

Mary Poppins is a series of children's books written by P. L. Travers and originally illustrated by Mary Shepard. The books centre on a mysterious, vain and acerbic magical English nanny, Mary Poppins. She is blown by the East wind to Number Seventeen Cherry Tree Lane, London and into the Banks' household to care for their children. Encounters with chimney sweeps, shopkeepers and various adventures follow until Mary Poppins abruptly leaves, i.e., "pops-out". The adventures take place over a total of eight books. However, only the first three books feature Mary Poppins arriving and leaving. The later five books recount previously unrecorded adventures from her original three visits. As P.L. Travers explains in her introduction to *Mary Poppins in the Park*, "She cannot forever arrive and depart."

The books were adapted in 1964 into a musical Disney film starring Julie Andrews and Dick Van Dyke. In 2004, Disney Theatrical produced a stage musical adaptation in the West End theatre. The stage musical was transferred to Broadway in 2006. It is still running there to this day, to sold out crowds. It has been highly successful, as was the classic 1964 film.

1964 Film

Mary Poppins was made into a film based on the series of children's books by Walt Disney Productions in 1964. According to the 40th anniversary DVD release of the film in 2004, Walt Disney first attempted to purchase the film rights to *Mary Poppins* from P.L. Travers as early as 1938, but was rebuffed because Travers did not believe a film version of her books would do justice to her creation and did not want an animated cartoon based on it. Disney finally succeeded in 1961, although Travers demanded and got script approval rights. The relationship between Travers and Disney is detailed in *Mary Poppins She Wrote*, a biography of Travers, by Valerie Lawson, published by Aurum Press in the United Kingdom. The biography is the basis for two documentaries on Travers, *The Real Mary Poppins* and *The Shadow of Mary Poppins*.

The process of planning the film and composing the songs took about two years. Songs in the film are by the Sherman Brothers. Mary Poppins is played by Julie Andrews. Disney cast Dick Van Dyke in the key supporting role of Bert. The Banks children were played by Karen Dotrice and Matthew Garber. Mr. and Mrs. Banks were played by David Tomlinson and Glynis Johns respectively. The film is rated G by the MPAA. In the film, Mary is noticeably kinder than characterized in Travers' novels. The film features adventures and episodes from all of the novels. Walt Disney and his associates added many adventures, also. The film does not include John, Barbara or Annabel Banks.

2004 Musical

In December 2004, a musical version of *Mary Poppins*, based on both the Disney film and the books, opened at the Prince Edward Theatre, London, after previewing in Bristol. It received critical acclaim and was nominated for nine 2005 Olivier Awards. It won two awards, Best Actress in a Musical, for Laura Michelle Kelly, and Best Theatre Choreography, for Matthew Bourne and Stephen Mear. The musical has original music and lyrics by Richard M. Sherman and Robert B. Sherman, book by Julian Fellowes, and a few new songs and additional music and lyrics by George Stiles and Anthony Drewe.

In November 2006 a Broadway production opened at the New Amsterdam Theatre, New York. It received mixed reviews, but was a box office success and nominated for seven Tony Awards. It won one award, Best Scenic Design of a Musical, for Bob Crowley.

A number of tour productions are planned for 2008 and onwards, among them a National UK tour and a National US tour.

In the musical version, Mary continues her characterization as moderately friendly and helpful from the Disney film; however, she is also noticeably vainer than her film portrayal, in keeping with the books. The Banks children, Michael and Jane, however, are shown as less kind and 'brattier'. It does not feature the other Banks' children John, Barbara or Annabel.

Possible test tasks:

T/F ?

Mary Poppins musical existed prior to the film.

Likewise Harry Potter the books were written before the film appeared.