

Read the text about the life of the billionaire Howard Hughes.

- Then choose the correct answer (A, B, C or D) for questions 1–7.
- Write your answers in the spaces provided.
- The first one (0) has been done for you.



Howard Hughes, The Aviator

by Jennifer Rosenberg

Howard Hughes' Childhood

Though he grew up in a wealthy household, Howard Hughes Jr. had difficulty focusing on school and changed schools often. Rather than sitting in a classroom, Hughes preferred to learn by tinkering with mechanical things. For instance, when his mother forbade him from having a motorcycle, he built one by building a motor and adding it to his bicycle. Hughes was a loner in his youth; with one notable exception, Hughes never really had any friends.

Tragedy and Wealth

When Hughes was just 16-years old, his doting mother passed away. And then not even two years later, his father also suddenly died. Howard Hughes received 75% of his father's million-dollar estate; the other 25% went to relatives.

Hughes immediately disagreed with his relatives over the running of Hughes Tool Company but being only 18-years old, Hughes could not do anything about it because he would not legally be considered an adult until age 21. Frustrated but determined, Hughes went to court and got a judge to grant him legal adulthood. He then bought out his relatives' shares of the company. At age 19, Hughes became full owner of the company and also got married (to Ella Rice).

Making Movies

In 1925, Hughes and his wife decided to move to Hollywood and spend some time with Hughes' uncle, Rupert, who was a screenwriter. Hughes quickly became enchanted with movie making. Hughes jumped right in and filmed *Swell Hogan* but quickly realized it wasn't good so he never released it. Learning from his mistakes, Hughes continued making movies. His third, *Two Arabian Knights* won an Oscar.

With one success under his belt, Hughes wanted to make an epic about aviation and set to work on *Hell's Angels*. It became his obsession. His wife, tired of being neglected, divorced him. Hughes continued making films, producing over 25 of them.

Hughes as an Aviator

In 1932, Hughes had a new obsession – aviation. He formed the Hughes Aircraft Company and bought several airplanes and hired numerous engineers and designers. He wanted a quicker, faster plane. He spent the rest of the 1930s setting new speed records. In 1938, he flew around the world, breaking Wiley Post's record. Though Hughes was given a ticker-tape parade on his arrival in New York, he was already showing signs of wanting to shun the public spotlight.

In 1944, Hughes won a government contract to design a large, flying boat that could carry both people and supplies to the war in Europe. The "Spruce Goose", the largest plane ever constructed, was flown successfully in 1947 and then never flown again. Hughes' company also developed a chain feeder for the machine guns on bombers and later built helicopters.

Becoming a Recluse

By the mid-1950s, Hughes' dislike of being a public figure began to severely affect his life. Though he married actress Jean Peters in 1957, he began to avoid public appearances. He traveled for a bit, then in 1966 he moved to Las Vegas, where he holed himself up in the Desert Inn Hotel. When the hotel threatened to evict him, he purchased the hotel. He also bought several other hotels and property in Las Vegas. For the next several years, hardly a single person saw Hughes. He had become so reclusive that he nearly never left his hotel suite.

Hughes' Final Years

In 1970, Hughes' marriage ended and he left Las Vegas. He moved from one country to another and died in 1976, aboard an airplane, while traveling from Acapulco, Mexico to Houston, Texas. Hughes had become such a hermit in his last years that no one was sure it was really Hughes that had died, so the Treasury Department had to use fingerprints to confirm the death of billionaire Howard Hughes. Hughes is buried in the Glenwood Cemetery in Houston, Texas, next to his parents.

0 Mr Hughes gained the most knowledge from

- A discussing the news with his parents.
- B playing with school friends.
- C doing things on his own.
- D studying with private tutors.

1 Mr Hughes became a millionaire, because he

- A was given a loan by his father.
- B got money from his family.
- C received money from investors.
- D founded a business.

2 After fighting with family members, Hughes decided to

- A become independent.
- B purchase property.
- C go abroad.
- D sell his business.

3 Hughes' first film

- A won an Oscar.
- B was autobiographical.
- C starred his wife.
- D was never shown in cinemas.

4 Hughes' partner left him because

- A he focussed too much on film making.
- B he was irresponsible with money.
- C she had fallen in love with another man.
- D she discovered he was having an affair.

5 Hughes devoted almost a decade to

- A learning to fly properly.
- B building up a boat company.
- C being the fastest flier.
- D travelling all over the world.

6 After being told to move out Hughes

- A bought the building he was staying in.
- B decided to move to Las Vegas.
- C moved to his second wife's home.
- D sold his company to pay the rent.

7 Upon his death, Hughes was

- A discovered in his hotel suite.
- B given a funeral in the air.
- C followed by many of his admirers.
- D identified by a government organisation.

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
C							