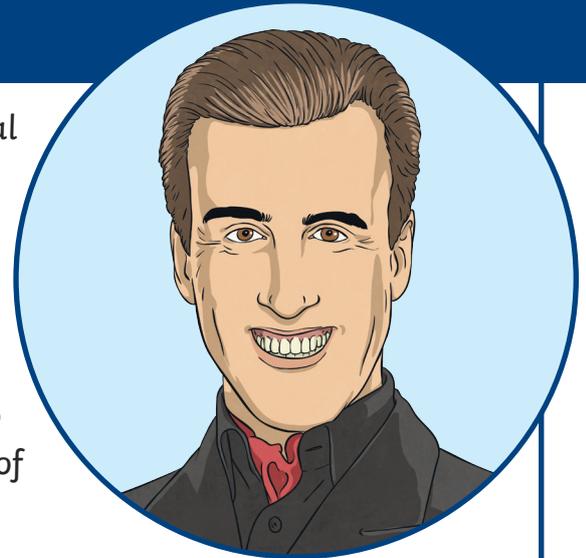


# Anton Du Beke



Anton Du Beke was born on the 20<sup>th</sup> July 1966. His real name is Anthony Paul Beke. He grew up in Sevenoaks, Kent with his Spanish mother, Hungarian father and two younger siblings (a brother and a sister). As a child, he was always very competitive and loved to play sport, including football, golf, and was even a junior boxer! However, one evening when he was 14, he was sent to meet his sister at a dance class at the Holton School of Dancing and everything changed.

Anton started to study ballet, contemporary, jazz and modern theatre dance. He had lots to learn as most professional dancers start long before the age of 14. He worked hard and sat his first exams in June 1981. A few years later, he began to compete in amateur competitions. He left school at the age of 16 with his dream of becoming a professional dancer. At age 17, Anton decided he would focus on ballroom dancing.

He met his dance partner Erin Boag (who was also a Strictly Come Dancing star) in 1997. This was the winning partnership and after less than a year of training together, they won the New Zealand championships and made it to the prestigious International Dance Championships at London's Royal Albert Hall. After a few years of winning titles and competitions the world over, the pair decided it was time to turn professional in 2002.



Life would change again in 2004, when BBC One advertised for professional dancers for a new prime-time TV show. The pair were chosen and Anton Du Beke is now the only original dancer to have been involved since Strictly Come Dancing's creation in 2004.

He believes the world would be a better place if everyone learned to dance. He has a strong work ethic and has been learning to sing and tap dance in recent years. He has also been branching out into the world of TV presenting. He hosted BBC's gameshow *The Wall* and *Step Up to the Plate*. His style icon and hero is the classic entertainer Fred Astaire.

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