

# Example Text: Biography

## (Ages 9 - 11)

1

Write an attention-grabbing introduction.

An introduction for a biography needs to give a summary of who that person is and why they are important or notable. An introduction should make the reader want to read on so encourage your child to use attention grabbing adjectives, an interesting statement and perhaps a question.

2

Write in past tense.

Past tense is really important for a biography as the events you are describing have already happened. Remind your child that they should be using -ed for regular past tense verbs. They may need help to identify any verbs that don't follow this pattern.

## Wally Funk

Mary Wallace Funk (also known as Wally Funk) is an American aviator, who **has set** many records in her lifetime in her career in aviation and space travel. She **was recognised** as '**The Most Outstanding Women in America**' in **1965** and is now also **the oldest person to have travelled to Space**. She **was** 82 years old. Read on to find out more about Wally's impressive life and achievements.

Can we have some kind of red line around this first paragraph to show it is the introduction and part of the success criteria please.



**Wally Funk dreamed of being a pilot since she was a child.**

### Early Life

**Wally Funk was born on 1st February 1939 in Las Vegas, New Mexico.** Her mother and father **owned** a shop. **From a very young age**, she **was fascinated** by planes and even **had** her first trip to see a plane when she was only one year old. **At the age of**

**3****Write in chronological order.**

Biographies are written in time order. Ask your child to imagine they are telling a story of that person's life from beginning to end or the most recent events (not forgetting that it needs to be factual). Encourage your child to use time conjunctions, such as 'first', 'after that', 'finally' and 'then'.

**4****Include a picture and caption.**

Pictures are often used to help the reader better understand what they are reading. They also make it more engaging to look at. Ask your child to think about what picture might be useful. Sometimes, you might also add a caption to say what the picture shows.

**seven**, she **was** interested in the mechanics of planes and began building them out of wood. **She had her first actual flying lesson when she was nine.**

### Education

**At school**, Funk **was not allowed** to take the courses that she wanted because she was a girl, which **she thought was very unfair**. Consequently, she **left** early and **went** to Stephen's College instead. **She graduated in 1958 with her pilot's license and an art degree**. **After that**, she **studied** at Oklahoma State University. She **earned** lots of aviation awards, including the 'Outstanding Female Pilot' award.

### Career

**When she was only 20 years old**, she **became** a professional aviator in Oklahoma - **she was the first female flight instructor at a US military base**. **In 1971**, she **became** the first female 'Flight Inspector' and in **1974**, she **became** the first female 'Air Safety Investigator'. She also **flew** in lots of air races and **helped** to train hundreds of pilots.

### Space

**In February 1961, Wally volunteered to be part of the 'Women in Space' programme**. People had thought that women would not be able to complete the tough training programme. **13 women graduated from the training (the Mercury 13)**; some of them **scored** better than the men. Funk was the youngest of these as she was only 21. The programme **was cancelled** so they never got to Space.

**Lots of women (like Wally) were involved in the Space race and helped to build NASA.**



5

Use factual information/  
talk about key events.

A biography tells us about factual events that happened in the person's life. Remind your child not to include their own opinion, however they may include other people's opinions through quotes. Make sure they have fully researched the person/ events before writing, so they know their facts are correct. Your child might also choose to present some key information in a separate fact box.

## Later Life

When NASA started letting women in, Funk applied three times but she didn't get in because of her education. Instead, she became Chief Pilot of five aviation schools before retiring. Despite not going to Space when she was younger, she set a record in 2021 as the oldest person in Space at the age of 82. When she got back, she said, "I can hardly wait to go again!"

Wally Funk has had many 'firsts' in her life and is a great role model for women in stereotypically 'male' careers. She has published a memoir, starred in a film about her life which is played at a museum and flown over 18,600 hours in her lifetime.

6

Include the person's feelings.

Biographies often include information to give us a sense of the person's character. A good way to do this is to find out how that person felt during specific points in their life. Try researching together to find interviews or quotes from the person about their thoughts or feelings.

7

Write a conclusion.

Most pieces of writing have a conclusion. The conclusion for a biography can be a bit different as it summarises the person's life by recapping their key achievements, what they are doing now if they are still alive or what they will be remembered for most if they aren't.

8

Use subheadings.

Subheadings not only help to make sure that your child is writing in chronological order, but they also help to separate information for the reader. When you read biographies, they often use subheadings such as 'Early Life', 'Education', 'Career', 'Other Achievements' and 'Later Life'.