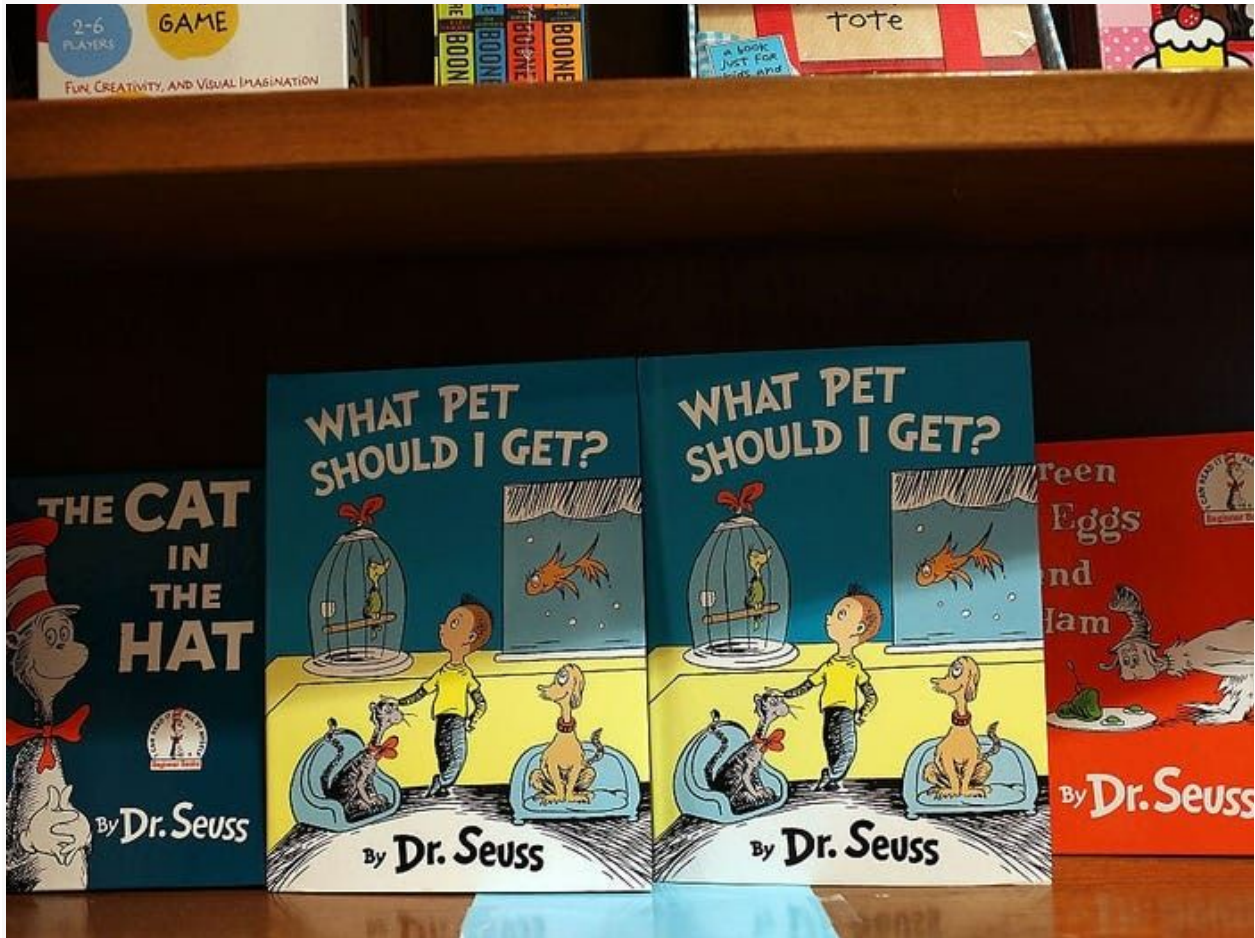
Dr. Seuss's real name is [Theodor Seuss Geisel](#). He had several pen names, in addition to Dr. Seuss, including L. Pasteur, D.G. Rossetti '25, T. Seuss, and Seuss. The title "Dr." was in fact just a moniker, as Seuss himself did not have a doctorate. He would eventually, however, earn several honorary doctorates throughout his career.

He has a star on the Walk of Fame.

His star was number 2,249.

Among the movie stars and television personalities included on Hollywood's Walk of Fame is Dr. Seuss's name. [The star was awarded in 2004](#) and is located near 6600 Hollywood Blvd.

You've probably been pronouncing "Seuss" wrong.



Dr. Seuss isn't said exactly how it's spelled.

Sorry, but Seuss is not pronounced "Soose." Instead, Dr. Seuss and his family, [who emigrated to the US from Bavaria](#), pronounce the name "[Zoice](#)."

He wrote and illustrated 45 books.



"How the Grinch Stole Christmas" is a popular one of Dr. Seuss's stories.

Sure, you might have only heard of a dozen or so of the late Dr. Seuss's children's books, but it turns out the literary genius crafted a total of [45 books](#).

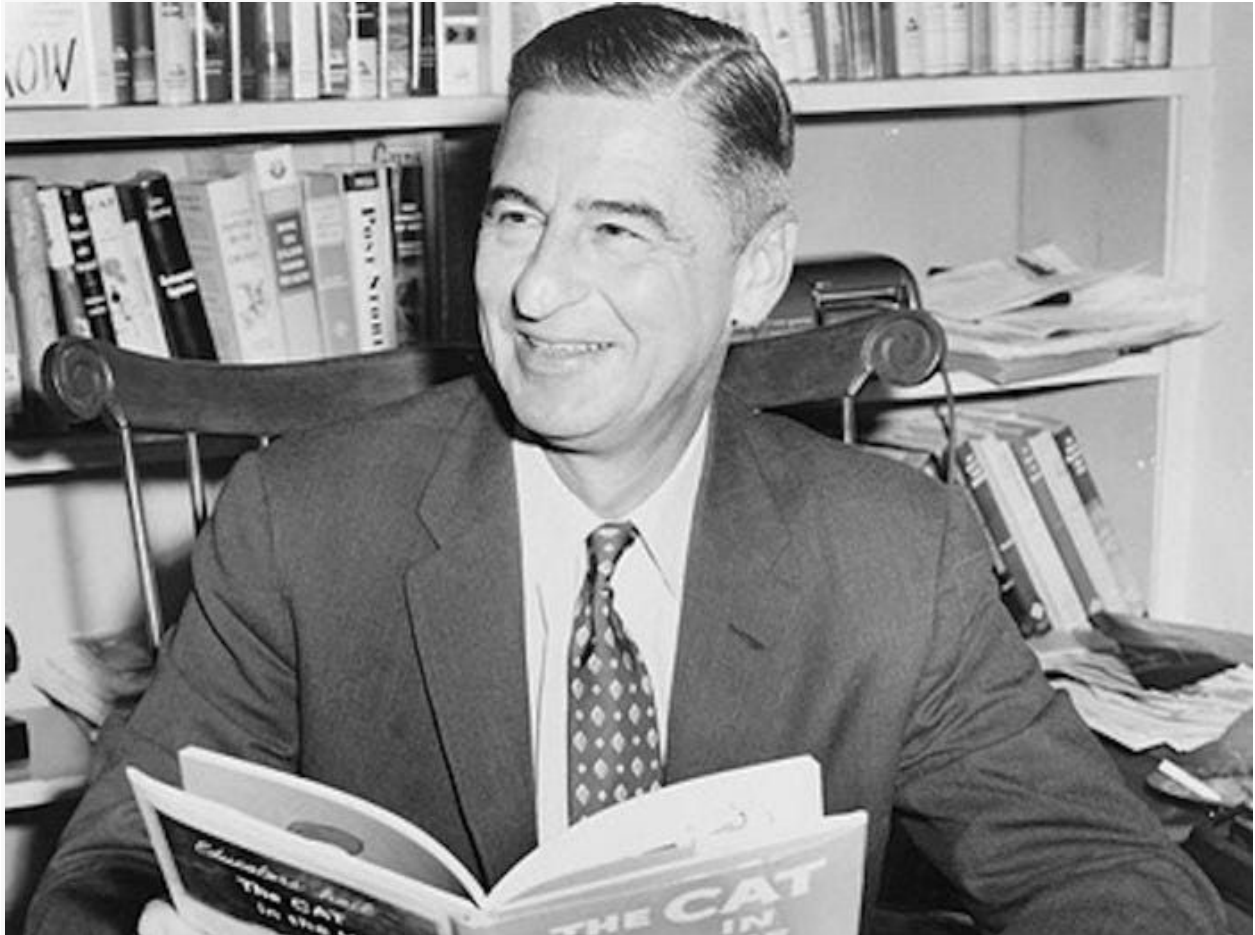
He published his first cartoon in 1925.



Dr. Seuss made political cartoons in the 1950s, many of which were about WWII. [Wikimedia Commons](#)

While attending Dartmouth, Dr. Seuss published his first cartoon in the humor magazine "Jack-O-Lantern." It features a character being pied in the face and is titled "The Pied Piper."

Dr. Seuss reportedly pretended to have a daughter.



Her name was Chrysanthemum-Pearl. [Wikimedia Commons](#)

Although he and his first wife were unable to have children (Seuss would never have any biological children), Dr. Seuss often boasted to friends about the achievements of the couple's imaginary daughter, [Chrysanthemum-Pearl](#), according to Smithsonian magazine. Although done in jest, Dr. Seuss did dedicate "The 500 Hats of Bartholomew Cubbins" to his imaginary daughter and even included her on Christmas cards.

He wrote for an ad agency.



His talents were used in advertising. [Wikimedia Commons](#)

Before making it big as an author, Dr. Seuss provided for him and his wife by creating ads for Flit.

He [received his job accidentally](#) after the wife of an advertising executive saw a cartoon using Flit as a punchline. He would eventually craft ads for places like Holly Sugar, NBC, Ford, and General Electric. He worked in this industry for thirty years.

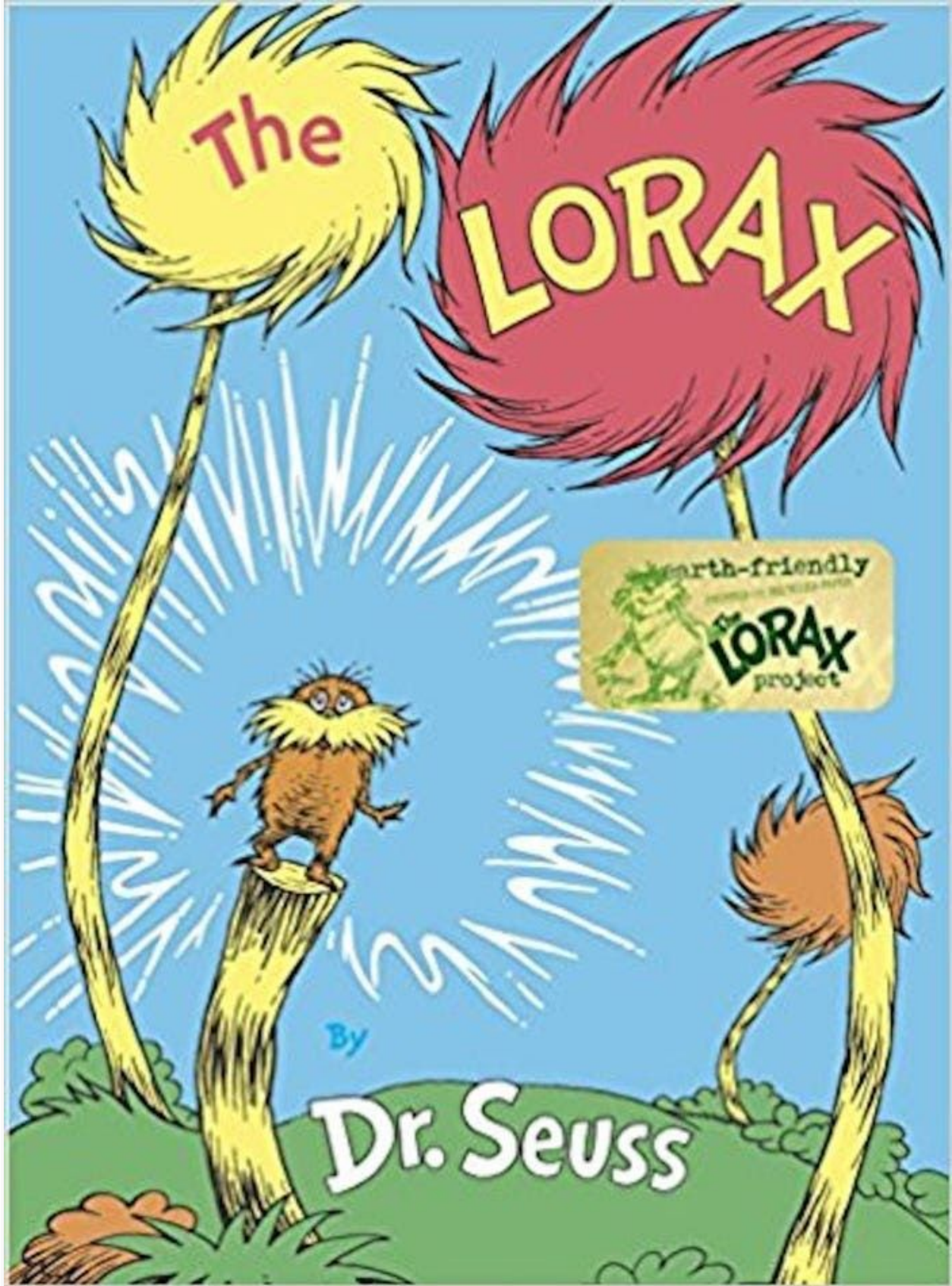
He treated his books like his "children."



Dr. Seuss didn't have a favorite book. GettyImages

Audrey Giesel, Dr. Seuss' wife, when asked what her husband's favorite book was, she replied, "First of all, **he liked each one**; he was like a father. He liked all his children, each particularly in the time of their conception."

"The Lorax" was possibly inspired by a monkey in Kenya.



The

LORAX

Earth-friendly
The LORAX
project

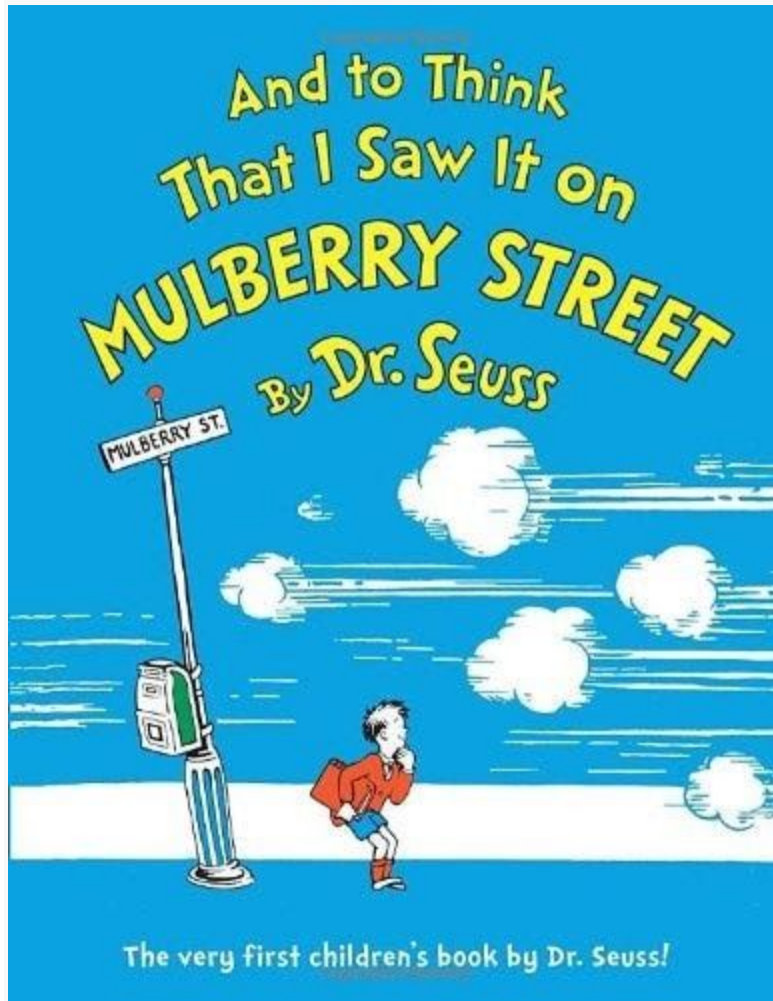
By

Dr. Seuss

The characters resemble the patas monkey. Random House

Dr. Seuss may have written "The Lorax" after seeing a particular species of monkey on a trip to Kenya. Evolutionary biologist [Nathaniel Dominy](#) told Popular Science, that while in Kenya, he'd noticed a monkey found near Mount Kenya, the patas monkey, that bore a strong resemblance to the fictional Lorax. It turns out Dr. Seuss stayed at a resort in Kenya, leading Dominy to argue the monkey was an inspiration for Dr. Seuss. The book, however, was not immediately met with success. [Professor Donald Pease](#), author of "[Theodor SEUSS Geisel](#)," said, "The book did not get onto the best-seller lists until the environmental movement picked it up."

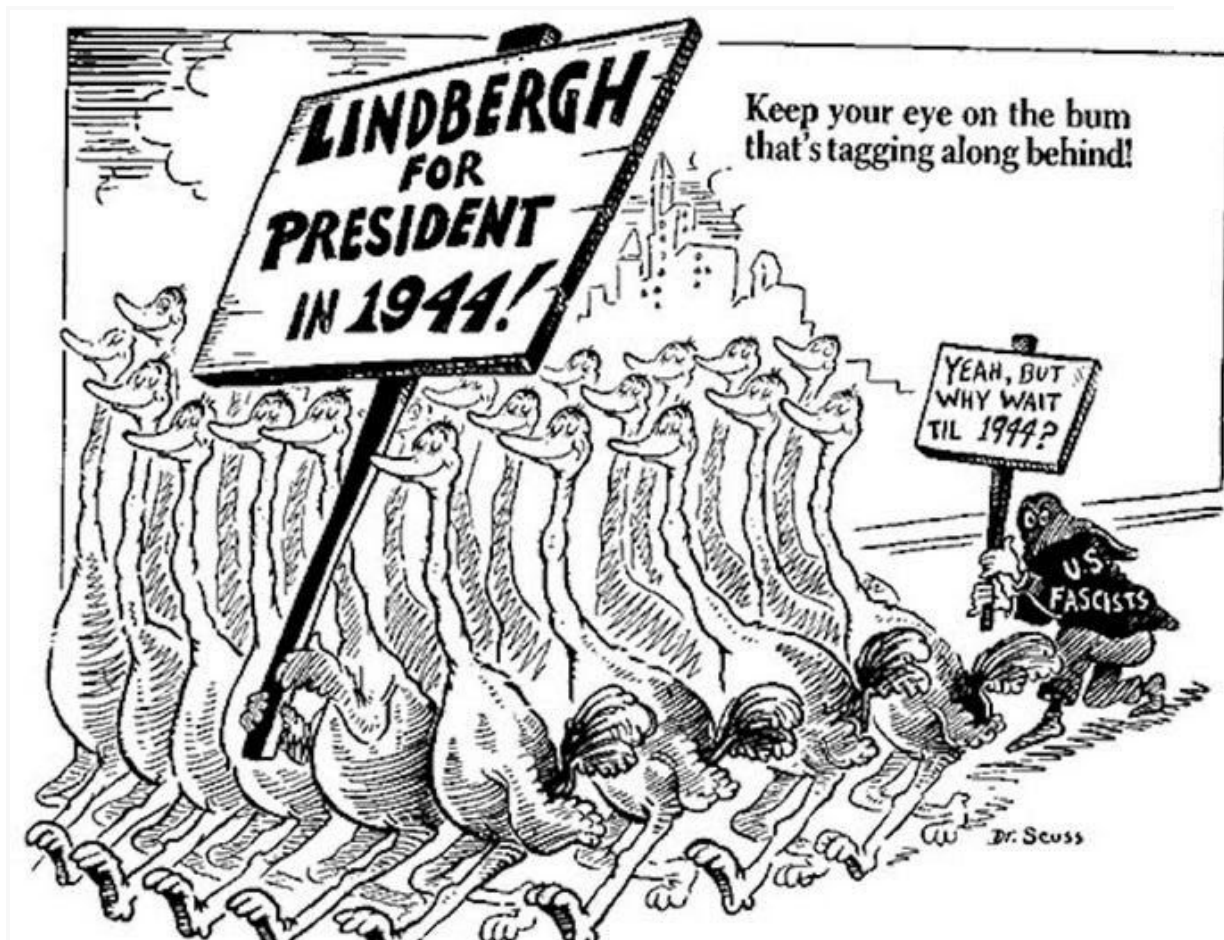
His first book wasn't published until 1937.



This was Dr. Seuss's first book. Random House

Although he wrote his first book in 1931, which involved the ABCs of creatures, his first book wasn't published until 1937. This book was called "And to Think That I Saw It on Mulberry Street."

He was a political cartoonist.



He was highly critical of Charles Lindbergh. [Wikimedia Commons](#)

Dr. Seuss began his career as a political cartoonist in 1941. He would publish [over 400 cartoons](#) in the New York newspaper "PM" throughout his career. His cartoons often chided isolationists and supported America's war effort. He did, however, also pen several [anti-Japanese cartoons](#) during World War II.

[According to filmmaker Ron Lamothe, who made "The Political Dr. Seuss,"](#) Dr. Seuss regretted these ads. "He was regretful about some of his cartoons for PM and some of the propaganda work he did for the Army Signal Corps," said Lamothe.

He served in World War II.



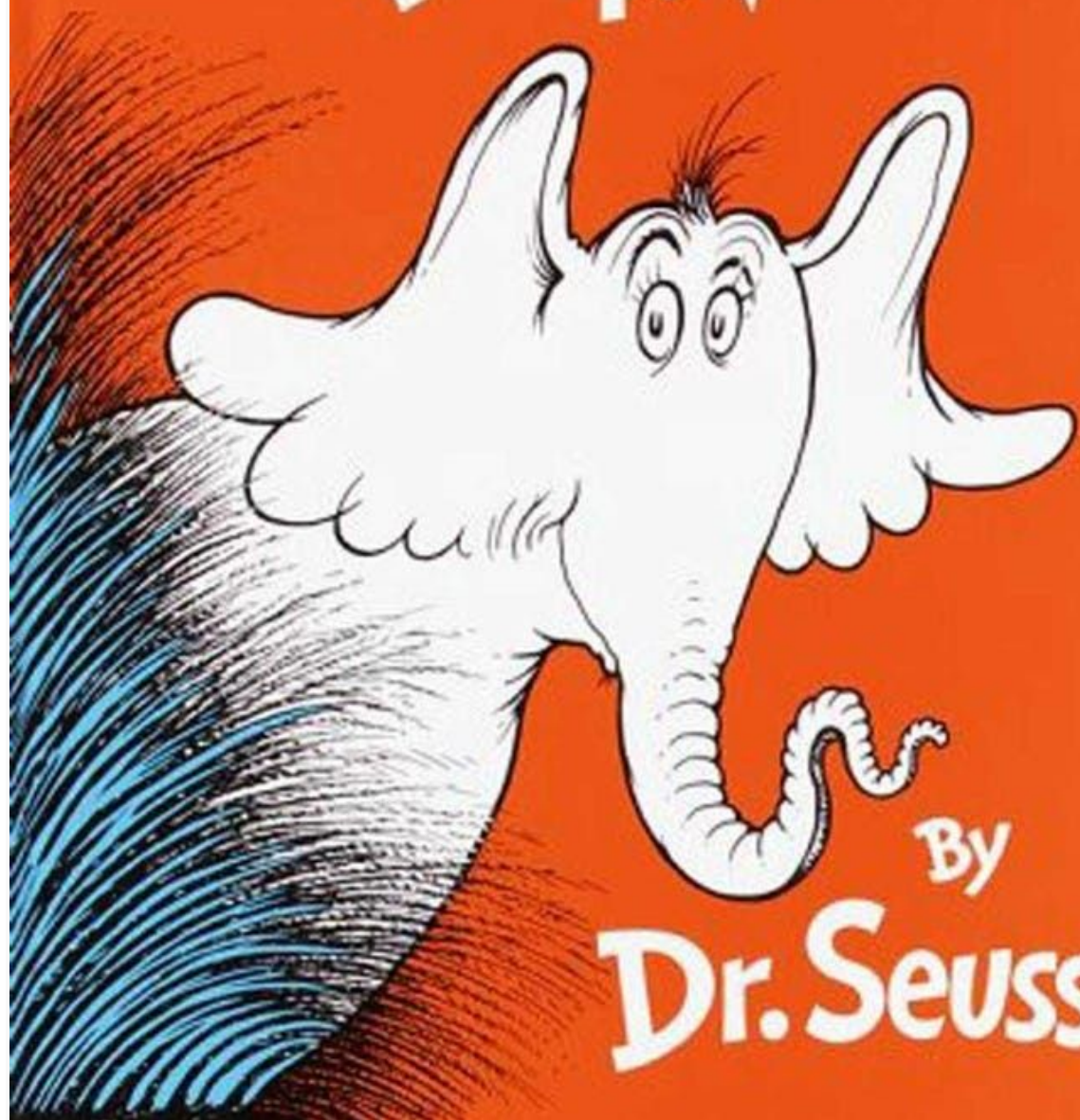
His time in the war inspired the character of Private SNAFU.

Warner Bros. Cartoons

Known as [Captain Geisel](#), Dr. Seuss served in the military during WWII, having joined the Army's Information and Education Division. In 1943 he created the cartoon character [Private SNAFU](#) with directors Chuck Jones and Friz Freleng.

Japan influenced one of his books.

HORTON HEARS A WHO!

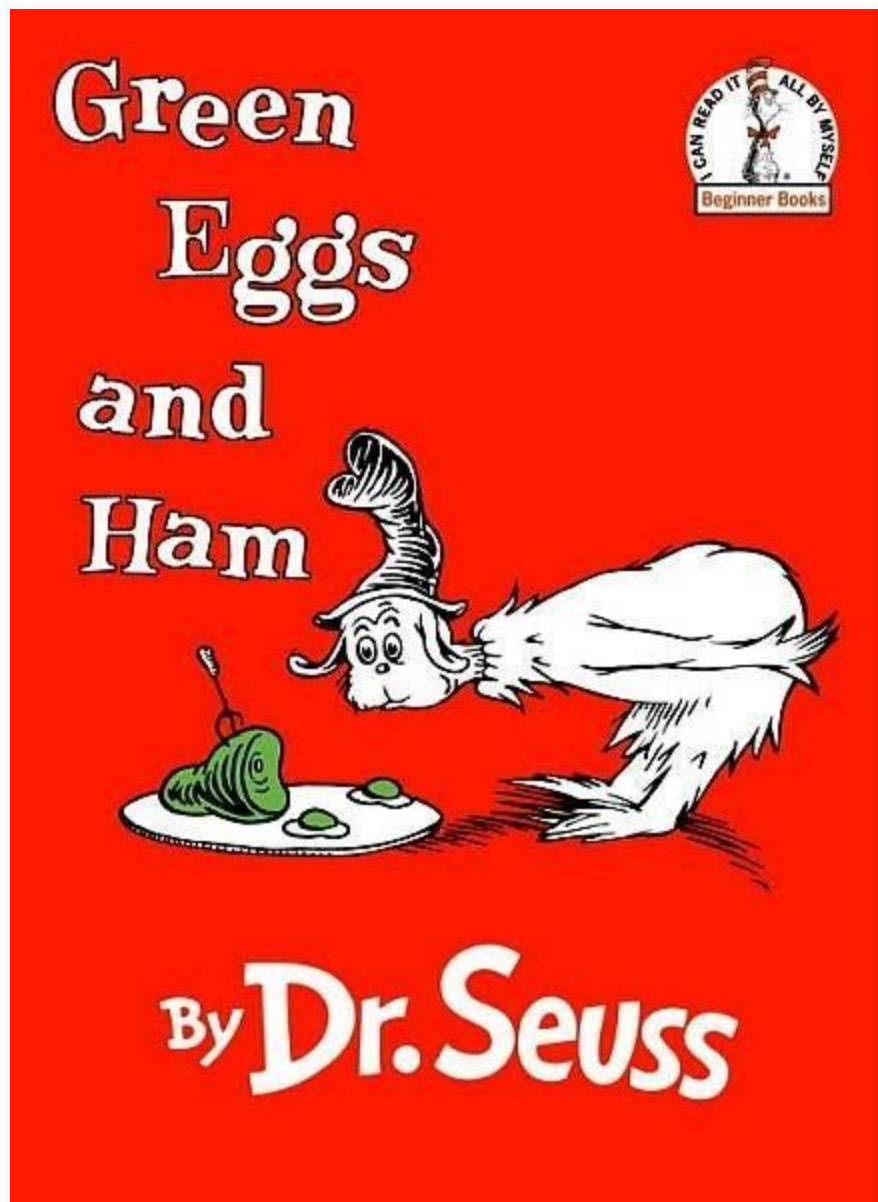


By
Dr. Seuss

The book's main character may have been inspired by his friend. [Wikipedia](#)

Dr. Seuss was [inspired to pen a book while on a trip to Japan in 1953](#). His trip inspired his picture book "[Horton Hear's a Who](#)," which, according to a dedication written by Geisel might be about his friend Mitsugi Nakamura. He wrote, according to the Harvard Political Review, the book was to his "Great Friend, Mitsugi Nakamura of Kyoto, Japan."

His most famous book was written on a bet.



The book has less than 50 words. [Wikimedia Commons](#)

In 1960, "Green Eggs and Ham" was reportedly published after Dr. Seuss's [publisher bet him](#) that he couldn't write a book with 50 or fewer words. The result is his best-selling creation that involves some interesting breakfast choices.

Dr. Seuss' wife thought he was a medical doctor when she first met him.



Audrey Giesel was married to Theodore Geisel from 1968-1991. Kevin Winter /GettyImages

"I wasn't aware that there was such a thing as a Dr. Seuss. I taught nursing at IU [Indiana University], and doctors were a very understood name and title. So, when I was being ushered down this line of about a dozen M.D. doctors and I came to Ted and they said, 'And this is our very own dear Dr. Seuss,' I immediately thought interns and medicine – just automatically. It was such a setup. And I was being facetious, and I said, 'Well, what is your specialty? The right or the left nostril?' And he just looked at me, didn't say anything, and I was ushered along to the next person," said his third wife Audrey Giesel.

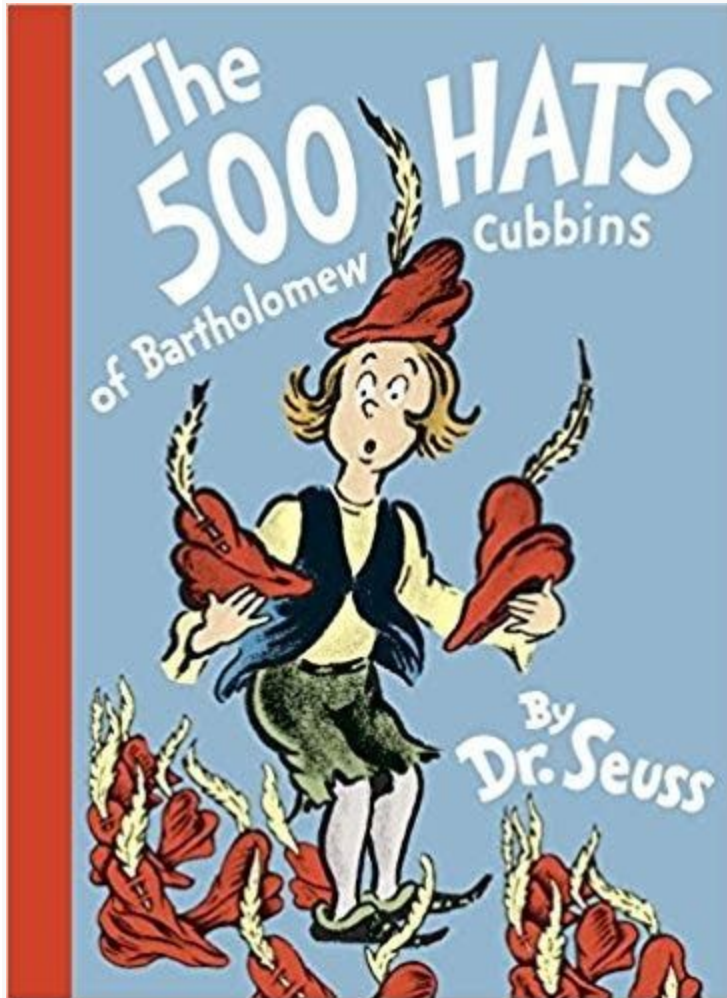
He won a Pulitzer Prize.



Children all over still read books by Dr. Seuss. Vince Bucci/GettyImages

In 1984, Dr. Seuss was awarded the [Pulitzer Prize](#) for his established body of works. Officially, he won the award for "his special contribution over nearly half a century to the education and enjoyment of America's children and their parents."

He collected hats.



The book may have had inspiration from Dr. Seuss's own life.
Random House Books for Young Readers

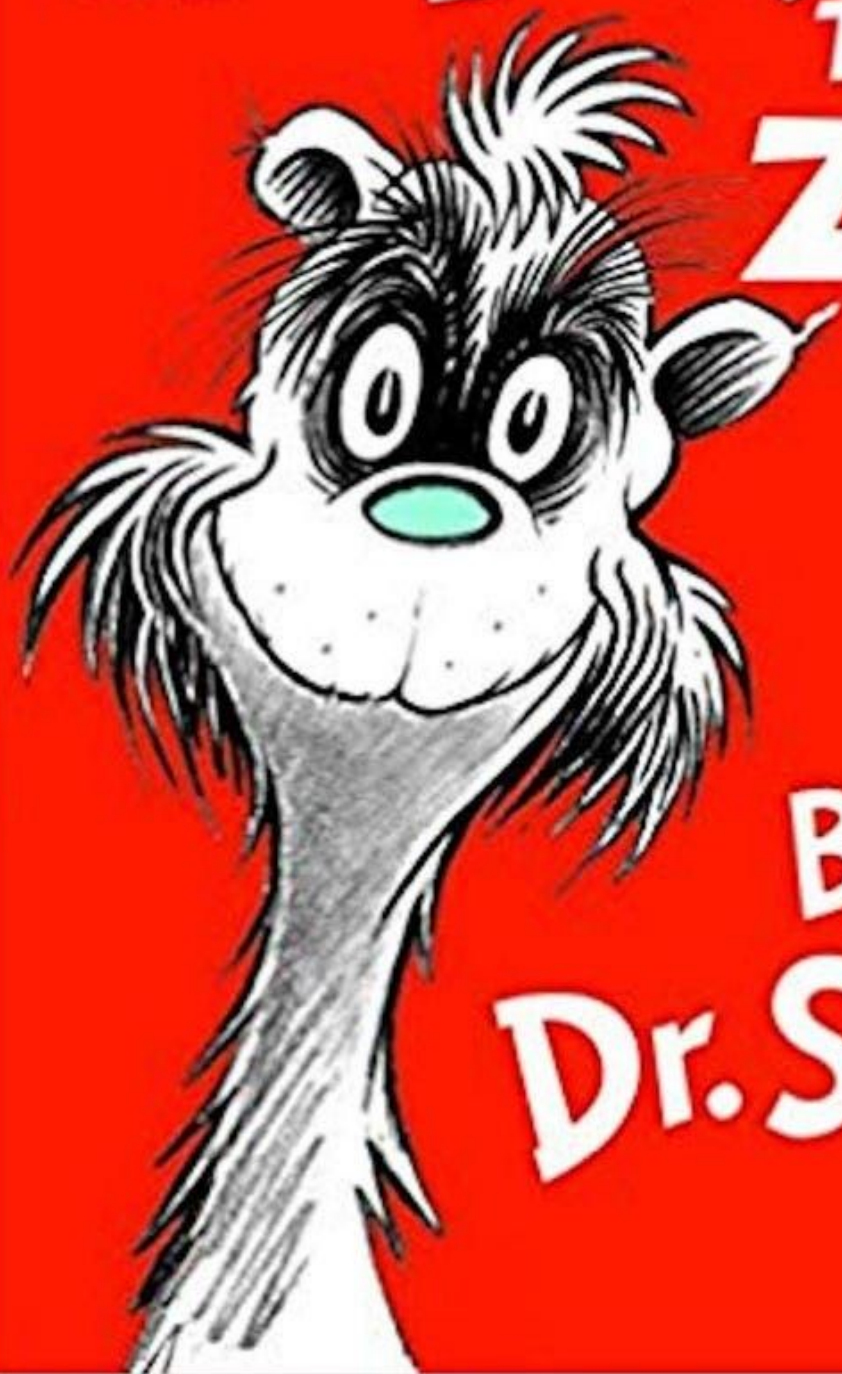
Oddly enough, Dr. Seuss, who has a book titled "The 500 Hats of Bartholomew Cubbins," collected a variety of hats throughout his lifetime. It is reported by Mental Floss that he collected several hundred hats of differing varieties, which were **sometimes put on display by Seuss's widow.**

He invented the word "nerd."

IF I RAN

The

ZOO



By

Dr. Seuss

"Nerd" appeared in "If I Ran the Zoo." Random House

The first known usage of the word "nerd" was in Dr. Seuss's 1950 book "If I Ran the Zoo." Although the way Seuss uses the word differs from our modern version, [he is credited with the creation of the word](#) nonetheless, according to Bustle.

He has two Academy Awards.



He co-wrote the propaganda film "Design for Death." US Army

Dr. Seuss [won two Oscars](#) in his lifetime. The first was in 1947 for "Design for Death" which he co-wrote with his wife, Helen. He would win his second Academy Award a few years later in 1951 with "Gerald McBoing-Boing," an animated short film.

He has several Emmys.



"Halloween Is Grinch Night" earned him an Emmy.

DePatie-Freleng Enterprises

What can't Seuss do? The celebrated author and Oscar winner also won [two Emmys](#), which he received in 1977 and 1982. The first was given for "Halloween Is Grinch Night" and the second was for "The Grinch Grinches The Cat in the Hat."