

In a biography, include key events in a person's life and explain why the person is important.

What makes my subject important?



John Hancock

Have you ever noticed the largest signature on the Declaration of Independence? It belongs to John Hancock, an important statesman and a founder of our country.

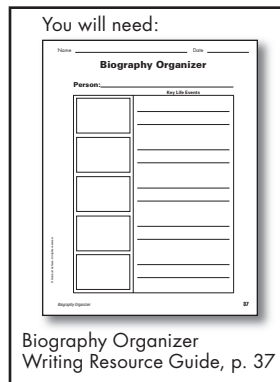
John Hancock was born in 1737 in Quincy, Massachusetts. After college, Hancock went to work in his uncle's merchant business...

1. Build Writing Skills

Teach Writing Form: Biography

A. **Restate Biography** Remind students that a biography describes key events in a real person's life. Explain that the events in a biography should be written in the order that they happened. A biography should explain why the subject is important. A writer must gather facts about the subject to write a biography. *Today we will focus on writing a biography.*

B. **Focus on the Visual** *What characteristics make this a biography? (It tells key events about a historical figure's life) Why is this subject important? (statesman, founder of our country)*



2. Write and Analyze

Writing Form: Biography

A. **Write Texts** Students should write a brief biography of a historical figure that they research using library or Internet resources.

Below Level	On Level	Above Level
Review students' Biography Organizers together. Ask them to explain why their subject is important and prompt them to be sure that one detail or event relates to this point. Using the organizer, help them choose the first event to write about in their draft.	Review students' drafts for chronological order and relevance. Suggest revision points to improve flow and clarity. Discuss whether the biography appropriately identifies the key reason for the subject's importance.	Review students' drafts for smoothly flowing chronology and relevance. Discuss options to increase voice and sentence fluency in the writing. Challenge students to add connecting words and phrases that will help the writing flow smoothly from event to event.

B. **Support Writing** When students are finished, ask:

- Which events from the person's life did you include in the biography? Why did you choose those events?
- Why is your subject important? Show me a detail about why this person is important.

3. Support Writing Independence

A. **Write on My Own** In a conference, ask:

- What resources did you use to find facts about your subject? How did those resources help you plan your writing?
- How did you organize facts to help tell the story of the person's life?
- Show me the most important event that you included in the biography. What makes this event so important?

B. **Monitor Learning** Use the rubric below to assess student's writing for characteristics of biography.

C. **Next Step** Continue providing small group support for biography format for students who score 1 or 2.

Writing Form: Biography

1. Little Evidence	Student's writing contains few or no key events and may focus on random details. Writing may also lack chronological organization.
2. Some Evidence	Student's writing contains some key events and details, mostly in chronological order. Writing is generally focused and works together as a whole.
3. Clear Evidence	Student's writing contains a sufficient number of key events and details, in chronological order. Writing is focused, moves smoothly from event to event, identifies the key reason for the subject's importance, and works together as a whole.