

Biographies & Autobiographies

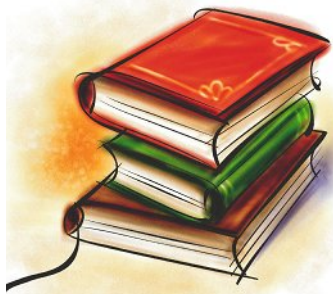
By: Dani & Connie



Biography: A detailed description of someone's life and has more than just the basics. Describes and discusses the real lives of real individuals. Biographies provide information about historical figures or famous people that may have had impact on our country. Often times the goal of the writer has become a way to express one's culture. Biographies are a great way to teach students history and to give a positive perspective of someone's story. Authors often interview, research and may follow a person to provide the best details and information in the biography.

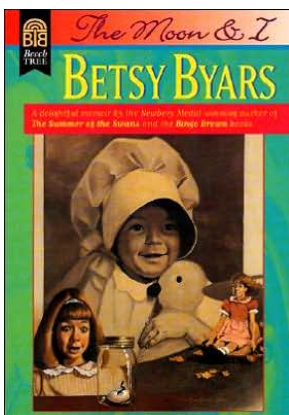
Autobiography: A personal account written by an individual giving his or her own honest perspective about life events, relationships and influences. Autobiographies allow the author to give their opinions, and expressing their feelings about experience in their lives. Successful individuals may share the challenges they faced to reach their goals and how they accomplished them.

Categories: Partial, complete, collective, and picture books.



Biographies and Autobiographies

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The Moon & I

Author: Betsy Byars

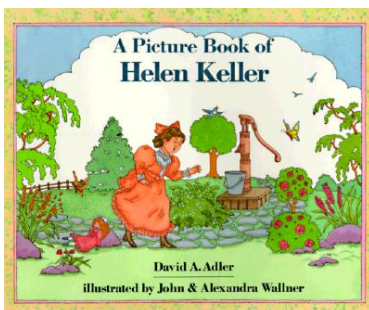
Illustrator: Betsy Byars

Genre: Autobiography

Grade Range: Intermediate

Plot Summary: Betsy Byars captures all of the moments in her life that lead to her becoming an author. Betsy often refers to the snake she once saw coiled up on her porch, which helped her to write for hours when she experienced writers block. Often times Betsy mentions her childhood memories and how she never imagined herself as an author. Over the years Betsy has become a very successful children's author and has also won the American Book Award.

Reader Response Activity: The author provides a great amount of information and experiences throughout her life and career. This is a very informative book. Students who are fans of Betsy's stories could use the book to create a project to inform other students about Betsy Byars, a well-known author.



A Picture Book of Helen Keller

Author: David A. Adler

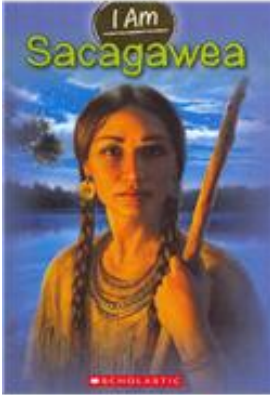
Illustrator: John & Alexandra Wallner

Genre: Biography

Grade Range: Primary

Plot Summary: The **main character**, Helen Keller, becomes very ill as a baby in this **setting**, Alabama. Because of this illness, she is left blind and deaf. Her parents take her to an eye doctor to see if there is anything they can do, but unfortunately, they can't help her. Finally, they go and visit Alexander Graham Bell, who helped them find someone who could help and teach Helen. That person was Anne Sullivan. She eventually taught Helen to communicate through a form of sign and even a little bit of how to talk. Helen goes on to be very successful in life and was dedicated to helping the blind and deaf. She even gets to meet famous people. The book ends with Helen's passing but explains how much hope she brought for the world.

Reader Response Activity: This is a great activity for K-3rd graders. Have your students write or draw out a story about something in their lives that gives them hope. Then explain some of the reasons that Helen gave people hope.



I Am Sacagawea

Author: Grace Norwich

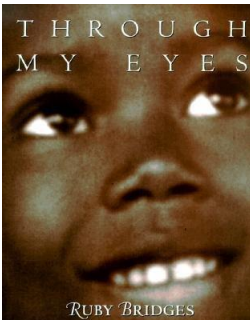
Illustrator: Anthony VanArsdale

Genre: Autobiography

Grade Range: Primary

Plot Summary: From the very beginning we learn that Sacagawea has a strong and ambitious personality. A rival Indian tribe captures Sacagawea. At first it seems horrible, but this will lead her to many adventures. After a few years Sacagawea adjusted to the lifestyle and customs of the new tribe, and now lives her life without thinking about her past anymore. Sacagawea joins American leaders on an adventure to discover the Pacific Ocean. Together they face many challenges and dangerous times, but this is when we see how strong and brave Sacagawea really is. This story is set in what we know as the United States, but at the time it was just land slowly coming together to form our country. There are many **historical references**, which shows how our country once was and how it is now.

Reader Response Activity: This story is great for a historical and cultural lesson. It shows the different Indian tribes, and how important their culture was. The author has many references to the land and the states, which would be fun for students to create maps of what the U.S. used to be and the few states that were part of it in the beginning how it has evolved and changed over time.



Through My Eyes

Author: Ruby Bridges

Illustrator: Not listed

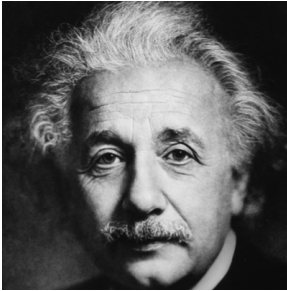
Genre: Autobiography

Grade Range: Primary-Intermediate

Plot Summary: A young African American girl is living the segregated lifestyle and going to an all black school until November 14, 1960 when everything changes. Starting that Monday, six-year-old Ruby Bridges, the **main character**, would be going to what used to be an all white school in the **setting**, New Orleans, Louisiana. She would be brought there by federal marshals to protect her from the protesters who liked things segregated. The story goes on to tell the experiences Ruby Bridges has going to that school. The book ends with where she is today.

Reader Response Activity: This activity will work great for 3-6th graders learning about the civil rights movement and discovering what makes themselves special. Start off by asking your students some of the things that make them a hero like Ruby. Give them examples, like maybe defending someone from a bully, maybe they recycle, or even volunteer at the local shelter. After that, explain to your class some of the things that

make Ruby a hero so they can see the connection. Then have your students write a story about what made them a hero at one time or another. Last have them bring in a white shirt and have them make their own super hero logo on it with marker. Then have them bring it home and wear it and have someone photograph them in it while they are doing something heroic. Finally you will have them paste the picture on their paper.



Albert Einstein

Author: Stephanie Sammartino McPherson

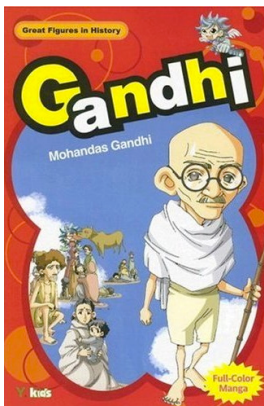
Illustrator: Princeton University Library

Genre: Biography

Grade Range: Primary

Plot Summary: This book portrays Albert Einstein as a very curious and smart person from the time he was young. His theories and experiments lead to a better understanding of the universe. He became a professor right out of college and extended his knowledge to his students. Albert became extremely well known in 1919 when his theory of starlight being sent from the sun was proven to be true. He continued to have adventures in Europe but when war started and Hitler took over Germany, Albert made the U.S. his new home. Until the very end of Albert's life he continue to do his best to accomplish more.

Reader Response Activity: This biography is a great read-aloud to show students how important people from history are, especially scientist that have helped make huge discoveries. This book is very informative and provides history as well as a science lesson. Students could design a small science experiment and explain it to the class like Einstein would to his peers.



Great Figures in History: Gandhi, Mohandas Gandhi

Author: Y Kids

Illustrator: Not listed

Genre: Biography

Grade Range: Intermediate

About the Book: This book is an educational Manga illustrated biography. This means that the book is written in comic book form. At the beginning of the book they give you background information on the character so you know whom they are when they are brought up in the book. Also, there is a robot that pops up occasionally to give you background information on the situation occurring. The really awesome thing about this book is that it is broken up into multiple parts of Gandhi's life. Each part is its own story or episode. The book has a total of 9 episodes. The episode I chose was episode 9 or Independence for India.

Plot Summary: The **setting** is in India. The episode starts out with the **main character**, Mahatma Gandhi, declaring India's independence from Britain. Lord Irwin, the British governor general to India has him arrested. Then people begin to start protesting Gandhi being arrested. Gandhi knows that the only way to prevent the people from rioting is to get out of jail. So Gandhi decides to go on a food strike, which means he refuses to eat. Eventually Lord Irwin sees that if Gandhi dies it will cause huge riots in India so he agrees to let him go. Once Gandhi is free everything is great until the Hindus and the Muslims start to fight. Gandhi decides to go on another food strike to make them stop fighting and it works. Unfortunately one Hindu man is not happy that there is peace so he decides to get back at Gandhi and kills him. The story ends with his followers being upset but realizing that Gandhi is still in their hearts watching over them.

Reader Response Activity: I think a great activity for intermediate classes to do have them do research on a hero sometime in history. Next they will write a 2 page comic biography on what makes them heroic like Gandhi. Having them do research on another hero will obviously give them insight on that person and that time in history, but it will also show them what a biography is, while giving them a chance to express their creativity with the Manga drawings.