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## CHAPTER 1

# EARLY LIFE

## WHO IS ED SHEERAN?

Ed Sheeran is an English singer-songwriter. He performs with an acoustic guitar and no band. The singer was born in February 1991. Ed grew up in Framlingham, Suffolk. This is a small town in eastern England. Fewer than 4,000 people live there.



## WHO IS SHAWN MENDES?

Shawn Mendes is a Canadian singer. Like Ed Sheeran, he writes his own songs. The singer was born in Toronto, Ontario, in August 1998. His parents raised him in Pickering, a suburb of Toronto. He told *Rolling Stone* that it is “the most comforting place in the world.” Even after becoming a star, Shawn lived at home.







Ross Castle, Ireland

## THE SHEERAN FAMILY

Ed's father, John Sheeran, is the son of Irish immigrants. The family visited Ireland often when the star was young. Irish culture, art, and music are important to the Sheerans. While Ed was growing up, his parents ran an art business.



## THE MENDES FAMILY



Shawn's family has immigrant roots too. His father's grandparents came from Portugal. The Mendes family still visits Portugal to see relatives. In Toronto, Shawn's father sells restaurant supplies. Mrs. Mendes works as a real estate agent. She was born in England. "They are both entrepreneurs, which is awesome, and now I am one too," Shawn told the *Telegraph*.

Porto, Portugal

### CANADIAN MUSICIANS

Many Canadian musicians make it big in the United States and around the world. Drake and Justin Bieber are both from Canada. So is R&B star The Weeknd. Canadian indie band Arcade Fire won a Grammy for Album of the Year in 2011. Megastar Celine Dion continues to entertain fans around the world.



Celine Dion

## THE YOUNGER BROTHER

Ed has an older brother named Matthew. He is a composer. Matthew also plays violin and viola. Their grandmother's final wish was for the two boys to work together. In 2017, Matthew planned the music for one of Ed's songs. "It's quite a cool thing to work with your sibling," Ed said in an interview with Steve Wazz at Duke University.







sound wave tattoo

## AN OLDER BROTHER

Shawn has a sibling too. His sister, Aaliyah, is five years younger. The two were very close growing up. Aaliyah recorded many of Shawn's early videos. The siblings have also recorded themselves singing together. "We have a really awesome connection," Shawn told KISS-FM radio. He even has a tattoo inspired by her. His sister and parents were recorded saying "I love you." This was turned into a drawing of a sound wave. Then Shawn got a tattoo of it.

A large, multi-story stone building with many windows, identified as Rishworth School. The building is surrounded by green trees and a lawn. A green rounded rectangle with the text 'Rishworth School' is overlaid on the top left of the image.

Rishworth School

## SCHOOL STRUGGLES

Ed grew up in a middle-class family. They sent him to a private school called Rishworth School. Teachers have described Ed as shy and quiet. His stutter and thick glasses made him a target of bullying. The singer talked about this in an interview with British rapper Dave and DJ Nihal. He said he “would cry every single day.”





## A FUN CHILDHOOD

Shawn's childhood was easier than Ed's. He had no problems at school and enjoyed playing sports. Hockey, soccer, and longboarding with friends were favorites. His family loved to have fun together too. "My dad takes Halloween serious," the singer told PopBuzz. "At our house we always dress up and create scenes. . . . It takes like three weeks. It was always a fun thing as a kid."

