

# Tracing the beginnings of SpongeBob, Squidward and the Krusty Krab

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Image 1. (From left) Sandy Cheeks, SpongeBob SquarePants, Squidward, Mr. Krabs and Patrick Starfish in Nickelodeon's "SpongeBob SquarePants" cartoon show. Photo by: Nickelodeon

SpongeBob SquarePants spent most of his life in a pineapple under the sea. But he was born in a marine biology institute in California, in 1989.

He was just Bob the Sponge then. He was a sea sponge with cool black shades and a bright smile. Bob the Sponge had no arms or legs. In his early days, he was only a talking blob. He starred in a comic book and described life in an intertidal pool, which is an ocean habitat home to millions of sea creatures.

"You are about to embark on a journey into one of the most incredible ecosystems on this planet, the Intertidal Zone!" Bob says.

This world was created by Stephen Hillenburg. He was a marine biologist. He made the comic while he was working as a teacher and artist at the Orange County Marine Institute. His goal was to teach kids about intertidal pools in an entertaining way.

## Short Comic Book For Kids

Originally, it was just a short comic book for kids. Within 10 years, it became one of the most popular TV cartoons. Bob the Sponge became SpongeBob SquarePants, and the Intertidal Zone became Bikini Bottom.

Nearly 20 years later, Hillenburg died Monday, November 26, of Amyotrophic lateral sclerosis. It is called ALS for short. ALS affects nerve cells in the brain and spinal cord. This causes the muscles to weaken. It also takes away a person's ability to do many things like walking. Hillenburg was 57.

"He touched the lives of many students," said the Ocean Institute, which used to be called the Orange County Marine Institute. "He brought laughter to millions."

Hillenburg always loved the ocean. He spent his childhood learning to surf and snorkel. His favorite show was "The Undersea World of Jacques Cousteau." After he graduated from high school, he spent a few summers working as a fry cook and lobster boiler at a restaurant in Maine. The restaurant became the inspiration for Bikini Bottom's fast-food restaurant, the Krusty Krab, and its owner, Mr. Krabs.



## Rocky The Shrimp And Mr. Barnacle

In 1986, Hillenburg went to work at the Orange County Marine Institute. Soon he used his drawing skills to make the educational comic book. Bob the Sponge stars with Rocky the Shrimp, and they visit creatures such as Mr. Barnacle, a hungry crab.

Later on Hillenburg said he made Bob a sponge because he wanted a funny-looking narrator.

Hillenburg tried to sell the comic book to different publishers in 1989. No one was interested.

That was no problem for Hillenburg, though. That same year, he decided that he wanted to go back to school to study animation. He eventually went to work for Nickelodeon, the children's cable network.

One of the people there saw his comic book and said, "This should be your own show."

Hillenburg brainstormed. He started drawing up a new sponge character. He started with more shapeless sea sponges with stubby limbs and droopy faces. Finally, he decided the square, kitchen sink sponge would work best.

The result was Sponge Boy. That was the name of the character when Hillenburg suggested the show to Nickelodeon in 1996.

## Two-Bedroom Pineapple

"Who is Sponge Boy?" Hillenburg wrote to Nickelodeon. "Sponge Boy is our hero! He's a single male sponge who resides in a fully furnished, two bedroom ... pineapple."

Sponge Boy loves his job at the Krusty Krab and never takes off his uniform.

Nickelodeon executives were sold on the idea. Hillenburg discovered that there already was a mop named "Spongeboy" and renamed the character "SpongeBob."

Through his life, Hillenburg's original mission remained the same. He wanted to educate young people about ocean conservation and its beauty.

"People have to come together and realize how important our oceans are," he said in 2009.

"Hopefully, if you watch SpongeBob, you see the plankton and the crabs and starfish, and you'll want to take care of our oceans."

## Quiz

- 1 WHY did Stephen Hillenburg decide to create a talking Sponge named Bob? How do you know?
- (A) Hillenburg had always wanted to create a character that lived in a pineapple; SpongeBob SquarePants spent most of his life in a pineapple under the sea.
  - (B) Hillenburg wanted to make a character that looked like a kitchen sink sponge; He was just Bob the Sponge then. He was a sea sponge with cool black shades and a bright smile.
  - (C) Hillenburg thought making the comic would get him a job as a marine biologist; He made the comic while he was working as a teacher and artist at the Orange County Marine Institute.
  - (D) Hillenburg wanted to make learning about intertidal pools fun and interesting; His goal was to teach kids about intertidal pools in an entertaining way.

- 2 Read the section "Rocky The Shrimp And Mr. Barnacle."

Select the paragraph from the section that shows how Stephen Hillenburg came up with the SpongeBob SquarePants look that people recognize today.

- (A) In 1986, Hillenburg went to work at the Orange County Marine Institute. Soon he used his drawing skills to make the educational comic book. Bob the Sponge stars with Rocky the Shrimp, and they visit creatures such as Mr. Barnacle, a hungry crab.
- (B) That was no problem for Hillenburg, though. That same year, he decided that he wanted to go back to school to study animation. He eventually went to work for Nickelodeon, the children's cable network.
- (C) Hillenburg brainstormed. He started drawing up a new sponge character. He started with more shapeless sea sponges with stubby limbs and droopy faces. Finally, he decided the square, kitchen sink sponge would work best.
- (D) The result was Sponge Boy. That was the name of the character when Hillenburg suggested the show to Nickelodeon in 1996.

- 3 Read the following paragraph from the article

*"People have to come together and realize how important our oceans are," he said in 2009. "Hopefully, if you watch SpongeBob, you see the plankton and the crabs and starfish, and you'll want to take care of our oceans."*

Which statement BEST summarizes the paragraph?

- (A) Stephen Hillenburg wanted SpongeBob to teach kids about the beauty and importance of the oceans.
- (B) SpongeBob was created by Stephen Hillenburg in a marine biology institute in 1989.
- (C) Stephen Hillenburg was a marine biologist who later decided that he wanted to make comic books instead.
- (D) SpongeBob became a popular cartoon show that made millions of kids laugh all over the world.

Read the following paragraph from the article.

*Hillenburg always loved the ocean. He spent his childhood learning to surf and snorkel. His favorite show was "The Undersea World of Jacques Cousteau." After he graduated from high school, he spent a few summers working as a fry cook and lobster boiler at a restaurant in Maine. The restaurant became the inspiration for Bikini Bottom's fast-food restaurant, the Krusty Krab, and its owner, Mr. Krabs.*

HOW does this paragraph support the MAIN idea of the article?

- (A) It explains why Hillenburg had such a hard time getting publishers to buy his comic book about a sponge.
- (B) It shows how the SpongeBob cartoon was influenced by events from Hillenburg's life and interest in the sea.
- (C) It describes SpongeBob's work at the Krusty Krab and illustrates why he never wanted to take off his uniform.
- (D) It illustrates that Hillenburg started drawing his SpongeBob character right after he graduated from high school.