

She's So Cool:

Biography Book Reports

2nd
GRADE



Ada Lovelace



Deborah Sampson



Sojourner Truth



Juana Ines De La Cruz



Julia Child



Shakuntala Devi



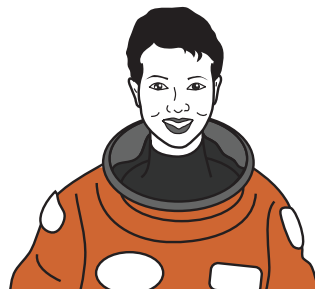
Hatshepsut



C.J. Walker



Bessie Coleman



Mae Jemison



Julia Morgan

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What is a Biography?



In this book, you will both read and write biographies of famous women in history.

A biography is the true story of someone's life written by someone else. Most biographies include the following information:

- Where and when the person was born
- Family information
- Major life events such as education, marriage, children
- Life accomplishments
- Major accomplishments and their impact on society

When writing a biography it is important to include these facts along with other interesting details about a person's life.

Pretend someone is going to write a biography about you. Answer the following questions in complete sentences.

1. Where and when were you born?

2. Who are the members of your immediate family?

3. What is the most exciting thing you have ever done?

4. Describe a time that you were proud of something you accomplished.

Reading for Comprehension: Julia Morgan



Julia Morgan was an architect who designed buildings in California. She was the first woman to graduate from a famous architecture school in Paris, and the first woman to become an official architect in California.

After high school, where she had liked to study math, she went to Paris to enroll in a school that had a very good architecture program. However, she was turned away because she was a woman. After two years, she was finally let in and went on to become the school's first female architecture graduate.

Julia's first big project was to rebuild the Fairmont Hotel in San Francisco after it was damaged in the 1906 earthquake. Over the years, she designed more than 700 buildings, many of which are now considered historical treasures. Many of the buildings she designed were for businesses that helped women, like many YWCA buildings and a women's college in Oakland. She is perhaps most famous for designing Hearst Castle, a beautiful castle on the coast of California.

Answer these questions based on the passage.

1. Where did Julia Morgan build her buildings?

2. What did she like to study in school?

3. Why did the school in Paris turn her down?

4. Why did the Fairmont Hotel in San Francisco need to be rebuilt?

5. What is Julia's most famous building?

Finding the Main Idea: Madam C.J. Walker



When reading a biography it is important to find the main ideas within the text. The main ideas will help you write a clear report.

Read the following passage about Madam C.J. Walker.

Madam C.J. Walker was the first woman to earn over one million dollars in America. Madam C.J. Walker was born Sarah Breedlove in Louisiana on December 23, 1867, just a few years after President Lincoln freed the slaves. Her parents had been slaves, and she was the first child in her family to be born a free woman.

When she was growing up, her family did not have a lot of money. She had a skin disease on her head that caused her to lose her hair, and suffered many years of hair loss. Determined to find a way to grow her hair back, she invented hair care products for African-American women. She used her husband's name – Charles J. Walker – and went around the country selling her products and showing people how to use them, and soon she made enough money to start a factory and a beauty school.

Madam C.J. Walker used a lot of the money she made to help African-Americans in her community, donating to organizations and community centers for African-Americans. Her beauty products are still sold today.

What is the main idea of the passage above?

Identifying Facts: Hatshepsut



In non-fiction, all the information in the writing must be true. A piece of true information is called a *fact*.

Read the passage about Hatshepsut and find three facts.

Hatshepsut was a queen in ancient Egypt. She ruled Egypt for over 20 years, and the country thrived under her leadership.

Egypt's leaders were called pharaohs (*fare-ohs*). Hatshepsut was born around 1508 B.C to a pharaoh named Thutmose I. Only sons were allowed to become pharaohs. When Thutmose I died, power was passed to her half-brother, Thutmose II. 15 years later, Thutmose II died. Normally, this would have meant Hatshepsut's stepson, Thutmose III, would have become pharaoh, but he was only a baby. She took over as pharaoh while her son was a child. In the years that followed, she became a powerful leader.

While she was pharaoh, she decided to look the part. She wore traditional king's clothing, even a fake beard! Under her power, Egypt grew and grew. The arts flourished, new buildings were built, and voyages to other lands were carried out. New trade routes were started and the country made lots of money. She was a peaceful leader.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Identifying Details: Julia Child



Read this passage about Julia Child. When you're finished, write down 4 details about her life that made the story more interesting.

There was much more to Julia Child than met the eye! Julia Child was a famous chef who helped America discover glamorous French cooking. Before she was a famous chef, she worked for the government. In 1941, she volunteered to join the OSS. She played an important part in top-secret government missions, and traveled all over the world as a spy for the U.S. government. Two years later, her husband was sent to France on business. She went with him to France, where she fell in love with French cooking. She studied at France's most famous cooking school, and worked with talented chefs.

At the time, most Americans considered French food to be very expensive and not easy to cook at home. Together with her friends, she wrote a cookbook about French food, called *Mastering the Art of French Cooking*. Publishers didn't think anyone would want to read it – it was over 700 pages long! – but the book became a huge success in the United States.

After the success of the book, she went on a local television show in Boston to demonstrate how to cook an omelet. Viewers were so impressed that she decided to start her own cooking show. It was called *The French Chef*, and it showed her cooking recipes step-by-step so viewers could follow along. For the rest of her life, she hosted cooking shows and wrote many books, and helped people see cooking as not a chore, but as an art form.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

Recording Facts: Shakuntala Devi



When taking notes, it is important to record information in your own words. Copying what someone else has written is against the law.

Read this biography of Shakuntala Devi.

Shakuntala Devi was known as “The Human Computer.” When she was very young, her father tried to teach her card tricks. However, she would always beat him because she could remember all the numbers in the cards she was shown! Within the next year, she was showing off her skills at local schools, and was a famous math whiz by her teens. When she figured out a problem, she was often faster than a computer. In 1977, she found out the 23rd root of a 201-digit number (in other words, a really tough math problem!) in less than a minute. She made history again in 1980, when she multiplied two 13-digit numbers in just 28 seconds. She was put in the 1982 *Guinness Book of World Records* for her talent.

Rewrite the sentences from this paragraph in your own words. The first two sentences have been done for you.

1. *Shakuntala Devi's nickname was "The Human Computer."*
2. *When she was young, her father tried to teach her card tricks.*
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.

Text Features:

Female FSA Photographers

During the Great Depression, many workers in America lost their jobs. The government started a program called the Farm Security Administration, or the FSA, to help those that needed it. As part of the program, they sent out a team of photographers to take pictures of struggling families, and later, of daily life during World War II. Many of the photographers were women.

The most famous woman on the team was Dorothea Lange. Her photograph, “Migrant Mother,” is the most famous photo taken during that time. Marion Post Wolcott was another FSA photographer. Before she started with them, she had been working as a newspaper photographer. She was frustrated with her work, because she was always being asked to photograph “ladies’ stories” like fashion shows. However, her photographer friends believed in her, and convinced the person hiring photographers for the FSA to hire her. A similar thing happened to Louise Roskam: when she and her husband, also a photographer, both applied to a magazine, they hired him but refused to hire her. They both later found jobs with the FSA. Ann Rosener liked to take photos of women working in factories and other “men’s” jobs to support their families.

The women that worked for the FSA showed the world that photography could do more than just make people look pretty – it could be used to reveal problems in the world and help change peoples’ minds about important issues.



Write 3 things that you can tell about the Great Depression by looking at the picture.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Text Features:

Deborah Sampson



In non-fiction writing, you will often find different text features. Subheadings are used to divide long passages into smaller pieces. Subheadings are usually bold. Footnotes give extra information about something within a passage. A small number or mark will show that there is a footnote at the bottom of the page.

Read the biography of Deborah Sampson and highlight or circle the subheadings and footnotes.

Early Life

Deborah Sampson was born on December 17th, 1760 in Plympton, Massachusetts. She was one of seven children, and was part of a family that had sailed to Plymouth in the Mayflower. At the age of ten, she was sent away to work on a farm. On the farm, she did a lot of hard work all day.

Deborah in Disguise

In Deborah Sampson's time, only men were allowed to be soldiers. When the United States went to war with Britain, Deborah wanted to help her country. She disguised herself as a man and joined the army. She fought alongside men for months and no one knew her secret, until she was hurt and had to see a doctor. The doctor found out her true identity, but he kept her secret. Shortly after, she received an honorable discharge¹ and was sent home.

The Fight's Not Over

After being sent home, she did not receive her pay. Male soldiers were paid a pension², but she was not paid at all. She wrote a complaint that was heard by the Senate. Founding fathers like Paul Revere and John Hancock supported her, and helped convince their colleagues that she deserved to be paid the same amount as her fellow soldiers. She won, and was given the money she was owed.

A Lasting Legacy

Deborah's actions changed peoples' minds about what women can do both on and off the battlefield. Now, both men and women serve side-by-side in the armed forces.

1: When a good soldier is allowed to leave service, it is called an honorable discharge.

2: A payment that is given every month.

Reading a Timeline: Sojourner Truth



Read the timeline about Sojourner Truth.

c. 1797: Sojourner Truth is born a slave with the name Isabella Baumfree.

1815: Marries another slave named Thomas.

1815-1826: Has five children: Diana, Thomas, Peter, Elizabeth, and Sophia.

1826: She and her daughter Sophia escape to freedom.

1826: She finds out that her son, Peter, was illegally sold to another owner. She stood up to the owner in court and won her son back, becoming one of the first African-American women to win a case against a Caucasian man.

1829: Moves to New York City and takes a job as a housekeeper to earn money for her family.

1843: Changes her name to Sojourner Truth.

1850: Her biography, *The Narrative of Sojourner Truth: A Northern Slave*, is published.

1850: Gives her first speech about slavery and human rights.

1851: Delivers her most famous speech, "Ain't I a Woman?" at the Ohio Women's Rights Convention

1851-1853: Tours Ohio giving talks about human and women's rights.

1860s: Sojourner helps recruit African-American men to fight for the Union during the Civil War.

Answer the following questions using the timeline.

1. What year did Sojourner Truth escape? _____
2. What happened to Sojourner Truth in 1850? _____
3. Why do you think she wanted rights for women as well as an end to slavery? _____

-
4. What do you think is the most important event in her life? Circle it on the timeline.

Create a Timeline



Interview a parent or grandparent and create a timeline of their life using this sheet. Use the Sojourner Truth timeline as an example.

Year: _____ **Event:** _____

Year: _____ **Event:** _____

Year: _____ **Event:** _____

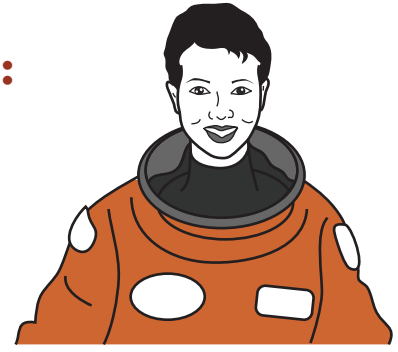
Year: _____ **Event:** _____

Year: _____ **Event:** _____

Year: _____ **Event:** _____



Comparing Two People: Bessie Coleman and Mae Jemison



Read these biographies of Bessie Coleman and Mae Jemison, then turn the page.

Bessie Coleman

Before there was Amelia Earhart, there was Bessie Coleman. Bessie Coleman was the first African-American woman to get a pilot's license and a pioneering female aviator who became famous for her daring air show stunts in the 1920s.

Bessie Coleman was born on January 26, 1892 in Atlanta, Texas. Bessie grew up in Texas, then moved to Chicago with her family at age 23. She worked as a manicurist in a barbershop. While working in the shop, she overheard stories told by men who had flown planes in World War I. She wanted to try flying for herself. She applied to flight schools, but no one would teach her because she was both a woman and African-American. She decided to go to Paris to find a school that would teach her.

After getting her license, Bessie wanted to start a flying school just for African-Americans. To raise money to start the school, she began working as a stunt pilot. People would come out to watch her fly planes in all kinds of crazy directions: Figure eights, loop-de-loops, and steep drops. Bessie soon became known as "Queen Bess," and within five years she was a popular air show performer.

Mae Jemison

Mae Jemison was the first African-American woman to go to space. Mae was born on October 17, 1956, the first of three children. Growing up, Mae loved science. She studied medicine in college and started her career as a doctor, going around the world to care for those in need.

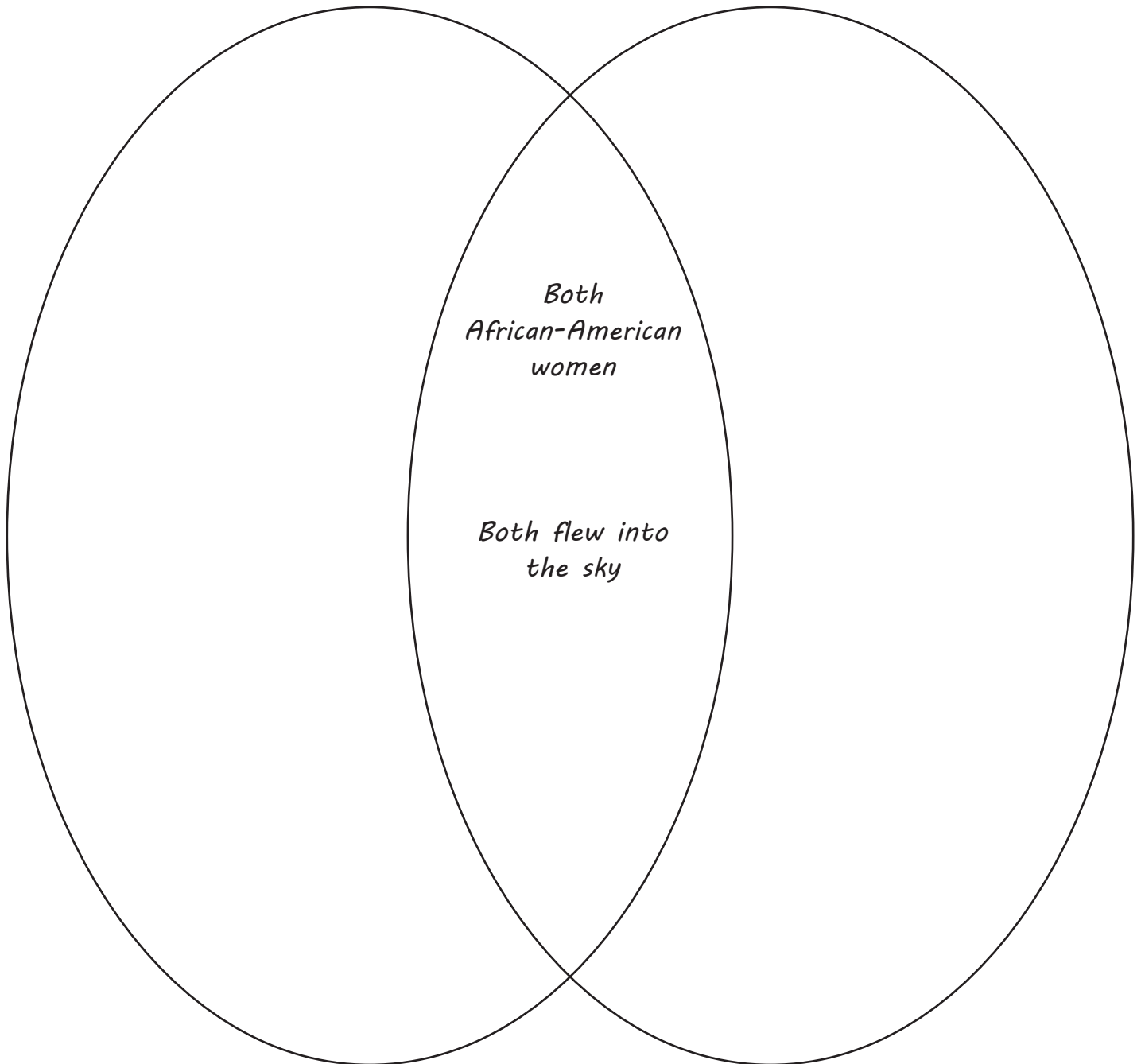
In 1983, Mae applied to NASA. Mae was inspired by Sally Ride's first flight a few years before, and also by the character of Uhura from *Star Trek* (the character was an African-American officer on a spaceship). Mae's first application was denied, but she didn't give up! She applied a second time and in 1987, she was hired. Five years later, she flew on the STS-47 mission to study life in space. She even brought a picture of Bessie Coleman with her to inspire her on the flight.

Mae retired from NASA in 1993. She went on to start scientific research companies, and she even got to be on an episode of her favorite TV show, *Star Trek*. She accomplished a first there too – the first real astronaut to ever be on the show.

Comparing Two Famous People

One way to compare two people is by using a Venn diagram. A Venn diagram uses circles to represent sets of information. These circles overlap. The overlapping area is used to record things that are the same about the two sets, while the outside areas are used to record things that are different.

Reread the text about Bessie Coleman and Mae Jemison and complete the Venn diagram below.



Using Notes to Write: Juana Ines de la Cruz



Below is an example of a complete biography outline. Use the information in the outline to complete the paragraph about Juana Ines de la Cruz.

Famous Person's Name: Juana Ines de la Cruz

Date and Place of Birth: November 12, 1651, San Miguel Nepantla, Mexico

Names of Mother and Father: Pedro Manuel de Asbaje, Isabel Ramirez

Names of Siblings: none

Facts About Early Life: As a child, Juana loved to learn. At the time, Mexico was the property of Spain, and it was not customary in either country for women to go to school. Juana would sneak books from her family's library into the chapel next door and hide there, reading in secret. By the time she was a teenager, she had written poetry, could do math, and had learned Latin.

When she was older, she was sent to live with her aunt in Mexico City. She asked her mother to let her dress up as a boy so she would be allowed into the city's schools. Her mother said no, but hired a tutor for her. Her tutor was so impressed that he called a meeting of experts to test her on her knowledge of science and literature. She passed, and soon became a sensation in Mexico City.

Education: Self-taught, then tutored

Facts About Adult Life: In 1667, she became a nun not only so that she could explore her religion, but because nuns were allowed to educate themselves. While a nun, she wrote books, poems, and plays, which often spoke out about women's struggles or had brave and smart women as main characters. She also published a famous essay that argued for women's access to education.

How this person made an impact on the world: She is now a national hero in both Mexico and Spain for her work to advance the role of women in society.

Juana Ines de la Cruz was born on _____ in _____.

Juana loved to _____ and had to hide in a _____ so she could do so without getting in trouble.

When she was older, she was sent to live in _____. She wanted to _____ so that she could go to school, but her mother wouldn't let her. Instead, her mother hired a _____.

In _____, she became a nun so that she would be allowed to study. While she was a nun, she wrote _____, _____, and _____ that showed smart and brave women.

Transition Words: Ada Lovelace



Transition words help a story flow smoothly. Some transition words are: *after, later, last, until, since, then, before, since, when, once, about, during, next and now.*

Read the short biography of Ada Lovelace. Highlight all of the transition words that are used in the passage.

Ada Lovelace was born in 1815 in London to Anne Isabella Byron and the famous poet, Lord Byron. When she was a child, her mother encouraged her to study math, which was unusual for a woman at the time. In 1833, she met mathematician Charles Babbage at a party. Charles had been making a machine that could calculate math problems. Once he found out she was interested in math, they became good friends. He showed the machine to her and she was fascinated by it. Charles then took Ada under his wing and taught her about his research during the next several years.

About ten years later, Charles had an idea for a new mathematical machine. A fellow scientist had written an article about it, but it was written in French. Charles asked Ada to translate the article for him. Not only did she translate the article, she added her own notes and ideas. Many of her ideas are still used in computers today. Her work went unnoticed until many years later, when scientists realized how revolutionary her ideas were. Now, she is considered by many to be the world's first computer programmer.



Biography Note Taking Sheet



Find a biography of a woman you admire or would like to know more about. Take notes on the sheet below.

Famous Person's Name: _____

Date and Place of Birth: _____

Names of Mother and Father: _____

Names of Siblings: _____

Interesting Facts About Early Life:

Schooling:

Interesting Facts About Adult Life:

How This Person Made an Impact on the World:

Writing a Biography



Using what you have learned in this book, write a short biography of the woman you took notes on earlier. Make sure to include all the details mentioned on the first page and a bibliography at the end. Draw or glue a picture of your subject in the box at the top.



Name

Cite Your Sources



An important part of research is giving credit to the sources that you use. This is called *citing your sources*. A final list of sources used in a research paper is called a *bibliography*.

When sources are organized into a bibliography, they must be in alphabetical order. Refer to the table below to properly cite your sources.

<i>Type of Reference</i>	<i>Information Needed for Bibliography</i>
Book	Author's Last Name, Author's First Name. Title of Book. City of Publication: Publisher, Date of Publication.
Book with Two Authors	Author's Last Name, Author's First Name and Author Last Name, Author First Name. Title of Book. City of Publication: Publisher, Date of Publication.
Magazine	Author's Last name, Author's First Name. "Title of Article". Magazine Title. Date: Page Number.
Website	Author's Last Name, Author's First Name. "Title of Article". The Title of the Website. Date You Visited. <Website URL>
Encyclopedia Article	"Title of Article." Name of the Encyclopedia. Volume Number. City Where the Book Was Published: Name of the Publisher, Year Book was Published.

Presentation Ideas

After completing your biography report, you may want to present what you have learned. Here are some examples of how to make your presentation fun and interesting.

- **Interview Your Subject:** Create a paper bag puppet of the person you researched and wrote a report on. Then, create questions to ask the puppet based on what you learned. During the presentation you will talk to the puppet and the puppet will answer.
- **Become a Historic Figure:** Do a little research on what your historical figure looked like and what they may have worn. On the day of the presentation, dress as the person and present your report as if you are that figure.
- **Write Creatively:** Compose a song or write a poem to sing or read to your audience about your subject.
- **Tell the Story through Props:** Create several "artifacts" and gather props that help tell the story of the person you have researched.
- **Make a Diorama:** Create a few 3D scenes from the person's life so that others can get a view of what their life was like.
- **Try Your Hand:** Put yourself in your subject's shoes by doing the thing they were famous for. Find a Julia Child recipe and cook it, design a house like Julia Morgan, or concoct a new shampoo like Madame C.J. Walker!



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