

Charles Schulz and the *Peanuts* gang

The author

Charles Schulz had dreamed of becoming a cartoonist since he was a young boy. When he was 15, he published his first drawing, a picture of his dog, which later inspired the character of Snoopy. After his high school graduation in 1940, he offered his cartoons for publication in magazines, but he received “nothing but rejection **slips**”, as he later noted.

***Peanuts*, an international commercial success** Schulz presented *The Peanuts* in October 1950 and they were published in seven U.S. newspapers. Their success grew more and more in the following years. In 1958, the first plastic toy dolls of Charlie Brown, Snoopy and other Peanuts characters were produced, starting a massive **flow** of Peanuts merchandise ranging from greeting cards to T-shirts. In the early 21st century, over 20,000 different new products featuring members of the Peanuts gang were marketed all over the world every year.

The *Peanuts* characters

Today, readers know and love a whole company of **unforgettable** young characters: Charlie

coolest: *il più simpatico*

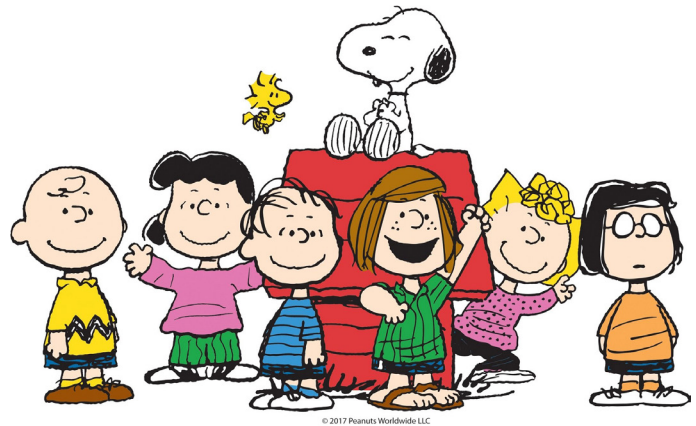
dust: *polvere*

flow: *flusso*

peanut: *arachide*

slip: *foglietto di carta*

unforgettable: *indimenticabile*



Brown, a true friend, a dedicated baseball manager, very responsible when he takes care of his dog, Snoopy; philosophical Linus with his comfort blanket and his bad-tempered big sister Lucy; Schroeder, the piano player; Sally, who wants answers to everything; their friends Franklin, Peppermint Patty, Marcie, Pigpen and his famous **dust** cloud, and the real star, Snoopy, the **coolest** beagle on the planet. Snoopy was one of Schulz's earliest Peanuts characters, appearing for the first time on October 4, 1950. In 1968, following the assassination of Martin Luther King, Schulz introduced his first black character, Franklin, whose father was a soldier in the Vietnam War. Another character, a yellow bird called Woodstock, was named after the famous 1969 music festival. From modest beginnings, *Peanuts* grew to become not only the best-loved comic strip in history, but a true global phenomenon.

1 Read the passage and say if the statements are true or false. Correct the false ones.

1. Charles Shultz's dream when he was young was to become a cartoonist.
2. His first published drawing was of a dog.
3. At the beginning of his career, his cartoons were published by a lot of magazines.
4. The cartoon *Peanuts* was presented at the end of the 1950s.
5. Merchandising of products featuring members of *Peanuts* started in 1958.
6. At the beginning of the 21st century, these products were marketed only in the US.
- 7 Charlie Brown is fond of baseball.
8. Lucy has got a very sweet temper.
9. At the end of the 1960s, Shultz introduced a black character into *Peanuts*.
10. Woodstock is a white rabbit.

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2 Match each word with the right definition.

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1. Graduation <input type="checkbox"/> | a. A piece of thick paper folded in half with a picture on the outside and a message inside. |
| 2. Massive <input type="checkbox"/> | b. A piece of wool or similar material used as a covering for warmth. |
| 3. Merchandise <input type="checkbox"/> | c. A group of people, usually friends. |
| 4. Greeting card <input type="checkbox"/> | d. The fact of finishing a course of study at university and obtaining a certification. |
| 5. Dedicated <input type="checkbox"/> | e. A sequence of drawings, often cartoon, arranged in interrelated panels. |
| 6. Blanket <input type="checkbox"/> | f. Very big or many. |
| 7. Gang <input type="checkbox"/> | g. Time and energy given to something important to you. |
| 8. Comic strip <input type="checkbox"/> | h. Goods featuring specific characters that are bought and sold. |

3 Read the text and choose the correct alternative.

Snoopy, the Perfect Friend

Snoopy is a loyal, sociable, imaginative and good-natured beagle. His **1. cartoon / book** comic has been famous to the world for many years. Fans population over the world is more **2. then / than** 350 million. He is the central character of *Peanuts* comic created by Charles M. Schulz. He also acts **3. like / as** an art connoisseur, especially when he is having daydreams on the **4. basement / rooftop** of his doghouse. He shows his genuine **5. affection / hate** to Charlie Brown who usually treats him delicious meals. Snoopy is in general tough except the time he is being bored by the cat **6. near / next** door. He very rarely **7. talks / tells** (which makes *The Peanuts* characters unique among other comic characters). His thoughts are not verbalised; his moods are instead conveyed **8. through / across** moans, yelps, growls, sobs, laughter or thought **9. balloons / balls**. Snoopy is super wise, with high creativity. He can write by typing. He always starts his **10. romance / novel** with the same sentence, "On a dark and rainy night..."

Adapted from: <http://www.snoopyfungarden.com/Emobile/Page/story/id/4.html>