

## Informational Text

### **GENRE: Biography**

#### **DEFINITION:**

Biography is a factual third person account of a real person's life usually focusing on character, career, or achievements, and providing authentic representations of the time and place in which the individual lived. A biography is more than a list of impersonal facts like birth, education, work, relationships and death. It also delves into the emotions of experiencing such events.

#### **PURPOSE:**

- To perpetuate the memory of a person
- To chronicle a person's life
- To share achievements, influences and incidents of the subject's life
- To dispel biased views
- To convey an accurate view of the person, make the person widely known, or reveal the significance of the person in relationship to influencing people or events
- To help readers come to understand big ideas, lessons and themes provided through understanding the subject's personal patterns throughout his/her history
- To reflect on aspects of historical or topical interest
- To acknowledge a person's influence on groups or causes
- To chronicle the most interesting and important events, usually with the aim of revealing character, personality, and social context.

#### **CHARACTERISTICS:**

- Factual, verifiable nonfiction account attempts to provide an accurate history or partial history of the person's life
- Narrative structure and elements
- Based upon credible primary and secondary research sources: diaries, journals, newspaper clippings, official documents, subject's letters and memos to or from others, personal knowledge, public ledgers, genealogies, digital library articles; books, videos, the Internet, newspaper articles, official documents, land memories captured through journal writing or interviews can be used as research materials to substantiate the details of this form of writing
- Well-represented characterization of the person
- Statements or descriptions related to the subject's significant relationships
- Often includes quotes, anecdotes, or comments from other people

- Commentaries provide insights from various perspectives
- May be written when the subject is alive or after death
- Visuals contribute to understanding of character, events, and theme
- May include footnotes and an extensive bibliography

### **Theme:**

- Often based upon the subject's pattern of actions (reflecting feelings, values and beliefs)
- Sub-themes derive from shortcomings, virtues and milestones

### **Characters:**

- Understood through third person account
- Reliable descriptions based on a record of facts
- Developed characterization drawn from various sources/perspectives
- Facts about the individual are authentic and verifiable
- Subject portrayed as a whole individual with strengths and weaknesses
- Subject experiences events and conflicts when attempting to resolve problems
- Descriptions of "significant relationships"
- Focuses on events that illustrate character traits, beliefs, values, and personal philosophy

### **Setting:**

- Various settings fluctuate with the chronological life experiences of the subject
- Authenticity of time and place in which the individual lived
- Often details family background, childhood experiences, education, personality and character, comments by critics, business ventures, contributions to field of work or interest and the effects of these

### **Plot:**

- Characters within settings encounter problems through events and rising action leading to problem resolution
- Well represented history of pivotal influential events (defining moments)
- Chronological events
- May be divided into separate episodes, milestones or chapters

**Author's craft:**

- Development of mood/tone, creation of tension, voice, point of view, imagery, figurative language (metaphors/similes) etc.
- Characterization
- Photos and illustrations to augment significant meaning
- Incorporates accurate, verifiable facts
- Theme
- Unity