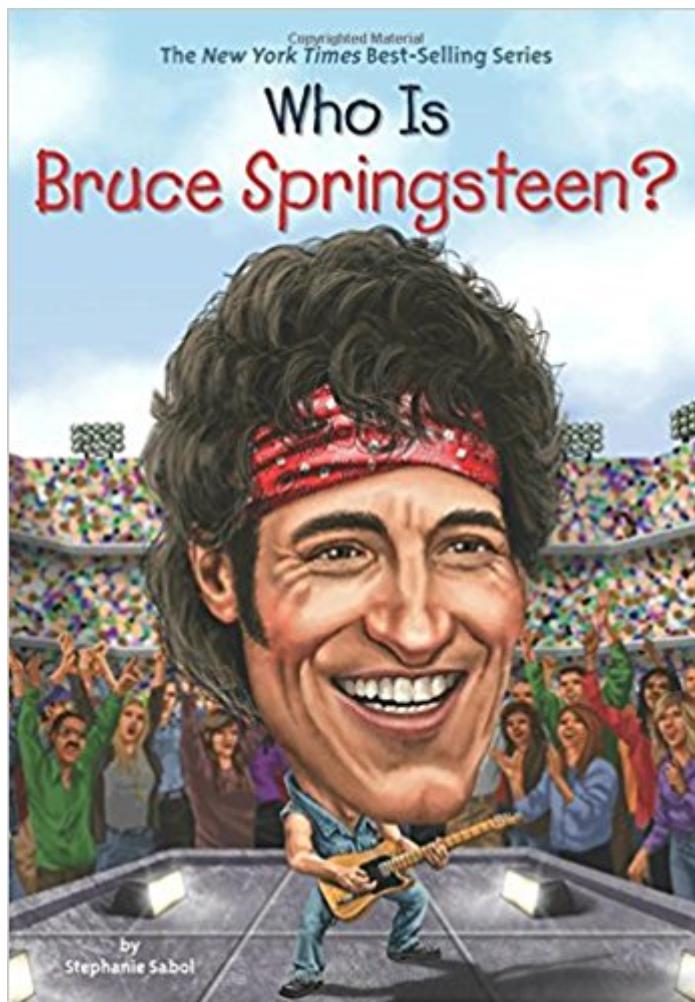


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# Who Is Bruce Springsteen? (Who Was?)



## **Synopsis**

Not only was Bruce Springsteen "Born in the USA," he has risen to become a twenty-time Grammy winner and American icon. Bruce Springsteen grew up in a blue-collar New Jersey town, where his parents struggled to make ends meet. Bruce didn't fit in at school but found solace in rock and roll and playing guitar. After the breakup of a local band he'd joined, Springsteen went out on his own and people began to take notice. He signed with Columbia Records and under pressure to come up with a hit, wrote "Born in the USA," which tells the story of America during the years of the Vietnam War. A multi-millionaire and twenty-time Grammy winner, the Boss has remained a working class hero whose music deals with the political and social changes in our country.

## **Book Information**

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Age Range: 8 - 12 years

Grade Level: 3 - 7

## **Customer Reviews**

Stephanie is a native of the Jersey Shore and a graduate of Boston College. She currently resides in Hoboken, New Jersey.

Who Is Bruce Springsteen?  December 1964  It was a cold winter day in northern New Jersey. A teenage boy brought his mother to the local music store. There, in the front window, was a black and gold electric guitar. The boy wanted it so much. He loved to play the guitar. But it cost

sixty dollars. Back then, that was a lot of money. It was more money than his mother had. So they left the store without the guitar. But that is not the end of the story. A few days later, the boy's mother went to the bank and took out a loan. On Christmas Day, her son woke up to find the guitar waiting for him under the tree. That teenage boy was Bruce Springsteen. And he grew up to become one of the most famous rock-and-roll stars ever. For forty years, people have been inspired by the messages in his songs. They are songs about the joy of being alive and the pain of a broken heart. They offer comfort during hard times. They make people proud to be Americans.

Bruce Springsteen never forgot that special guitar. It changed everything. In fact, when he was voted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 1999, the first person he thanked was his mother. He thanked her for buying him that guitar and, most importantly, for believing in him.

### Chapter 1: A Young Boy

Bruce Frederick Springsteen was born on September 23, 1949. He lived in Freehold, New Jersey, with his parents and two younger sisters, Virginia (called Ginny) and Pamela. Ginny was one and a half years younger than Bruce, but Pamela was much younger. Bruce was twelve when Pamela was born. Pamela was such a cute baby that Bruce didn't mind helping out. He liked playing with her or even giving her a bottle.

Freehold is a medium-size town located near the New Jersey shoreline, and about a ninety-minute drive from New York City. There were lots of farms and factories when Bruce was a boy. It was not a wealthy town. People in Freehold were mostly "blue collar" workers. Most of the jobs in Freehold were at the local factories. The biggest was Nestle, which produced chocolate bars and coffee. While Bruce was growing up, one of the big employers, a rug factory, left town. Jobs became harder to find. Bruce's mother, Adele, worked as a secretary for a lawyer. She had a good job. However, Bruce's father, Doug, had trouble finding steady work. For a while he drove taxis and trucks. At one point he was a prison guard. To make ends meet, the Springsteens moved in with Doug's parents after Bruce was born. They stayed for six years. Bruce's grandparents lived in a house that had cracked walls, windows that rattled, and just one kerosene heater to warm the house in winter. His grandparents didn't believe in a lot of rules for him. Bruce was allowed to stay up all night, watching television and playing with his toys.

As a little boy, Bruce loved to have books read aloud to him. One of his favorites was *Brave Cowboy Bill*. Bill had many adventures in the Wild West. Bruce was so crazy about the story that soon he knew all the words by heart. When Bruce was old enough, his mother sent him to a Catholic school. Bruce did not like it one bit! There were so many rules, and the nuns were very strict. One time in third grade, a nun stuffed him in a trash can! Why? She said the trash can was where he belonged. As if he were no better than garbage! Bruce spent

time in the principal's office, too. He was not a bad kid. He was just different. He liked to be alone with his thoughts. Not all the time, of course. He also liked to hang out with other kids, play baseball, and read Archie comics. Bruce enjoyed spending time with his mother. Adele also loved music. She'd play the radio in the kitchen, singing and dancing while making breakfast. Bruce sang and danced right along with her. Adele introduced Bruce to all kinds of music—pop, rock and roll, country, and folk music. One night in 1957, Adele let Bruce stay up late to watch The Ed Sullivan Show on television. Elvis Presley was performing, and Bruce could not take his eyes off him. Elvis wasn't afraid to be different, and he looked like he was having so much fun onstage. After seeing Elvis, Bruce wanted his own guitar. If Elvis could be a rock star, why couldn't he? As Bruce grew older, all he could think about was rock-and-roll music. When he was fourteen, he was riding in the car with his mom, listening to the radio. The Beatles song "I Want to Hold Your Hand" started to play. As soon as Bruce's mom stopped the car, Bruce jumped out and ran to the nearest pay phone. He had to call his girlfriend. He couldn't wait to tell her about the awesome song he had just heard. Then, in 1964, Bruce got that special guitar for Christmas. From then on, Bruce practiced every day. He said, "It took over my whole life." . . . . Everything from then on revolved around music. Everything. Sometimes Bruce would play the guitar and watch himself in the mirror. Even though Bruce was just a skinny boy with dark curly hair, he liked what he saw. When he held his guitar, he felt powerful.

First of all I'm biased because if it's about Springsteen it can't be bad! That said, I love it. This is my first book from this series and I'll be ordering more for my son and I. The boy needs his rock and roll history!

My six-year old son wanted to read about this rock star guy when he saw the book at the library. We checked the book out, but he was only half way done when the book was due. So, I took the book back to the library and decided to buy the book so that he can take his time because he likes to switch to reading different the books by the day. He enjoys reading this book to learn about a rock star's life, and like it because it introduced him to new words. The George Washington book from the same book series is next for him, and I hope that is brings the same reading success.

Perfect read for all ages!!

Girft for the husband. Fast passed reading he liked it!

Very cute, small book! LOL

My granddaughter loved it

Awesome. Illustrations

Its Bruce, how can you not love it!

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