

Bill Gates

William Henry Gates III was born in Seattle, Washington on October 28, 1955. He was the middle child of William H. Gates II, a prominent Seattle lawyer, and Mary Gates, who worked as a teacher before she had kids.

Bill had an older sister, Kristi, and a younger sister, Libby. Bill loved to play board games and was competitive at most everything he did. He was an intelligent student and his best subject in grade school was Math. However, Bill got easily bored with school and ended up getting into trouble a lot. His parents kept him occupied with outside activities like Boy Scouts and reading science fiction books.

After graduating from high school in 1973, Gates attended Harvard University. At first he planned to study as a lawyer, but he continued to spend much of his time on computers. He also kept in touch with his friend Paul Allen who was working for Honeywell.

In 1975, Gates dropped out of Harvard to start a software company with Paul Allen called Microsoft. The company was doing well, but it was in 1980 that Gates made a deal with IBM that change computing. Microsoft reached a deal to provide the MS-DOS operating system on the new IBM PC. Gates sold the software to IBM for a fee of \$50,000, however he held onto the copyright of the software. When the PC market took off, Microsoft also sold MS-DOS to other PC manufacturers. Soon, Microsoft was the operating system in a large percentage of computers around the world.

Gates wasn't satisfied with just winning the operating system portion of the software market. Over the next few years he introduced new products such as Windows Office programmes like Word and Excel. The company also introduced new and improved versions of Windows.

In 1986, Gates took Microsoft public. The company's stock was worth \$520 million. Gates owned 45 percent of the stock himself which was worth \$234 million. The company continued its rapid growth and the stock price soared. At one point, Gates' stock was worth over \$100 billion. He was the richest man in the world.

Like most successful entrepreneurs, Bill Gates' success came from a combination of hard work, intelligence, timing, business sense and luck. Gates constantly challenged his employees to work harder and innovate, but he also worked as hard or harder than the people who worked for him. Gates also wasn't afraid to take risks. He took a risk when he dropped out of Harvard to start his own company. He also took a risk when he changed Microsoft's operating system from MS-DOS to Windows. However, his risks were calculated. He had confidence in himself and his product.

