

Teenage Businessman

William Henry Gates III was born in Seattle, Washington on October 28, 1955. His father, William Henry Gates Jr., was a lawyer. His mother, Mary, was a schoolteacher and chairperson of United Way International. Both of his parents were active in charitable causes. In dinnertime conversations, William and Mary would often tell their children about the work they did.

Bill was the second of three children, and the only son. "It was a rich environment in which to live," Bill Gates later said about his family.

Growing up, Bill spent a lot of time in his basement bedroom reading and thinking. Once, when his mother called him for dinner and he didn't respond, she asked Bill what he was doing.

"I'm thinking!" he shouted back at her.

"You're thinking?"

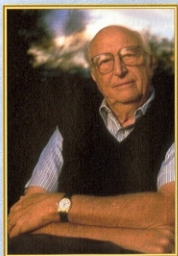
"Yes, Mom, I'm thinking. Have you ever tried thinking?"

Mr. and Mrs. Gates decided their young son needed counseling. They thought a therapist would help Bill overcome his shyness and learn to be more obedient to his parents. After a year, the therapist told Bill's parents that his stubbornness was there to stay.

Bill Gates became interested in computer programming when he was a student at Lakeside School.

In 1968, when Bill was in eighth grade, he enrolled at Seattle's prestigious Lakeside School. His former school wasn't much of a challenge for him, and his parents hoped Lakeside would give him the stimulation he needed. That year, the students at Lakeside learned about computers.

Computers were still new, expensive, and huge! A single computer took up an entire room. Only a few large businesses and universities owned them. Lakeside School couldn't afford a computer, so the school raised money to buy time on a computer owned by General Electric. School **administrators** were certain they'd purchased enough computer time to last a whole school year, but they hadn't counted on Bill Gates and his friend, Paul Allen.



*Bill Gates's father,
Bill Gates Jr.*

Did You Know...

Bill was an Eagle Scout, and served in 1972 as a congressional intern.