

Uncovering History with Ellie: A Biography Workshop

Learning objective: To identify and analyse the features of a biography, focusing on chronological structure, formal tone, and the use of third-person perspective.

Read the short biography of a pioneering explorer below. Pay close attention to how the author uses dates and descriptive language to tell a life story. Then, answer the questions to demonstrate your understanding of biographical features.

Born in 1912 in a quiet coastal village, Captain Arthur Halloway was destined for the sea. By the age of ten, Arthur had already memorised the constellations, often guided by his grandfather's ancient nautical charts. In 1934, he embarked on his most daring expedition yet: mapping the uncharted northern archipelagos. Despite facing freezing gales and limited supplies, Arthur's meticulous record-keeping ensured his team's safety. He returned home in 1936 as a celebrated navigator. Throughout his later years, he dedicated his time to mentoring young sailors, ensuring that his passion for exploration would inspire generations to come. Arthur Halloway passed away in 1998, leaving behind a legacy of curiosity and courage that remains a cornerstone of modern maritime history.

Word bank: Chronological · Perspective · Achievement · Legacy · Fact-based · Formal · Milestone

1. Identify two specific pieces of evidence from the text that prove this biography is written in chronological order. (2 marks)

2. Explain why the author chose to write this piece in the third person rather than the first person. What effect does this have on the reader? (2 marks)

3. How does the author convey Captain Halloway's character without using direct quotes? Provide one example from the text to justify your answer. (2 marks)

4. Compare and contrast the challenges Arthur faced during his 1934 expedition with the impact he had in his later years. What does this suggest about his personal growth? (3 marks)

5. What might happen to the historical accuracy of this biography if it were written by a close family member instead of a neutral historian? Justify your opinion. (3 marks)

Draw: Draw a commemorative plaque or a museum display case dedicated to Captain Arthur Halloway. Include one symbol that represents his love for the sea and one that represents his legacy of mentoring.



Extension challenge: Research a historical figure who has made a significant contribution to science or exploration. Write a brief paragraph (approx. 100 words) using a formal tone, incorporating at least two dates and one complex sentence describing their greatest achievement. Reflect on why biographies are essential tools for preserving our collective history.