

Biographies

A biography gives facts about a person's life. It is not written by the subject of the book but by an author who has done their research and knows a great deal about that person. Biographies are written in the third person and can be written about someone who is no longer alive.

Other Important Features of a Biography

A biography is a life story written in chronological order. It can include information about when and where the subject was born, their childhood, important events in their lives including information about what they did or achieved. If the person is no longer alive, it may include information about when and how they died. The biography may also include direct quotes from the subject or quotes from others about the subject.

Autobiographies

What does the prefix 'auto' mean?

'Auto' means 'self' therefore an autobiography is self-written. It is an account of someone's life, written by the person themselves, in chronological order. An autobiography is different to a biography because it is written in the first person, explaining important events in their life. The subject may write about what has influenced them and include details of their feelings during different experiences they have had.

Autobiographies are primary historical sources of information whereas biographies are secondary sources.

To remember the difference ... auto = self.

Quick Quiz

Biographical or Autobiographical Writing? How do you know?

He was born and grew up in London, moving to France at the age of 13.

I never enjoyed writing until I met my idol, Jacqueline Wilson, who ignited my interest.

“She never could sit still at school!” was the comment made by Mrs Alice Hall, an old teacher of hers.

He died at the age of 98, with his family at his bedside.

Dancing became my passion. I would dance every day and used to get angry and frustrated when I was told off for practising in the living room. I think my mother was always more concerned about me knocking over her priceless ornaments.