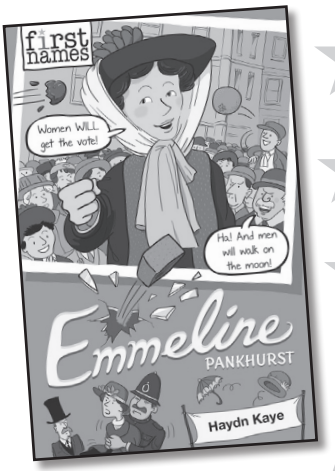
Who will you get to know next?





Coming soon . . .





first names

Elon MUSK



Tracey Turner

Illustrations by Mike Smith

For Toby, who is also full of bright ideas

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All the facts in *First Names: Elon Musk* have been carefully checked and are accurate to the best of our knowledge, but if you spot something you think may be incorrect, please let us know. This text is intended to be entertaining, that's why we've included Elon as a cartoon character. However, the words and thoughts spoken by this character are not the actual words and thoughts of the real Elon Musk – they're sometimes just for fun – and the Elon Explains sections aren't explained in Elon Musk's own words.

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Plastic bottle
Cardboard
Dangerous homemade fuel
Highly flammable chemicals

Introduction – Pretoria, South Africa, 1981

`Five . . . four . . . three . . . two . . . one . . .´

Everyone else was out and Elon had the back garden to himself. The fuse was lit. He and the cat were at a safe distance. The moment had arrived.

`. . . zero!´

With an impressive *whooosh!* the rocket whizzed into the air.

`We have lift off! Yes!´

The cat fled. Elon squinted into the cloudless sky, following the rocket's path. It soared way beyond the roof of the house, until it was just a speck up above him. Then the fuel ran out and it plummeted back to the ground, smashing into the patio.

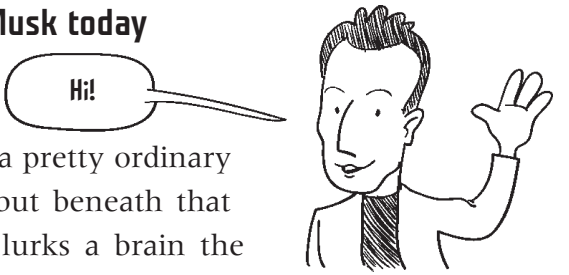
This was his most impressive launch yet. The rocket had travelled up 50 metres or more, it hadn't exploded, and Elon and the cat were both unharmed. What a result.

'Right,' said Elon, gathering up the broken bits of rocket. 'I'm going to make an even better one.'

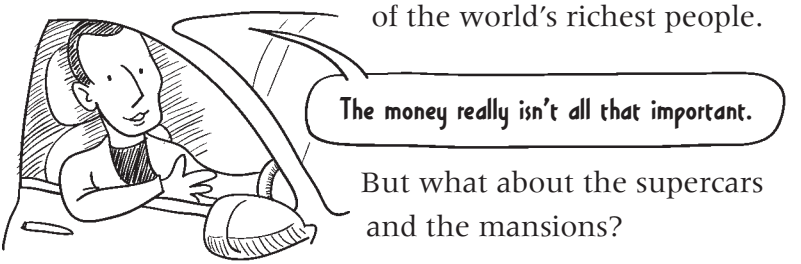
As we're about to find out, Elon's childhood passion for rocket-building never left him. He did make an even better rocket – in fact, he's now making **the most powerful space rocket in the whole world**.

But before we follow Elon's rockets into orbit, let's find out a bit more about him.

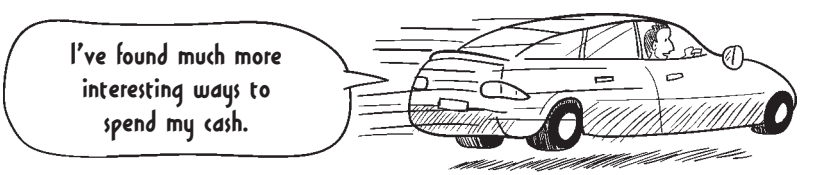
This is Elon Musk today



He looks like a pretty ordinary kind of guy, but beneath that cool exterior lurks a brain the size of a planet. He's an expert on rocket science, has a new and revolutionary idea about once a week, and never forgets a fact. He's an entrepreneur engineer and inventor who's sent mice into orbit, built awesome electric cars, inspired a mega-successful movie, and become one of the world's richest people.



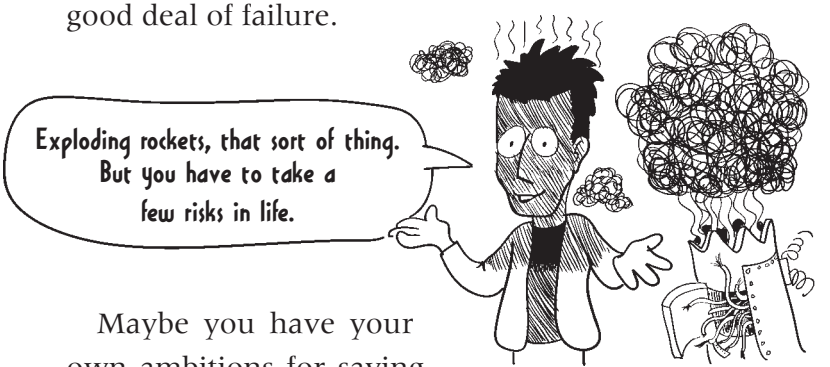
But what about the supercars and the mansions?



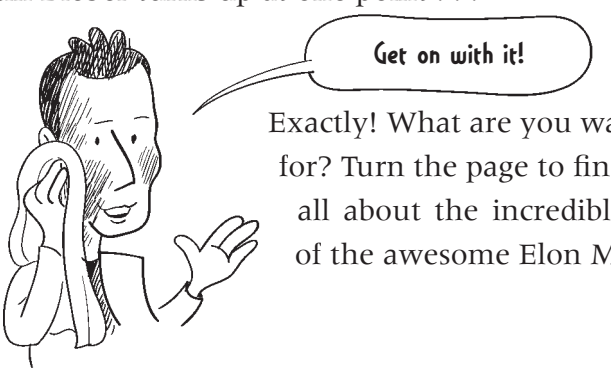
Elon does have a point there. He's used his own money to fund the super-powerful spacecraft he's developing. Another of the amazing things he's doing is a mind-blowing mission to **save the human**

race from extinction – by helping us become a multiplanetary species, starting with a colony on Mars.

But Elon wouldn't be building the biggest space rockets in the world without single-minded determination and total belief in what he's doing. Before his incredible success, he had to cope with a good deal of failure.



Maybe you have your own ambitions for saving humanity or changing the world for ever. If so, or even if you just like the sound of the rockets, the fast cars and the space mice, you are definitely going to be interested in Elon's story. There's a space greenhouse in here as well, and lots of video games. Oh, and Justin Bieber turns up at one point . . .



Exactly! What are you waiting for? Turn the page to find out all about the incredible life of the awesome Elon Musk.

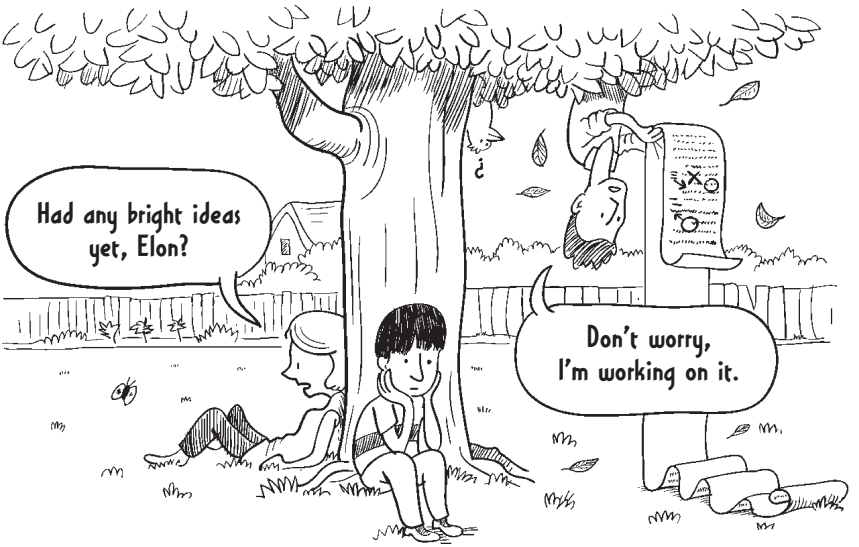
1 Elon's Easter Eggs and Blasting Stars

So, how does a rocket-building, Mars-colonizing billionaire start off in life? In Elon's case (and, to be honest, he's just about the only rocket-building, Mars-colonizing billionaire out there), he lived with his family in Pretoria, South Africa. Was he a boy genius who was full of money-making ideas and amazed everyone with his scientific knowledge? Yes, of course he was. But let's start at the beginning.

Elon was born in 1971, and back then South Africa could be a tough place to grow up. The government separated people of different races – children even had to go to different schools – and black people didn't have the same rights as white people. Things were extremely unfair, and often a little tense, to say the least. On the other hand, the Musks were well off. They didn't own a private jet or anything flash like that, but Errol Musk, Elon's dad, was a successful engineer, and Maye Musk, his mum, was a nutritionist and model.

You might want to take a moment to get your head around the full horror of this next bit, because – even though they could easily have afforded it – **Mr and Mrs Musk didn't give their children any**

pocket money! How on earth did Elon and his younger brother and sister – Kimbal and Tosca (the family liked interesting names) – get their hands on unhealthy snacks, toys and comics?



Two of Elon's younger cousins had similar pocket-money problems. They lived close by – their mum and Elon's mum were twin sisters – and when Elon came up with some brilliant plans, they were keen to get involved. Despite the unimaginable horror of not having any pocket money, the children were allowed plenty of freedom to do what they wanted and so some of those plans actually succeeded. Here's one of the best:

An Eggstreme Solution

By the time Elon was around 15, he'd already had a lot of practice finding solutions to the pocket-money problem, and now he turned his attention to chocolate. He couldn't help noticing that Easter eggs were expensive, but chocolate bars were cheap, so he put a business idea to Kimbal and his cousins:



The cousins took their Easter eggs around the wealthiest streets in Pretoria, and used a clever sales pitch to sell them for about ten times the going rate.

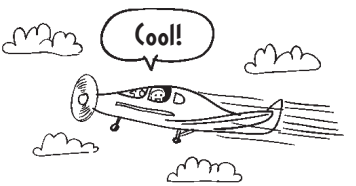


It worked! The cousins made a tidy sum.

If you were just off to buy some cheap chocolate and silver foil, stop right there. Easter eggs are much cheaper now so this clever scheme wouldn't work today.

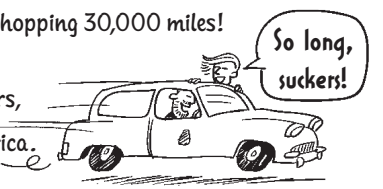
Adventurous Oldsters

Elon and his cousins were certainly an adventurous bunch, and that might have had something to do with their grandparents, Joshua and Wyn Haldeman. Sadly, grandad Joshua died when Elon was only three, but granny Wyn lived on to tell the children about their many daring adventures. She even gave slide shows to prove her stories were true. Among other things, the two oldsters . . .



- Flew a single-engine plane all over Canada, with their kids in the back.

- Moved to South Africa and became the first people ever to fly a single -engine plane from there to Australia – a whopping 30,000 miles!



- Came joint first, beating professional drivers, in a 12,000-kilometre car race through Africa.

- Searched for the fabled Lost City of the Kalahari Desert, which meant the whole family camping in the African bush with hungry hyenas, leopards and lions circling. Wyn had to patrol the perimeter with her rifle.

