

# Harry Houdini

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## Early Life

Harry Houdini was born March 24, 1874 in Hungary. His given name was Ehrich Weisz, and he was one of six children. In 1876 his father moved to the United States where he got a job as a rabbi. At the age of 8 Ehrich Weisz moved to Milwaukee with his family.

In his early life Ehrich worked as newspaper delivery boy and shined shoes to help support his family. At age 9 he made his first stage appearance calling himself “Ehrich, the Prince of the Air” performing a trapeze act. After this act he and his brother Theo began to try out magic.

This is when Ehrich decided to change his name, which he chose after a French magician Robert Houdin, making his stage name Harry Houdini.

## Houdini's Magic Career

His early career started in New York's halls and theaters, performing in museums with his brother Theo. The two brothers were known as "Brothers Houdini."

Houdini became known for his escape artist. His first famous escape trick was called "Metamorphosis." In this trick Houdini placed his assistant into a locked box and then magically switched behind a curtain.

After these tricks he decided to take a new step: handcuffs. He became known as the "The Handcuff King" after completing a trick where

his hands are locked in a pair of standard police handcuffs and was able to escape with nothing but his own magic hands.



#### Movie Career

Houdini made his first movie for a French movie company in 1901. This movie was used to show Houdini's famous escapes including handcuffs and straightjackets. This movie is what sparked a new interest in the movie

industry.

After this film he took a fifteen-year break, and then in 1916 he made another appearance in *The Mysteries of Myra*. In 1918 he appeared in *The Master Mystery*, and made a small appearance in *The Grim Game* in 1919.

Houdini received the honor of a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame in 1923 even though some critics saw his movies as “profits too meager to continue.”

# Works Referenced

Corcoran, Kieran. "They'll Be Tying Themselves in Knots to Get These! Harry Houdini's Handcuffs That Give Away Secrets to His Escapes Go on Sale." Mail Online. Associated Newspapers, 05 Dec. 2013. Web. 02 Dec. 2015.

"The Great Harry Houdini." Harry Houdini. The Great Harry Houdini, 2013. Web. 02 Dec. 2015.



# Common Core State Standards

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.5.7

Draw on information from multiple print or digital sources, demonstrating the ability to locate an answer to a question quickly or to solve a problem efficiently.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RF.5.3

Know and apply grade-level phonics and word analysis skills in decoding words.

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