

Genre: Biography

Definitions:

- “A biography is an account of a person’s life written by someone else.” (Kathleen Buss and Lee Karnowski. *Reading and Writing Literary Genres*, IRA, 2000)
- A biography is “...a written account of a person’s life that focuses on character and career or achievements.” (Margaret E. Mooney. *Text Forms and Features*, Richard C. Owen, 2001)

Purpose:

- To tell about a person’s life, highlighting achievements.
- To make sure that people’s view of the person is accurate.
- To make the person well known.
- To show the person’s influence on people and events (in history).

Form and Features:

- A biography gives an accurate history of a person’s life or part of his or her life and accurately shows the time and place in which he or she lived.
- Details may include family background, childhood experiences, education, personality, comments by others (favorable and not), and contributions or influences on people and events.
- Biographies are well-researched from sources such as diaries, newspapers, documents, letters, etc.
- Biographies often include quotes, anecdotes, and comments from other people.
- Biographies are usually organized sequentially and told in the third person.
- Illustrations are usually photographs.
- Chapters often have descriptive titles, not just numbers. (adapted from Mooney, *Text Forms and Features*, Owen, 2001)