

READING

Daniel Defoe

Daniel Defoe was born in London in 1660. He was a novelist, journalist and poet. His original name was Daniel Foe, but in his middle 30s, Daniel started calling himself "Defoe" because it sounded more gentlemanly. He received a good education and he became a businessman. He liked his profession, although he was often unsuccessful. In 1684, Defoe married Mary Tuffley. Their marriage lasted for 47 years, until Defoe's death. They had eight children.

Defoe's first writings were about politics. In many of his works, he supported King William III. From 1704 to 1713, he wrote and published a journal called the *Review*. In this journal, Defoe supported the government. The articles were not only about politics, but also about religion, business, morals, and so on. In 1713, he was put in prison for his writings. However, he continued to produce the journal even in prison.

In 1719, Defoe wrote his most famous book, *Robinson Crusoe*. It is the story of an Englishman who leaves his home to go to sea. He survives a shipwreck and lives on an island for 28 years, alone for most of the time. He discovers that the island is sometimes visited by cannibals. They kill and eat prisoners there. One of the prisoners escapes and Robinson helps him. He names his new friend *Friday*, teaches him English and makes him a Christian. At the end, the two men leave the island and get to England.

When he published *Robinson Crusoe*, Defoe was 59 years old. He wrote some other books after that, for example *Moll Flanders* or *Captain Singleton*. The main characters in these books are often criminals. In 1724, Defoe published his last important work of fiction, *Roxana*.

Daniel Defoe died on April 24, 1731. Because of *Robinson Crusoe*, he has been called "the father of the English novel".

1 Read the text and answer the following questions.

- 1 Why did Daniel Foe start calling himself Daniel Defoe? _____
- 2 How many children did Daniel Defoe have? _____
- 3 What were Defoe's first writings about? _____
- 4 What happened to Defoe in 1713? _____
- 5 How long did Robinson Crusoe live on an island? _____
- 6 Who sometimes visited Robinson's island? _____
- 7 How old was Defoe when he published *Robinson Crusoe*? _____

2 Are these sentences true (T) or false (F)?

- 1 Daniel Defoe didn't get any education. _____
- 2 Daniel Defoe was always good at his job. _____
- 3 Defoe's journal was full of articles against the government. _____
- 4 Defoe stopped writing his journal when he was put in prison. _____
- 5 Friday learned English from Robinson Crusoe. _____
- 6 Robinson Crusoe left Friday on the island and returned to England. _____
- 7 The main characters of Defoe's books are often bad people. _____

SOURCES: <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Daniel-Defoe>,

<https://www.britannica.com/topic/Robinson-Crusoe-novel>, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Robinson_Crusoe,
<https://www.biography.com/people/daniel-defoe-9269678>, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Daniel_Defoe

KEY

1 Read the text and answer the following questions.

- 1 Why did Daniel Foe start calling himself Daniel Defoe? **because it sounded more gentlemanly**
- 2 How many children did Daniel Defoe have? **8**
- 3 What were Defoe's first writings about? **politics**
- 4 What happened to Defoe in 1713? **he was put in prison**
- 5 How long did Robinson Crusoe live on an island? **for 28 years**
- 6 Who sometimes visited Robinson's island? **cannibals**
- 7 How old was Defoe when he published *Robinson Crusoe*? **he was 59 years old**

2 Are these sentences true (T) or false (F)?

- 1 Daniel Defoe didn't get any education. **F (he got a good education)**
- 2 Daniel Defoe was always good at his job. **F (he was often unsuccessful)**
- 3 Defoe's journal was full of articles against the government. **F (he supported the government)**
- 4 Defoe stopped writing his journal when he was put in prison. **F (he continued even in prison)**
- 5 Friday learned English from Robinson Crusoe. **T**
- 6 Robinson Crusoe left Friday on the island and returned to England. **F (they both went to England)**
- 7 The main characters of Defoe's books are often bad people. **T (his main characters were often criminals)**