
BBC LEARNING ENGLISH

News Report

Robin Williams honoured

The logo for BBC Learning English, featuring the letters 'BBC' in a white box above the words 'LEARNING ENGLISH' in white text on a teal background.

The **late** American actor and comedian Robin Williams has been honoured by the Screen Actors Guild in a ceremony in Los Angeles.

Williams died in an **apparent** suicide in August 2014. He was 63 years old.

Williams was born on 21 July 1951 in Chicago, Illinois. In his **teens**, he joined his school's drama club as a way to **overcome shyness**.

Later, when he was studying at New York's famous Juilliard School, his tutor suggested a career in **stand-up comedy**.

His **breakthrough** came when he appeared on the TV show Happy Days as an **alien** called Mork.

The character inspired a **spin-off** TV series, Mork and Mindy, which made Williams a star.

He then appeared in several films, but it was not until 1987's Good Morning Vietnam that Hollywood found a suitable **vehicle** for him. This role earned him his first Oscar **nomination** for best actor.

His second nomination came two years later for Dead Poets Society, in which he played an **inspirational** English teacher at a **strict** boys' school, who encourages his pupils to think for themselves.

He was finally awarded an Oscar in 1998 for his role in Good Will Hunting.

He later turned to darker roles, like the serial killer in the Alaska-set Insomnia.

"People think of me as likeable, so the appeal was to play against those expectations," he told Empire magazine in 2010.

At his funeral, President Obama described him as "**one of a kind**".

Vocabulary

late

used to refer to a person who is dead

apparent

seeming to be real

teens

teenage years; the period in a person's life from age 13 to age 19

overcome

to defeat an enemy or deal with a problem

shyness

feeling uncomfortable and nervous in the company of other people

stand-up comedy

a style of comedy performance where one person stands on the stage and talks to the audience

breakthrough

an event which starts a successful period in someone's career

alien

a creature from another planet

spin-off

a TV programme involving characters from a previous TV programme

vehicle

a film, TV programme, etc., which shows the talents of a particular actor

nomination

an official suggestion that someone should get a prize

inspirational

someone or something that encourages you and makes you feel confident or creative

strict

tough; imposing strong rules, or threatening serious punishment if someone doesn't obey the rules

one of a kind

someone or something which is unique

This story is based on an original BBC News story:

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/entertainment-arts-28752027>