

Name _____ Date _____

E.B. WHITE

Elwyn Brooks White was born in New York in 1899. He was the youngest child in a large family.

E. B. White graduated from Cornell University in 1921. After he graduated, he worked as a newspaper reporter in Seattle. He returned to New York in 1924, and began working for the *New Yorker* magazine. The *New Yorker* is a literary magazine, publishing short stories, essays, and novel excerpts. White joined the staff in 1927. He wrote for the magazine for sixty years. E.B. White is well known for his essay style, which is spare, clear, and elegant. Some fans have said that White defined the “American voice” in his essays, which were published in the *New Yorker* and other magazines, as well as several books.

He definitely defined American writing style with his update of William Strunk, Jr.’s *Elements of Style*. *The Elements of Style* (also called *Strunk & White*) has been assigned reading in most high schools and colleges for nearly fifty years. The book’s straightforward directions (“Be clear”) and simple format (it’s only 85 pages long) have made this book about grammar and usage an indispensable tool for American writers.

E.B. White is an honored writer for adults, but many people love him best for his children’s books. His first children’s book, *Stuart Little*, was published in 1945. This tale of a mouse and his adventures with a human family was popular when it was published, and its popularity endures today. He wrote *Charlotte’s Web*, a story of an unusual friendship between a pig and a spider, in 1952. In 1970, E.B. White’s third and last children’s book, *The Trumpet of the Swan*, was published. The story about a boy’s observations of nature and a voiceless swan is also well loved.

He married the literary editor of the *New Yorker*, Katherine Sergeant Angell, in 1929. They had one child together, Joel White, and also raised Roger Angell, her son from a previous marriage. E.B. White died in 1985 at his farm in Maine.

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ANSWER THE QUESTIONS ABOUT *E.B. WHITE*

1. E. B. White
 - a. wrote children's books
 - b. wrote essays
 - c. wrote a grammar book
 - d. all of the above

2. Based on the description in the text, which adjectives most accurately describe E.B. White's writing style?
 - a. flowery and romantic
 - b. crisp and clean
 - c. childish and simple
 - d. harsh and witty

3. Why is *The Elements of Style* assigned in schools?
 - a. because E.B. White is a famous children's book author
 - b. because it's very short and students like short books
 - c. because it defines how to write clearly and simply
 - d. because it hasn't been updated for sixty years

4. *Charlotte's Web* is about
 - a. an odd relationship
 - b. a mouse raised by humans
 - c. how to write clearly
 - d. a new movie

5. *The Trumpet of the Swan* is about
 - a. a spider and a pig
 - b. a swan without a voice
 - c. an adventurous mouse
 - d. none of the above

6. E. B. White's first children's book was
 - a. *Stuart Little*
 - b. *Charlotte's Web*
 - c. *The Trumpet of the Swan*
 - d. All of the above

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ANSWERS

1. d
2. b
3. c
4. a
5. b
6. a