

The Weaver of Wonders: A Life of Discovery

Learning objective: To identify and explain the key features of a biographical text, including chronological order and the use of third-person perspective.

Read the biography of the pioneering inventor, Elara Thorne, and answer the questions below. Think carefully about how the author describes her life journey.

Elara Thorne was born in 1912 in a small, coastal village. From a young age, she was fascinated by how things moved, often spending hours dismantling old clocks to understand their gears. By 1930, she moved to the city to study mechanical engineering, a field rarely entered by women at the time. Despite facing many challenges, Elara persisted with her studies. In 1945, she invented the 'Solar-Stream', a clever device that harnessed sunlight to power simple household lamps. This invention cost only £5 to produce, making sustainable light accessible to many families. Throughout her later years, Elara became a mentor for young scientists, encouraging them to question the world around them. She passed away in 1998, leaving behind a legacy of curiosity and innovation. Today, she is remembered not just for her inventions, but for her unwavering determination to improve the lives of others through science. Her story remains an inspiration for every curious mind that looks at a complex machine and asks, 'How does that work?'

Word bank: chronological · biography · pioneering · innovation · legacy · accomplishment

1. Identify the year Elara Thorne was born and the year she invented the 'Solar-Stream'. (2 marks)

2. What was the retail cost of the 'Solar-Stream' device, and what was its primary purpose? (2 marks)

3. Why does the author describe Elara's field of study as 'rarely entered by women at the time'? (2 marks)

4. What can you infer about Elara's character from the way she spent her childhood? (2 marks)

5. Do you think Elara Thorne's contribution to society was significant? Justify your answer using evidence from the text. (3 marks)

Draw: Draw a diagram of your own invention that could help people in your local community, just like Elara Thorne's Solar-Stream.



Extension challenge: Research a person who has made a significant impact on technology. Write a short paragraph explaining why their work is still important today. Compare and contrast their life journey with Elara Thorne's. What might happen if Elara had never persisted with her engineering studies?