

How to write a biography

In a biography we give a summary of a person's life, including key facts and interesting points.

We start with the person's birth and continue until their death or until the present.

Remember!

1 Structure

- In the introductory paragraph, say why this person is famous / important. Give details about their birth / childhood.
- In the next paragraph, give the main details about the person's life and career.
- In the last paragraph, explain what the person is doing now / the end of his or her life. Give an opinion about the person's importance today.

2 Content

- Use past tenses to write about someone who has died and present tenses and the present perfect to write about someone who is still alive.
- Use sequencing words to make the order of life events clear.
- Use character adjectives to describe the person.

Useful language

Life stages: ... was born on/in ... / At an early age ... /

His/her early life was ... / He/She was educated at / grew up in ... /
He/She lived in ... / spent ... years in ... / retired in ... / died in ...

Sequencing: At first, ... / After / Afterwards, / Later, ... / Then, ... /
Finally, ... / In the end, ... / in 1986

Addition: Not only ... but also ... / He/She both ... and ...

Result: As a result of this, ... / Consequently, ... / Because of this, ...

Character adjectives: famous / imaginative / talented / brilliant / exceptional /
creative / influential / popular / inspiring / successful / well-known

Model question

Write about a person from the fashion industry who you admire. Why do you admire this person?

Model answer

Jan Carstairs **was born** in London in 1945 and she **became interested** in art and design at **an early age**. By the 1960s, Jan had become **one of the most influential designers** of the 1960s and **her clothes were worn by the top models** of the time.

Jan came from quite a poor family, but she **won a scholarship** to a famous London art college **in 1959**. Four years later, she was designing the mini skirts and paper dresses that appeared on the covers of the most popular magazines of the '60s.

Jan was **brilliant**, but very **shy**. Because of this, she avoided publicity. In **1974** she moved to a small town in France where she **lived until she died in 2004**. Jan Carstairs was an **exceptionally talented** designer and is **still remembered and copied** by fashion designers **today**.

life stages

importance

sequencing

character, reason

opinion and importance today