

Mastering the Art of Biography: Life Stories

Learning objective: To analyse the structural features, linguistic devices, and chronological organisation required to write an engaging and informative biography.

Read each question carefully. Use your knowledge of non-fiction writing styles to provide detailed, reasoned responses. Aim to use ambitious vocabulary and clear, coherent sentences.

This worksheet requires you to demonstrate your knowledge of biography writing rather than reading a pre-written text. Think about the lives of famous historical figures or inspiring individuals you have researched in class.

Word bank: Chronological · Perspective · Anecdote · Legacy · Objective · Milestones · Context · Chronicle

1. A biography is typically written in the third person. Explain why a biographer chooses to use the third person instead of the first person, and discuss how this affects the reader's perception of the subject. (2 marks)

2. Why is it essential to maintain a chronological structure when detailing a person's life? What might happen to the reader's understanding if the sequence of events were significantly disrupted? (2 marks)

3. Compare and contrast the inclusion of 'facts' versus 'anecdotes' in a biography. Why is a balance of both necessary to create a compelling life story? (3 marks)

4. If you were writing a biography about Nova the Owl, identify two 'milestones' you would need to include to ensure the reader understands her development as a scientist. (2 marks)

5. Justify your answer: Is it possible for a biography to be truly 'objective' (completely neutral), or does the author's own perspective inevitably influence the narrative? Explain your reasoning. (3 marks)

6. Imagine you are writing the concluding paragraph of a biography. What is the importance of discussing a person's 'legacy' rather than simply ending with their final years? (2 marks)

Draw: Draw a 'Timeline of Life' diagram for a person of your choice. Include at least four significant milestones, using symbols to represent their biggest achievements.



Extension challenge: Research a historical figure who changed the world through science or discovery. Write an introduction paragraph (approx. 100 words) for their biography, ensuring you include a 'hook' to grab the reader's attention, the context of their time, and a clear thesis statement about why they are an important figure in history.