BRIDGES EDITION

GENRE readers' & writers' WORKSHOP

BIOGRAPHY

George Washington

Abraham Lincoln



by Catherine Goodridge

Benchmark EDUCATION

Genre: Biography
Level: K/20*

GENRE readers' & writers' WORKSHOP™

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LITERARY ANALYSIS
- Respond to and interpret text
- Make text-to-text connections
- Analyze the genre

READING SKILLS
Comprehension
- Identify sequence of events

Word Study
- Adjectives that describe locations

Tier Two Vocabulary (see Glossary)

WRITING SKILLS
Writer's Tools
- Strong verbs

Writer's Craft
- How to write a biography

THEME CONNECTIONS
- U.S. History

*The reading level assigned to this text is based on the genre examples only. "Focus on the Genre," "Reread," and "Writer's Craft" features were not leveled. These sections are intended for read-aloud or shared reading.

Benchmark Education Company
629 Fifth Avenue • Pelham, NY • 10803

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ISBN: 978-1-60859-647-8

The Readers' & Writers' Genre Workshop series includes eleven fiction and nonfiction genres. There are two titles with multiple stories for each genre.

How to use this book

1. Learn about the genre by reading pages 2–3. Get background information about the subjects of the biographies on pages 4–5.
2. Read the biographies for enjoyment.
3. Reread the biographies and answer the questions on pages 13 and 21.
4. Reread the last biography. Pay attention to the comments in the margins. See how an author writes a biography.
5. Follow the steps on pages 22–23 to write your own biography.
6. Complete the activity on the inside back cover. Answer the follow-up questions.

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Photo credits: Cover B, Page 4B, 11, 12, 16, 17, 18, 20: The Granger Collection, New York; Page 8, 9: Library of Congress; Page 19: Bettmann/Corbis

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George Washington



Abraham Lincoln



Two Biographies

by Catherine Goodridge

Table of Contents

Focus on the Genre: Biography 2

Meet the Subjects 4

George Washington 6

Abraham Lincoln 14

The Writer's Craft: Biography 22

Glossary 24

Make Connections Across Texts . . . . . Inside Back Cover

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BIOGRAPHY

What is a biography?

A biography is a factual retelling of another person's life. The person may have lived long ago or in recent history, or the person may still be alive today. Biographies can cover a person's entire life, or just important parts of a person's life. When possible, a biography includes direct quotes from the person. This helps the reader make a connection to the person.

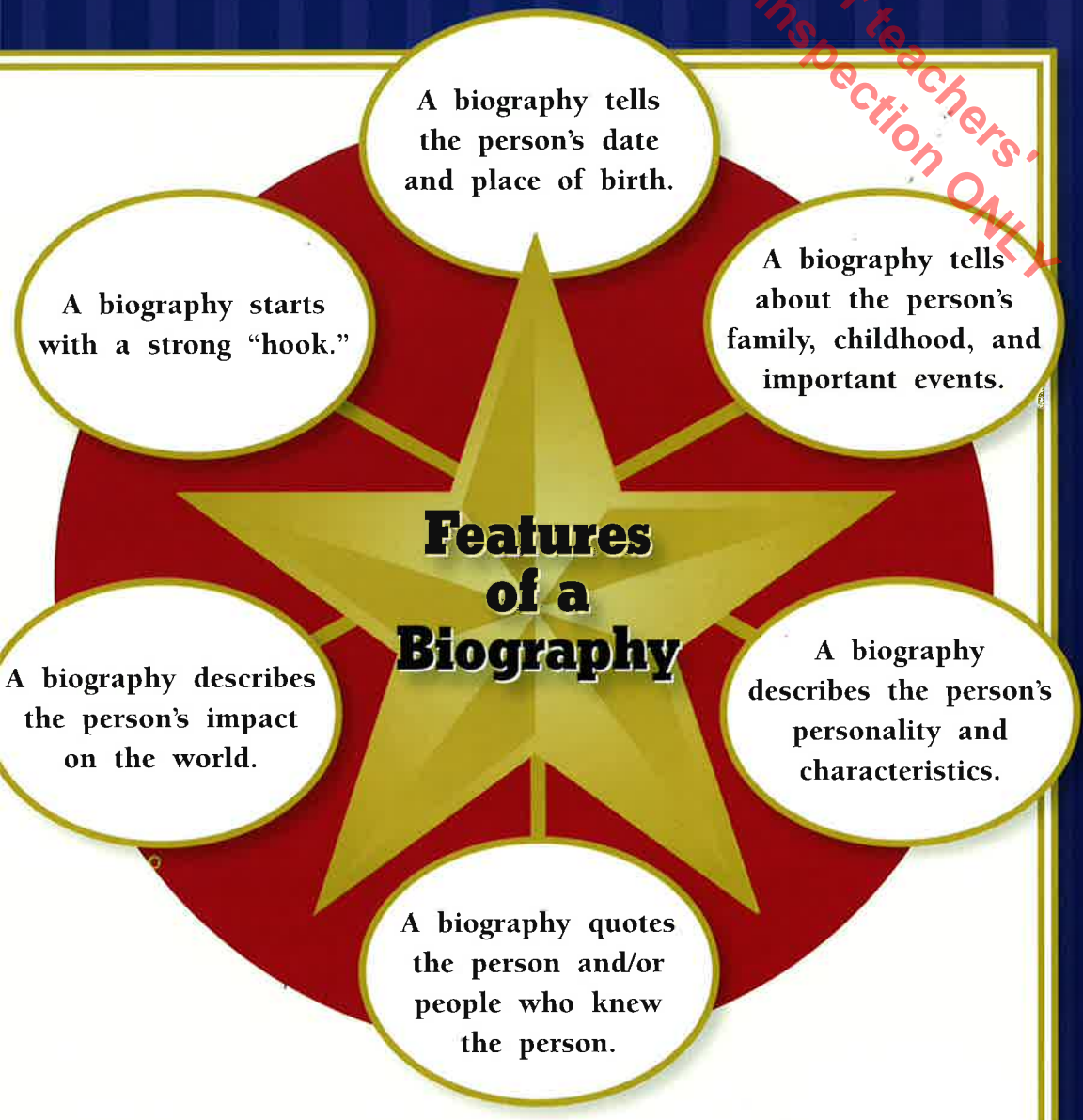
What is the purpose of a biography?

A biography helps a reader understand the people, places, times, and events that were or are important in the subject's life. It provides a summary of the person's major life experiences and achievements. In addition, the way the author writes the biography helps a reader get a sense of the person as a real human being who had (and perhaps still has) an impact on the lives of others.

How do you read a biography?

The title will tell you the subject of the biography and may include something interesting about him or her. The first paragraph will try to "hook" the reader by capturing his or her attention. As you read, note the setting. The setting often influences what happens in a person's life. Also pay close attention to the sequence of events in the person's life. Ask yourself: *Did this event happen to the person, or did the person make it happen? How did this event affect the person's life? What do I admire about this person? Is there something in this person's experiences that I could apply to my life?*

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Who writes biographies?

People who write biographies want to learn more about others' life stories and how those people made their marks on the world. Some people write biographies because they are interested in a certain topic, such as sports, history, or cooking. Others write biographies simply because they are interested in people!

George Washington and Abraham Lincoln

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George Washington

1732	Born on February 22 in Virginia.
1748	Became a surveyor.
1753	Served as a soldier in the French and Indian War.
1759	Married Martha Dandridge Custis, a widow with two children.
1775	Chosen to lead the colonists' war with Britain.
1777	Endured a difficult winter in Valley Forge, Pennsylvania, with his loyal soldiers.
1781	Helped the colonies win their freedom from Britain.
1789	Became the first President of the United States.
1799	Died at his home in Mount Vernon, Virginia.



Abraham Lincoln

1809	Born on February 12 in Kentucky.
1837	Started a law practice in Illinois.
1842	Married Mary Todd.
1843, 1846	Had two sons.
1847	Won election to U.S. Congress.
1850, 1853	Had two more sons.
1861	Became sixteenth President of the United States; the Civil War began.
1863	Signed the Emancipation Proclamation to free slaves.
1865	Civil War ended; Lincoln was assassinated.

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Tools Writers Use

Strong Verbs

Which sounds better: "I talked loudly" or "I shouted"? Yes, **shouted** is a stronger verb, or action word. **Shouted** doesn't need an adverb, such as **loudly**, to make it better. We already know that shouting is loud. Another way to use strong verbs is to choose synonyms that specifically describe an action. These words help show, rather than tell, what happened. For example, do you walk to class, or do you stride, amble, shuffle, or saunter? Finally, authors use strong verbs to shorten, or tighten, sentences. Example: "I designed the poster" (verb: **designed**) rather than "I was the designer of the poster" (verb: **was**).

George Washington



As a young man, George Washington proved that he could be a leader when he fought in the French and Indian War.

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