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Easy Reader Biographies™

Teaching Guide

Strategies • Mini-Lessons • Graphic Organizers

by Pamela Chanko

NEW YORK • TORONTO • LONDON • AUCKLAND • SYDNEY
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**Teaching
Resources**

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Introduction

Everyone loves a good story—and when that story is true, it can be even more compelling. Teaching history is an essential part of any curriculum, but children are more likely to absorb (and enjoy!) what they learn about their country's past when it is told through narrative, rather than when it is presented as rote facts and dates. And that's what *Easy Reader Biographies* is all about—riveting stories! We've chosen 12 remarkable people who have faced challenges, followed dreams, and fought for causes, helping to shape our country's identity as well as their own. From Johnny Appleseed's cross-country mission to Harriet Tubman's brave journey to freedom, the lives of these amazing people are sure to inspire children.



In addition, the program is designed to make nonfiction accessible and engaging. As teachers, we need to prepare even the youngest learners for increasing academic demands, and give them the skills they need to interpret nonfiction material both in and out of school. *Easy Reader Biographies* introduces children to nonfiction features such as picture captions and glossaries, as well as easy-to-read graphics such as timelines, diagrams, and maps—all within the context of exciting, true-life stories.

Perhaps most important of all, *Easy Reader Biographies* is a flexible, easy-to-use program designed to meet your teaching needs. The helpful features you'll find in the program include:

- a handy storage box designed to create an inviting book display
- five copies of each book, allowing for both independent reading and group instruction
- teaching pages with step-by-step strategies for each title
- an engaging reproducible graphic organizer for each title, designed to boost comprehension and critical thinking skills
- ... and much more!

With *Easy Reader Biographies*, children will develop essential reading skills, build core content knowledge and cultural literacy, and meet some amazing Americans who are sure to inspire.

How to Use the Program

Easy Reader Biographies is a nonfiction reading program designed to support and enhance any curriculum. The books can be used in a variety of ways to meet the needs of your students. In addition, this teaching guide provides a wealth of strategies and tips to help you maximize children's learning. Use the following options to guide you in tailoring the program to your curriculum.

Setting Up the Books

The handy storage box can be used to create an inviting book display. Remove the lid and hang it on the back of the box; then place the box on a countertop at students' eye level. Inside the box, you'll find five copies of each of the 12 titles. The tiered shelves are designed to display six titles at a time, two in each row. Rotate your display as needed to feature different titles.

Using the Teacher's Guide

This complete teaching resource provides you with all the materials you'll need to get the most out of the program in your classroom. In this guide, you'll find the following:

- A rationale for making the program part of your reading, writing, and social studies curriculum. **Connections to the Standards** (pages 8–9) presents each important standard your students will meet through reading the books as well as through the lessons and activities featured in this teaching guide.
- A **Guided Reading and Nonfiction Feature Grid** (pages 10–11) that shows each book's guided reading level, word count, vocabulary, and nonfiction features at a glance.
- A **Sample Guided Reading Lesson** (pages 12–13) to use as a model for teaching the texts with guided reading groups.
- **Teaching Nonfiction Text** (pages 14–17), which provides research and strategies to help children learn how to read and comprehend key features of nonfiction.
- **Teaching the Biographies** (page 18), which provides a guide for presenting the books to children, including suggestions for before, during, and after reading.
- Four **Graphic Organizers to Use With Any Book** (pages 20–23), easy-to-use reproducibles that reinforce children's learning and build critical skills.
- One **Teaching Page** and one **Reproducible** for each title in the program (pages 24–47). The titles are organized in alphabetical order. You might present the stories in chronological order or choose books that coincide with a particular topic of study or holiday, such as Presidents' Day or Martin Luther King, Jr., Day. On these pages, you'll find:



- A short synopsis with background information about the biography's subject.
- Strategies, questions, and discussion ideas to introduce the book to children.
- A step-by-step guide for teaching the spotlighted nonfiction feature.
- Simple instructions for using the reproducible after reading.
- A short list of book links—titles to check out if children would like to learn more.
- After-reading reproducibles—each title's activity sheet focuses on essential comprehension skills, such as cause and effect, comparison and contrast, sequencing, and personal reading response.

Using the Books to Teach Nonfiction Text

The biographies in this program provide a great venue for teaching the genre of nonfiction. Embedded in each book are a variety of nonfiction text structures, such as chronological order, cause and effect, and problem and solution. Every book contains the essential nonfiction features of realistic illustrations, captions, bold-faced words, and a glossary. In addition, each title has one or two spotlighted nonfiction features—these include maps, diagrams, bulleted lists, timelines, and more.

Using the Books for Independent Reading

These biographies make perfect additions to your independent reading library. You can display the books in the provided storage box, or if you prefer, place them in a basket labeled "Biographies." Invite children to browse through the books and choose one to read during independent reading time. Or place one of the titles in a resealable bag for each student, along with other books at his or her reading level.

Using the Books for Guided Reading

These books are also excellent choices for guided reading. Each book correlates with guided reading level I or J. (See the grid on pages 10–11 for leveling information about each title.) This will help you select titles at just the right level for each student. Research shows that books are "just right" when children are able to read and understand the majority of the text and are able to use strategies to figure out most of the unknown words they encounter. The teacher is then able to provide scaffolding, assisting with challenging concepts and providing prompts to boost comprehension and build self-correction strategies.

Since five copies of each title are included, you can easily group students and use one title for small-group instruction. On pages 12–13, you'll find a sample guided reading lesson to use with *Rosa Parks: Bus Ride to Freedom*. Use the sample as a model to plan guided reading lessons for the other titles in the program. The grid on pages 10–11 allows you to preview each title's reading level, word count, average number of words per page, and vocabulary, so you can tailor your instruction to meet students' needs.

Connections to the Standards

The books and lessons in this program are designed to support you in meeting the following standards for students in grades K–2, outlined by Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning (McREL), an organization that collects and synthesizes national and state K–12 curriculum standards.

Civics

- + Understands ideas about civic life, politics, and government.
- + Understands the essential characteristics of limited and unlimited governments.
- + Understands the sources, purposes, and functions of law, and the importance of the rule of law for the protection of individual rights and the common good.
- + Understands the central ideas of American constitutional government and how this form of government has shaped the character of American society.
- + Understands issues regarding personal, political, and economic rights.
- + Understands issues regarding the proper scope and limits of rights and the relationships among personal, political, and economic rights.
- + Understands how certain character traits enhance citizens' ability to fulfill personal and civic responsibilities.
- + Understands the importance of political leadership, public service, and a knowledgeable citizenry in American constitutional democracy.

Geography

- + Understands the characteristics and uses of maps and other geographic tools.
- + Knows the location of places and geographic features.
- + Understands the physical and human characteristics of place.
- + Understands how geography is used to interpret the past.

History

- + Understands the causes and nature of movements of large groups of people into and within the United States.
- + Understands major discoveries in science and technology, some of their social and economic effects, and the major scientists and inventors responsible for them.
- + Understands how communities in North America varied long ago, including:
 - Understands changes in community life over time.
 - Understands the contributions and significance of historical figures of the community.

- Understands how democratic values came to be, and how they have been exemplified by people, events, and symbols, including:
 - Knows the English colonists who became revolutionary leaders and fought for independence from England, such as George Washington and Thomas Jefferson.
 - Understands how individuals have worked to achieve the liberties and equality promised in the principles of American democracy and to improve the lives of people from many groups, such as Rosa Parks, Martin Luther King, Jr., and Cesar Chavez.
 - Understands how important figures reacted to their times and why they were significant to the history of our democracy, such as George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Abraham Lincoln, Susan B. Anthony, and Martin Luther King, Jr.
 - Understands the ways in which people in a variety of fields have advanced the cause of human rights, equality, and the common good, such as Rosa Parks and Cesar Chavez.
 - Understands the reasons that Americans celebrate certain national holidays.
 - Knows the history of American symbols.
 - Knows why important buildings, statues, and monuments are associated with state and national history.
 - Understands how people have helped newcomers get settled and learn the ways of the new country.



Historical Understanding

- Understands and knows how to analyze chronological relationships and patterns.

Language Arts

- Uses the general skills and strategies of the writing process.
- Uses the stylistic and rhetorical aspects of writing.
- Uses grammatical and mechanical conventions in written compositions.
- Uses the general skills and strategies of the reading process, including:
 - Uses meaning clues such as picture captions, title, cover, and headings to aid comprehension.
- Uses reading skills and strategies to understand and interpret a variety of informational texts, including:
 - Understands the main idea and supporting details of simple expository information.
 - Relates new information to prior knowledge and experience.

Source: *Content Knowledge: A Compendium of Standards and Benchmarks for K-12 Education*. 4th edition (Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning, 2004).

Guided Reading and Nonfiction Feature Grid

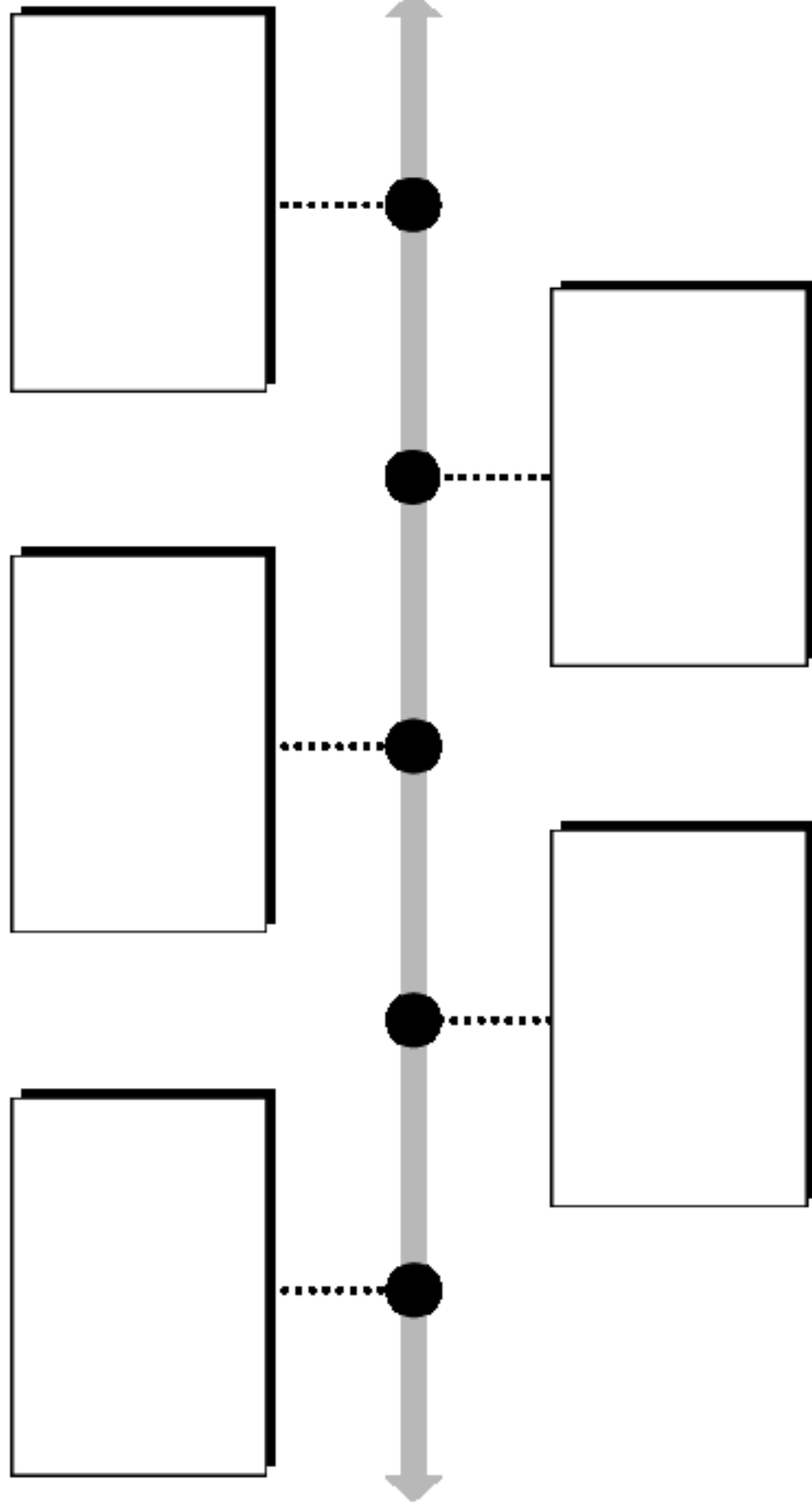
Title	SUSAN B. ANTHONY: Fighter for Women's Rights	JOHNNY APPLESEED: An American Who Made a Difference	ALEXANDER GRAHAM BELL: A Famous Inventor	CESAR CHAVEZ: A Leader for Change	HELEN KELLER: An Inspiring Life	MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.: A Man With a Dream
Guided Reading Level	J	I	I	I	J	I
Word Count	665	638	631	707	666	707
Average Number of Words per Page	42	40	39	44	42	44
Vocabulary	arrested convention election equal passionate property rights timeline	herb medicine orchard settler snowshoe trudged wilderness	deaf fascinated incredible inventor laboratory tube vibration wire	boycott crop migrant farmworker register strike union	Braille communicate hope inspiring palm realized timeline	boycott equal law mourned pastor protest segregation
General Nonfiction Features	realistic illustrations, captions, glossary	realistic illustrations, captions, glossary	realistic illustrations, captions, glossary	realistic illustrations, captions, glossary	realistic illustrations, captions, glossary	realistic illustrations, captions, glossary
Spotlight Nonfiction Features	list timeline	diagram flowchart map	diagram	list	timeline	illustrated examples with captions

Name _____ Date _____

Sequencing Timeline

Write the person's name on the line. Then write important events in the order in which they happened.

Important Events In _____'s Life



Name _____

Date _____

Vocabulary Chart

Record new words on the chart. First, write the vocabulary word. Next, write what it means. Then, use the word in your own sentence.

Word	What It Means	Sentence Using Word