

Hot Celebrity Biographies

Introduction

This Teacher's Guide helps students become familiar with the characteristics of biography as they examine expository text structures and features. In this series, students will read engaging, high-interest material about contemporary celebrities. These biographies follow the lives of these actors and singers by describing how they rose to fame but still held onto their values and personal beliefs.

National Standards

This series supports Language Arts, Health and Physical Education curriculum. Go to www.enslowclassroom.com and click on the Curriculum Correlations tab. Click on your state, grade level, and curriculum standard to display how any book in this series backs up your state's specific curriculum standard.

Classroom Activities

Activities for teaching the five curriculum areas: Reading/Language Arts, Math, Science, Social Studies, and the Arts can be found in this Teacher's Guide. Students will learn about the characteristics of biography and examine the text features found in this genre. Activities in Math, Science, Social Studies and the Arts will provide students the opportunity to apply information from the book to the concepts and skills found in these content areas.

Guided Reading Level: R

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Teacher's Guide for *Taylor Swift: Music Superstar*

Before the age of 21, Taylor Swift had sold more records and received prestigious awards singers twice her age still hope to achieve. This young singer pursued her dreams to be a country singer from a young age and soared to the top of the charts by remaining true to herself and sharing her feelings through her music. A talented singer-songwriter, Taylor Swift has reached millions and uses her fame to bring attention to important causes.

Share the information below with your students in preparation for reading
Taylor Swift: Music Superstar

Biographies

Biographies are nonfiction stories written about someone else's life. They are often written about someone famous who has made an important contribution to society. Authors must research the person they are writing about by conducting interviews and reading other sources. Authors collect this information so they can include the important facts that describe what this person is like. Characteristics of this genre may include:

- Place of birth and death
- Information about family and upbringing
- Influences
- Significant events, such as problems or obstacles they overcame
- Goals and accomplishments

Additional ideas for teaching about biographies can be found at this Web site:

<http://school.discoveryeducation.com/teachers/>

Expository Text Structures and Features

Expository text is nonfiction material that serves to inform, explain, describe or persuade by using facts and details. Familiarizing students with the characteristics of expository text can help deepen comprehension and critical thinking skills. Expository text can have many different structures, such as chronological order, compare and contrast, and cause and effect. Many biographies, including the ones in this series, are arranged in chronological, or sequential, order. There are a variety of text features used in expository text:

- **Captions:** Written material that accompanies and further explains or describes a graphic aid
- **Glossary:** a section at the end of the book that defines terms found within the material
- **Graphic aids:** Visual items that usually supplement written material, such as photos, charts, and timelines
- **Headings and subheadings:** Words or phrases that introduce and tell you what a section will be about
- **Index:** an alphabetical listing of where topics and terms are located in the book.
- **Sidebar:** Supplemental information placed next to a longer piece of writing.
- **Table of Contents:** an outline found at the beginning of a book that shows the parts of the book in the order they appear

Additional information about expository text structures and features can be found at this Web site:

<http://www.wawm.k12.wi.us/District%20Information/Pupil%20Services/support/ContentAreaLitExpositoryText.htm>

The Five Curriculum Activities

SAFETY WARNING:

Before any activity, make sure your students do not have any allergies to items that you might use. Never use anything that is sharp or may cut a student. Do not use anything too hot or cold which might injure any student. Always have an adult supervise all activities to ensure the safety of your students and provide an appropriate setting, such as a gym or outdoor space, for physical activities.

Reading/Language Arts activity:

Turn to page 18 and read the sidebar titled “Family Support.” Check for comprehension by discussing with students what the sidebar is about. Then, ask students why they think this information was included separately and why it was added to this chapter. Help students understand that the purpose of a sidebar is to provide additional (and sometimes contrasting) information to a longer piece of writing. In this example, the sidebar presents more detailed information about Taylor Swift’s relationship with her family and was added to a chapter that was about what helped her become a success.

Have students review chapter 3 on pages 31-20, paying close attention to the sidebar on page 23. On their own, ask students to write about what the main idea of the sidebar is and why it was added to that chapter.

Math activity:

Review the “Discography” on page 47 and Inform students that they will use the information in this section to create two pie charts. Describe how charts are a way of visually representing information. Students should create one pie chart to represent the albums, EPs and singles. The second chart should show how many singles were released in each year. Review the process for making a pie chart by showing how to calculate percentages and remind students to include labels and titles for the chart. Encourage students to use color or patterns to differentiate the different sections of their pie chart.

Science activity:

Taylor Swift taught herself to play guitar and worked hard to improve her music skills. The guitar is a popular instrument that is played by plucking its strings. Explain to students that plucking the guitar string makes the string vibrate. This vibration moves air molecules and will ultimately produce sound. However, a guitar string does not have much surface area and does not make much sound, which is why the guitar body is needed to help amplify the sound. To demonstrate how the guitar amplifies sound perform the following experiment:

- Seal a bowl with plastic wrap
- Tape a rubber band to the center and pluck it
- Pluck a rubber band not taped to the bowl and compare the difference in sound

Additional details about the guitar and this experiment can be found at this Web page:

<http://entertainment.howstuffworks.com/guitar1.htm>

(Materials needed: bowl, plastic wrap, rubber band, tape)

Social Studies activity:

Taylor Swift's family moved to Nashville, Tennessee to help her music career. Nashville has a rich history and has long been a center for country music. Point out Nashville on a map, elicit any background information students have about it, and tell students they will be exploring its history. Divide students into groups of three and assign each one of the following topics to present:

- How was Nashville founded?
- How did Nashville become a music center?
- How did Nashville become the State Capital?

Students may use the following Web page to research information about Nashville:

<http://www.tnhistoryforkids.org/cities/nashville>

Arts activity:

Discuss with students what they know about country music and whether or not they think Taylor Swift fits into this genre of music. Tell students that the Grand Ole Opry is a country music radio program based in Nashville that dates back to 1925. Help students research the history and timeline of the Grand Ole Opry by exploring this Web site: <http://www.opry.com/about/History.html>

Then, listen with students to some of the original broadcasts of the Grand Ole Opry:

<http://www.archive.org/details/OIOpry>

Use these broadcasts to help student think about and discuss how country music has changed, what has remained the same, and how it has influenced American music in general.

Handout

A sidebar is a short piece of writing that provides additional information within a longer article or book. Look at “Ten Taylor Favorites” on page 10 to see an example of a sidebar.

Use the sidebars and other information contained in the book to answer the following questions.

1. Read the sidebar “Fan Appeal” on page 15 and answer the following questions.

What is the main idea or message of this sidebar?

Why do you think it was included in this chapter?

2. Read the sidebar “Down Time” on page 32 and answer the following questions.

What is the main idea or message of this sidebar?

Why do you think it was included in this chapter?

3. Read the sidebar “Endorsement Checks” on page 40 and answer the following questions.

What is the main idea or message of this sidebar?

Why do you think it was included in this chapter?

Assessment

1. Where did Taylor Swift sing the national anthem?
 - A. U.S. Open golf tournament
 - B. National Football League Superbowl
 - C. National Basketball Association Finals
 - D. U.S. Open tennis tournament
2. What is the subject of Taylor Swift's song "Mean?"
 - A. The song is about how her speech was interrupted at the MTV music awards ceremony.
 - B. The song is about how life is unfair but you have to make the best of what you have.
 - C. The song is about how she knows her flaws and doesn't need critics to point them out.
 - D. The song is about how popular kids can sometimes be cruel to kids who aren't popular.
3. What was the title of the album Taylor Swift released in 2010?
 - A. "Speak Now"
 - B. "Taylor Swift"
 - C. "Fearless"
 - D. "Sounds of the Season"
4. In addition to the guitar what other instrument does Taylor Swift play?
 - A. flute
 - B. drums
 - C. clarinet
 - D. saxophone

5. Read the following sentence from the book.

Despite the success of her first album, Taylor somehow managed to remain the same humble person she always had been.

What is the meaning of *humble* as it is used in this sentence?

- A. modest
 - B. optimistic
 - C. outgoing
 - D. superior
6. Read the sentences below from the book.

I would sit on the edge of class and watch people interact with each other. I'd watch guys flirt with cool girls and I would watch best friends talk, and I would go home and write about it.

The word *interact* contains the prefix *inter-* meaning *between* or *among*. You can conclude that, as the word is used here, *interact* means

- A. to communicate with others.
- B. to ignore others.
- C. to feel sympathy for others.
- D. to be jealous of others.

7. Read the sentence below from the book.

Unlike many stars who have achieved big things, Swift did not allow it to ruin her personal life with vices such as alcohol or drugs.

Which word is an antonym of *vices* as it is used in this context?

- A. forgiveness
- B. corruption
- C. virtues
- D. penalties

8. Read the following quote from Taylor Swift.

“When I knew something was going on in someone’s personal life and they didn’t address it in their music, I was always very confused by that,” she said.

What conclusion can be drawn about Taylor Swift from this quote?

- A. Taylor Swift uses her music to express how she feels about the relationships in her life.
- B. Taylor Swift is a very private individual and chooses not to reveal personal information in her songs.
- C. Taylor Swift is curious and often talks to other celebrities about what is happening in their lives.
- D. Taylor Swift addresses the personal life of celebrities she doesn’t know in her music.

9. Which of the following sentences best demonstrates that charity work is important to Taylor Swift?

- A. “At twenty-one years old, Taylor Swift said she realized there still are goals left for her to go for.”
- B. “Your schedule can change, but I continue to walk around with the mentality that I’m not really a big deal because as fast as it came, it can go.”
- C. “Her stories are personal to her, but she leaves them vague enough so others can picture how the lyrics apply to their lives.”
- D. “Even with her busy schedule, Swift has always found time to give back to those less fortunate than she is.”

10. Review chapter 1 and read the sidebar “Ten Taylor Favorites” on page 10 to answer the following question.

Why was the sidebar “Ten Taylor Favorites” included in this chapter?

- A. This chapter is about Taylor Swift’s move to Nashville and the sidebar lists the ten most interesting things about the city.
- B. This chapter introduces basic information about Taylor Swift and the sidebar includes some interesting facts about her.
- C. This chapter discusses Taylor Swift’s early childhood and the sidebar show what she enjoyed most as a child.
- D. This chapter is all about the things that Taylor Swift likes and dislikes and the sidebar draws attention to her favorite things.

Answer Key:

1. D. In 2002, at the age of 12, Taylor sang the national anthem at the U.S. Open tennis tournament.
2. C. Taylor wrote the song “Mean” in response to critics who thought she didn’t have a good singing voice (page 38).
3. A. Taylor released her third album, “Speak Now,” in October 2010.
4. B. Taylor sometimes plays the drums at her concerts (page 35).
5. A. *Haughty* means to not feel or act superior to others but to be modest or down-to-earth.
6. A. To *interact* means to communicate by acting among or with others.
7. C. *Vices*, in this context, means to behave immorally or offensively; the opposite of this is *virtues*.
8. A. This sentence from page 6 of the book discusses how Taylor finds it odd that other musicians wouldn’t write about their personal lives. Students can make the connection that Taylor thinks it makes sense to use music to convey emotions about events in her life.
9. D. This sentence shows that she values doing charity work because she makes time to help those in need.
10. B. This first chapter in the books discusses Taylor’s background and personality. The sidebar includes additional details that describe who she is as a person.