

THE WORLD OF  
BEVERLY CLEARY

HOME ABOUT BOOKS CHARACTERS FUN & GAMES  
EDUCATORS & LIBRARIANS

## ABOUT BEVERLY CLEARY

## BIO



"WHEN IT COMES TO WRITING BOOKS KIDS LOVE, NOBODY  
DOES IT BETTER"

—ILENE COOPER, BOOKLIST

Beverly Cleary was born in McMinnville, Oregon, and, until she was old enough to attend school, lived on a farm in Yamhill, a town so small it had no library. Her mother arranged with the State Library to have books sent to Yamhill and acted as librarian in a lodge room upstairs over a bank. There young Beverly learned to love books. However, when the family moved to Portland, Beverly soon found herself in the grammar school's low reading circle, an experience that has given her sympathy for the problems of struggling readers.

By the third grade she had conquered reading and spent much of her childhood surrounded by books—either at home or in her public library. Before long her

school librarian was suggesting that she should write for boys and girls when she grew up. The idea appealed to her, and she decided that someday she would write the books she longed to read but was unable to find on the library shelves: funny stories about her neighborhood and the sort of children she knew. And so Ramona Quimby, Henry Huggins, Ellen Tebbits, and her other beloved characters were born.

When children ask Mrs. Cleary where she finds her ideas, she replies, 'From my own experience and from the world around me.' She included a passage about the D.E.A.R. program in *Ramona Quimby, Age 8* (second chapter) because she was inspired by letters she received from children who participated in 'Drop Everything and Read' activities. Their interest and enthusiasm encouraged her to provide the same experience to Ramona, who enjoys D.E.A.R. time with the rest of her class.



Leading story hour in the park (From *My Own Two Feet: A Memoir*)

Mrs. Cleary's books have earned her many prestigious awards, including the 2003 National Medal of Art from the National Endowment of the Arts and the 1984 John Newbery Medal for *Dear Mr. Henshaw*. Additionally, *Ramona and Her Father* and *Ramona Quimby, Age 8* were named 1978 and 1982 Newbery Honor Books, respectively.

Among Mrs. Cleary's other awards are the American Library Association's 1975 Laura Ingalls Wilder Award, the Catholic Library Association's 1980 Regina Medal, and the University of Southern Mississippi's 1982 Silver Medallion, all presented in recognition of her lasting

contribution to children's literature. Mrs. Cleary was also the 1984 United States author nominee for the Hans Christian Andersen Award, a prestigious international award.

Equally important are the more than 35 statewide awards Mrs. Cleary's books have received based on the direct votes of her young readers. In 2000, to honor her invaluable contributions to children's literature, Beverly Cleary was named a Living Legend by the Library of Congress. This witty and warm author is truly an international favorite. Mrs. Cleary's books have been published in twenty-eight languages and her characters, including Henry Huggins, Ellen Tebbits, Otis Spofford, and Beezus and Ramona Quimby, as well as Ribsby, Socks, and Ralph S. Mouse, have delighted children for generations.

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## BEVERLY CLEARY HONORS AND AWARDS

1978 Newbery Honor Book, *Ramona and Her Father*

1982 Newbery Honor Book, *Ramona Quimby, Age 8*

1984 Newbery Medal, *Dear Mr. Henshaw*

National Book Award, *Ramona and Her Mother*

Catholic Library Association's 1980 Regina Medal Award

University of Southern Mississippi's 1982 Silver Medallion\*

Children's Book Council 1985 Everychild Award\*

American Library Association's 1975 Laura Ingalls Wilder Award\*

Named a 2000 Library of Congress 'Living Legend'\*

\*All presented in recognition of her lasting contribution to children's literature. In addition, Mrs. Cleary's books have received more than 35 state awards based on the direct votes of her young readers.

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## PRAISE FOR BEVERLY CLEARY

"Cleary is adept at taking everyday events and making the reader see the humor and delight in simple things. Everyone will want to visit with this old friend."

- Sharon Salluzzo, *Children's Literature*

"America's favorite author for children... her sharp recollections of the complex feelings of childhood and her ability to relate those feelings in a way that is both humorous and comforting to the reader make her work ever popular with children and adults."

- Joanne Kelly, *The Beverly Cleary Handbook*

"Who is Beverly Cleary? She is the author who has made books exciting to children - hundreds and thousands and generations of children. How can you repay Beverly Cleary for such an outstanding contribution?"

- Caroline Feller Bauer, *Horn Book Magazine*

"[Beverly Cleary] has the rare gift of being able to reveal us to ourselves while keeping an arm around our shoulder... Cleary is able to sketch clearly with a few perfect strokes the inexplicable adult world as seen through a child's eyes."

- Katherine Paterson, *Washington Post Book World*

"[Beverly Cleary's] impact as a children's book writer cannot be overestimated...her sensitive, penetrating awareness of individual children and their needs endures."

- Cathryn M. Mercier, *Twentieth-Century Children's Writers*

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## VIDEO

### Beverly Cleary author interview



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