

## Lesson plan 7. Introduction to biographies

### Learning outcome

Students will understand the different elements in biographies.

### Success criteria

- Students can understand the type of information that goes into a biography.
- I will know they have achieved this when students can identify different elements and language features in a biography.



### Pre-lesson preparation and resources

- Story 10 – *Jean Batten: World-famous pilot* (page 3)
- Template 16 – Venn diagram (page 5)
- Collection of biographies, including picture books, information and chapter books
- Whiteboard, smart board or OHP with relevant pens

### Learning sequence

1. Read aloud a biography featured in a picture book.
2. Put a collection of biographies in front of each group of students. Encourage students to look through the books and ask them to discuss in their groups how the books are like other non-fiction books and how they are different. Afterwards, encourage students to share. Record the information on template 16, Venn diagram, page 5.
3. Put story 10, *Jean Batten: World-famous pilot*, page 3, on a whiteboard, smart board or OHP for the class to see – revealing only the title at first. Ask students to put their hand up if they have heard of Jean Batten. Then ask individual students to share what they know about her. Record the information on a whiteboard or smart board. Remind students they are making a text-to-self connection to the story.
4. Read the first paragraph to the students. Ask the students how the author has hooked readers into the story – revealing main character, setting and dialogue – which give an indication that this is an adventurous person.
5. Have the students read the next paragraph with their partners. Afterwards, ask them to discuss what the purpose of that paragraph is, for example, what influenced Jean when she was young. Ask some students and their partners to share with the rest of the class.
6. Ask students to read the third paragraph and look for words that move along the timeline of Jean's life. For example, "When Jean was eight", "Throughout Jean's teen years", "When Jean was 21 ...", "After a few test flights ...", "In 1936 she achieved ..." and use the dates.
7. Share with the class what we have read about Jean's life from the time when she lived with her family, teen years and her biggest achievements – flying solo around the world.
8. Have students finish reading the rest of biography and then turn to their partners and discuss how the author finished the biography. For example, it talks about her later years and how she died. Ask selected students to share their comments with the rest of the class.
9. Ask students to draw a timeline of her life, using the information from the article.

### Conclusion

- **Homework** – Students write in their learning logs about what they have learnt about biographies.
- **Assessment** – Students' contribution to discussions, learning log work.

## Lesson plan 8. Writing biographies

### Learning outcome

Students will understand how to write a biography.

### Success criteria

- Students can write a biography.
- I will know they have achieved this when students write an article about someone's life.



### Pre-lesson preparation and resources

- Template 14 – Biography writing planner (page 4), photocopied
- Collection of biographies, including picture books, non-fiction books and chapter books
- Whiteboard, smart board or OHP with relevant pens
- Graphic Organiser link: <http://www.eduplace.com/graphicorganizer/>

### Learning sequence

1. Continue reading aloud a biography to the class.
2. Inform the class that they are going to write a biography. Biography writers start with a person who they have found inspirational. Brainstorm on the whiteboard or smart board possible people the students could write a biography about.
3. Ask students to research information about the person they are going to write about. Encourage students to use books, encyclopaedia, as well as online resources. Ask students to record their research on template 14, biography writing planner, page 4, and include early years, schooling, after school and work experience, their big achievement and their later years. Suggest to the students that they might want to also record influences, obstacles, personal tragedies, etc.
4. Have students write an introduction (paragraph one) that hooks the reader. Say to the students, *Think about what makes the person interesting, as well as introducing who they are and where they are.*
5. For paragraph two, suggest to the students they write about what sort of training and skills that person learnt. Walk around the room and read out passages that have been well written.
6. In paragraph three, encourage students to write about the main event in that person's life. Walk around room and read out passages that do this well.
7. In paragraph four, suggest to students they finish with what has happened to that person. Ask the class, *Have they died? Are they doing something else?* Say to the class, *End with an interesting sentence that sums up that person's life.*
8. Once students have completed a self edit of their work, conference each student individually to give them feedback on key things they might have left out, such as influences, obstacles, personal tragedies, etc.
9. Encourage students to form peer editing groups and give feedback on each other's work.

### Conclusion

- **Homework** – Students write in their learning logs about how difficult or easy they found writing a biography. Write a finished copy of their biography.
- **Assessment** – Students' contribution to discussions, the biography the students have written, learning log work.

## 10. Jean Batten: World-famous pilot

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Jean Batten's mother pinned a newspaper clipping about the first pilot to cross the English Channel above Jean's cot when she was a baby. Her mother wanted her to believe she could do anything that men could do. It seems to have spurred her early yearnings for adventure. From age three, she often escaped out of the front gate only to be brought home on the back of the milkman's cart. When Jean was eight, her mother took her down to the harbour to watch the Royal Flying Corps train in their flying boats. "At such moments as I watched spellbound ... I experienced such a surge of exhilaration that I felt quite sick with longing to be up there in it."



Throughout Jean's teen years, she idolised pilots who were making history: Charles Lindbergh, flying solo non-stop across the Atlantic; Bert Hinkler, the first to fly solo from England to Australia and Charles Kingsford-Smith who made the first ever flight across the Pacific ...

When Jean was 21 she sailed to England and enrolled in a flying school in London. A year later she gained her flying licence and immediately began to save for an aeroplane ... After a few test flights she made three attempts to fly from England to Australia. On the third flight she arrived in Darwin after 14 days and 22 hours of flying, beating Amy Johnson's (the first woman to fly that journey) flight record by nearly five days. (Amy was the first woman to fly solo from England to Australia and back, and she broke the world record for women and men flying from England to Brazil.)

In 1936, Jean achieved a world first, flying from England all the way to New Zealand in her Percival Gull plane. She made the whole trip in 11 days and 45 minutes, including a 2½ day stopover in Sydney. On the way back, Jean broke the world record between Australia and England again ...

Jean never flew again ... Afterwards she travelled around Europe and for years no one knew what had happened to her ... One of the world's most famous pilots had been buried in an unmarked grave ...

*Abridged, from New Zealand Hall of Fame: 50 Remarkable Kiwis (2011), by Maria Gill, illustrated by Bruce Potter, published by New Holland Publishers (NZ) Ltd*

## 14. Biography writing planner

Biography writing planner	
<p><b>Research</b></p> <p><i>Include early years, schooling, after school, work experience, achievement, later years</i></p>	
<p><b>Introductory paragraph</b></p> <p><i>Who they are</i></p> <p><i>Where they live</i></p> <p><i>School years</i></p>	
<p><b>Paragraph 2</b></p> <p><i>Training, skills – things they learnt leading up to the main event</i></p>	
<p><b>Paragraph 3</b></p> <p><i>Main event</i></p> <p><i>Include obstacles</i></p>	
<p><b>Conclusion</b></p> <p><i>Where that person is in their life now</i></p>	

16. Venn diagram

