

# **Canadian Celebrity Readers**

# **Famous Male Actors**

## **Grades 4-8**

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Ruth Solski was an educator for 30 years. She has written many educational resources over the years and is the founder of S&S Learning Materials. As a writer, her main goal is to provide teachers with a useful tool they can implement in their classrooms to bring the joy of learning to children.

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# Canadian Celebrity Readers

## Famous Male Actors

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G

raham Greene is best known for playing Native North American roles. His portrayal of the characters that he plays is always positive and very dignified. Although Greene has become a strong role model for Native actors in North America and has proven that they can play roles other than in the western genre, he never set out to be looked upon in this manner. He does not consider himself a spokesperson for Native rights nor a trail blazer for other Native actors in film and television. Greene prefers to have people think of him as an actor capable of playing any role that comes his way and excels in roles that have nothing to do with his Native heritage.

Graham Greene, an Oneida, was born on June 22, in 1952. He is the son of Lillian and John Greene and was raised along with five other children in Ohsweken on the Sixth Nation Reserve outside of Brantford, Ontario. At the age of 16, Graham dropped out of school and went to Rochester, New York, in the United States, where he worked at a carpet warehouse. Two years later, he returned to Toronto to study welding at George Brown College and then worked at a factory in Hamilton building railway cars. During his early years, he also worked as a high-steel worker, landscape gardener, carpenter, and bartender. In the 1970's, he worked as a "roadie" and sound man for Toronto rock bands and ran a recording studio in Ancaster, Ontario.

Graham did not grow up with the burning desire to become an actor. His acting career began due to the encouragement of a fellow worker. This colleague felt Graham would make a great actor. They discussed this matter for several weeks and finally decided to end the debate by cutting a deck of cards for the highest card. If Graham lost, he would become an actor. Shortly after, Graham found acting roles in several small theater groups which no longer exist.

In 1974, Graham graduated from *The Centre for Indigenous Theatre* where he had completed a Theatre School program. He began performing in Toronto and England. Greene's TV debut was in an episode of *The Great Detective* in 1979. His screen debut was in the 1983 movie *Running Brave*. He

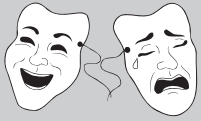


also appeared in other movies such as *Revolution* and *Powwow Highway*, but it was his role as Kicking Bird in the Oscar-winning film *Dances with Wolves* that brought him stardom in 1990. For this role, he received an Academy Award nomination. Greene received other roles in such films as *Thunderheart*, *Benefit of the Doubt*, *Maverick*, and the television series *Northern Exposure* and *The Red Green Show*. He also hosted the reality crime documentary show *Exhibit A: Secrets of Forensic Science*.

In 1992, Graham played the role of Ishi, the last Yahi, in the HBO drama, *The Last of his Tribe*. In 1994, he began appearing as Mr. Crabby Tree in the children's series *The Adventures of Dudley the Dragon* and for this role, he received his first Gemini Award.

In 1997, Graham suffered from deep depression due to family problems and had to be hospitalized. Later, he returned to work for CBC-TV and completed several films. He has talked openly about his battle with clinical depression to help others with the same problems.

Graham has been seen in parody commercials for the famous Lakota-brand pain reliever on *The Rick Mercer Report*. In 2007, he narrated a documentary series called *The War That Made America* and was invited to perform at the Stratford Festival Theatre in two plays. Graham Greene's acting ability has been honoured with two major awards. They are the Earle Grey Award for lifetime achievement and the Dora Mavor Moore Award of Toronto for Best Actor. He is one of the most visible Native Canadian actors working on the stage, in television, and in film today. During his remarkable career, he has had roles in 13 stage performances and in more than 30 movie and television productions. ★



# Graham Green

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Reading Skills

Use the words, in the box below, to complete the sentences about Graham Greene. Record the words on the lines provided.

famous	persuaded	ability	proven
television	actor	Oneida	capable
films	narrated	consider	stage
nomination	offered	elegant	acting
overcome	Reserve		

- Graham Greene is a \_\_\_\_\_ Canadian \_\_\_\_\_ who has performed on the \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and in many \_\_\_\_\_.
- He is of \_\_\_\_\_ heritage and was born and raised by his parents on the Sixth Nation \_\_\_\_\_.
- Graham has an \_\_\_\_\_ speaking voice and has \_\_\_\_\_ many different types of documentaries.
- Graham Greene has \_\_\_\_\_ that Native actors are \_\_\_\_\_ of playing any role presented to them.
- Greene was \_\_\_\_\_ by a fellow worked to try \_\_\_\_\_.
- His \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_ clinical depression has helped others with the same problem.
- His role as Kicking Bird brought him an Academy Award \_\_\_\_\_.
- Graham Greene prefers that people and fans \_\_\_\_\_ him an actor who excels at any role \_\_\_\_\_ to him.

## Vocabulary Skills

A. Underline the root word in each of the following words.

- |                 |                  |
|-----------------|------------------|
| 1. portrayal    | 6. encouragement |
| 2. proven       | 7. northern      |
| 3. western      | 8. hospitalized  |
| 4. documentary  | 9. remarkable    |
| 5. performances | 10. production   |

B. Skim through the biography to locate nine compound words. Record them on the lines provided.

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C. Locate the antonyms for the following words in the biography. Record them on the lines provided.

- negative \_\_\_\_\_
- weak \_\_\_\_\_
- eastern \_\_\_\_\_
- lowest \_\_\_\_\_
- shallow \_\_\_\_\_
- unknown \_\_\_\_\_
- peace \_\_\_\_\_
- invisible \_\_\_\_\_

## Research Skills

The Oneida Nation was the smallest of the five nations of the Iroquois confederacy. Using the Internet, research to find out five interesting facts about the Oneida.

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**P**aul Michael Gross is a famous Canadian actor, producer, director, singer, and writer. He was born on April 30, 1959, in Calgary, Alberta. His father was a Tank Commander in the Canadian army and as a result the family moved about and lived in a variety of places in Canada and the United States, as well as countries overseas. During his teenage years, Paul lived in Washington where he was introduced to acting and performed in plays such as *Canterbury Tales* and *Faustus*. At the age of 14, he was doing commercials which later helped to pay for his university education. At the age of 15, Paul was given an *Opportunities for Students* grant that paid for a summer at the *Stratford Festival Theatre* box office running errands and doing odd jobs. He was very impressed with the atmosphere, the actors, and the plays that were presented. After his stay at Stratford, he eagerly pursued Canadian regional theatre and began writing. Several of his early plays won him several writing awards.

Paul studied acting at the University of Alberta in Edmonton, but left during the third year. He later returned to complete the half-credit in order to receive his fine arts degree. After university, he performed in stage productions like *Hamlet*. In 1985, he won the Dora Award for Best Performance in *Romeo and Juliet*, and in 1988, for his role in *Observe the Sons of Ulster Marching Toward the Somme*. Gross was invited to be the playwright-in-residence at the prestigious Stratford Festival and at the Grand Theatre Company in London, Ontario to write plays that were presented in both theatres. Eventually, his writing skills extended into television where Paul wrote the teleplay for an episode of the CBC series *For the Record*. He also penned the CBC-TV movie, *Gross Misconduct*, which was about the life of hockey player Brian Spence.

In 1989, Paul returned to one of his other passions, music. As a teenager, he had studied classical guitar. He began writing rock and roll lyrics and performed with a band called *Bone Men*.

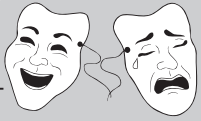


Paul's film and television appearances have also been numerous and his characters varied. In *Getting Married in Buffalo Jump*, he played a farm hand, while in *Whale Music*, he was a rock singer. In *Buried on Sunday*, he played a minister. On television, Paul appeared in the CBC remake of the movie *20,000 Leagues Under the Sea*; as a yuppie in the hilarious Canadian handy-man show, *Red Green*; and in the miniseries *Chasing Rainbows*.

Paul's television role in the show *Due South* as the upright Mountie, Benton Fraser, brought him international popularity and fame. *Due South* lasted for three seasons. During the third season, Paul acted but also assumed the duties of producer and writer. For this work, he earned an estimated salary of 2 to 3 million dollars per season and was the highest paid performer in Canadian history at that time.

Since *Due South*, Paul has portrayed the title role in *Hamlet* at Stratford Festival of Canada; Chris Cutter in the Canadian curling movie *Men with Brooms*; Tom McLaughlin, a young Canadian Prime Minister in the CBC mini-series *H2O*; Geoffrey Tennant in the TMN mini-series *Slings and Arrows*; Brian Hawkes in the first episode of the *Tales of the City* series, and John Diefenbaker in *Prairie Giant: The Tommy Douglas Story*.

Lately, Paul's major project has been a motion picture called *Passchendaele*, which was shot in Alberta in 2007. This movie is his lifelong dream to show Canadians the horrors of World War One told to him by his grandfather. It is a story of determination, commitment and triumph and one our nation will never forget. It was released in the fall of 2008. ★



# Paul Gross

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Reading Skills

Find a sentence in the biography that proves each of the following statements are true. Record the first five words of the sentence on the line provided.

1. Paul Gross experienced acting at a young age.

\_\_\_\_\_

2. He is a highly skilled and talented Canadian.

\_\_\_\_\_

3. Gross became famous worldwide due to one television show.

\_\_\_\_\_

4. Paul Gross grew up as an army brat.

\_\_\_\_\_

5. Paul's acting ability has been recognized and honoured.

\_\_\_\_\_

6. Paul's talent earned him money at a young age.

\_\_\_\_\_

7. His various talents have brought him monetary rewards as well as fame.

\_\_\_\_\_

8. Paul has been seen in movies and on television.

\_\_\_\_\_

9. Make a list of words that describe Paul Gross.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## Vocabulary Skills

A. Using straight lines, join the pairs of synonyms.

- |                  |                 |
|------------------|-----------------|
| 1. playwright •  | • very bad      |
| 2. salary •      | • victorious    |
| 3. penned •      | • dramatist     |
| 4. prestigious • | • story         |
| 5. gross •       | • bad behaviour |
| 6. misconduct •  | • earnings      |
| 7. episode •     | • distinctive   |
| 8. triumph •     | • wrote         |

B. Using straight lines join the pairs of antonyms.

- |              |             |
|--------------|-------------|
| 1. famous •  | • best      |
| 2. worst •   | • death     |
| 3. major •   | • winter    |
| 4. triumph • | • daughters |
| 5. won •     | • defeat    |
| 6. sons •    | • unknown   |
| 7. life •    | • lost      |
| 8. summer •  | • minor     |

## Research Skills

The Battle for Passchendaele was a horrific ten day artillery bombardment that began on July 31st, 1917.

Using the Internet or books in the resource centre, research the conditions in which Canadian and Allied forces had to fight.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_