

Biographer's Blueprint: Crafting a Life Story

Learning objective: To identify, select, and organise chronological facts to construct a structured biography of an influential figure.

You are acting as a biographer for Ellie the elephant. Using the provided facts below, sequence the events of her life into a cohesive narrative structure. Ensure you use cohesive devices (conjunctions, adverbials) to link the paragraphs. Choose the most significant 'turning point' in her life and explain why it defines her character.

Word bank: chronological · milestone · biography · anecdote · legacy · perspective · turning point · narrative

1. Ellie was born in the Great Savannah. At age five, she memorised the location of every waterhole in the region. At age ten, she saved her herd during a drought by leading them to a hidden spring. At age fifteen, she began teaching younger elephants about history. Using this data, explain why the drought incident is considered a 'turning point' in her life narrative rather than just a routine event. (3 marks)

2. When writing a biography, why is it essential to include an anecdote about a subject's character, rather than just a list of dates and facts? Justify your answer. (2 marks)

3. Compare and contrast the structure of a biography with an autobiography. How does the 'perspective' of the writer change the tone of the story? (3 marks)

4. If you were writing Ellie's biography, what specific historical research would you need to conduct to ensure your account is factually accurate? (2 marks)

5. What might happen to the historical record of Ellie's life if a biographer decided to omit her failures and only write about her successes? Explain the impact on the reader. (3 marks)

6. Draft a 'hook' sentence for the opening paragraph of Ellie's biography that would engage a reader immediately. Ensure you use an adverbial phrase to set the scene. (2 marks)

Draw: Sketch a timeline map for Ellie's life, using symbols to represent her three major milestones: her birth, the discovery of the waterhole, and her role as a teacher.



Extension challenge: Research a famous historical figure (such as Mary Anning or Alan Turing). Write a short, 150-word biographical summary that focuses on a 'turning point' in their life, using formal, sophisticated vocabulary such as 'pivotal', 'formidable', and 'unwavering'.