

Writing a biography of a New Zealander

This task is about finding out about a well-known New Zealander.



Introduction

Choose a well-known New Zealander to do research on and write about. Carry out your research using the steps and questions in the table below.

Steps and questions to ask yourself	Notes
Deciding: Who will I choose as a well-known New Zealander? What do I already know about this person? What do I still need to know?	Look at the key research areas on the note taking sheet.
Finding: Where will I go for information?	Information about people can be found in all sorts of resources: in books, videos, on the internet, or by interviewing people, or the actual person.
Using: How will I select information and sources to use? How will I read efficiently?	Take a quick look at each resource. Use index and contents pages, and headings. If the resource doesn't have what you need, don't use it. When you find a useful resource, take a closer look. Read the last sentence in paragraphs and conclusions. Which bits of information are useful? You could photocopy the useful bits and highlight or underline keywords and phrases.
Recording: How do I take notes? How do I make notes?	Use the note taking sheet. Remember, write in a shortened form. You can: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• write briefly, using keywords, phrases (not full sentences)• use a method to organise your work (e.g., bullet points, lists, mindmaps, charts)• use abbreviations and symbols, e.g., imp for important, # for number• organise your notes so you can use them to start writing.
Presenting: What form will my writing take? How will I present my work?	A biography is a written narrative account of one person's life. Your work could be published as a video, infographic, speech, poster, or a slide show.
Evaluating: How will I evaluate my work?	Find and read a biography. Make a list of the different structure and language features that authors use to write effective and engaging biographies. Consider which of these features you could use when you write your biography of a well-known New Zealander.

Taking notes

Use the following template to take notes in preparation for writing your biography of a well-known New Zealander. Remember to write in a shortened form.

Person I am researching: _____

Their personal details: (e.g., date of birth)
Early influences: (3 or more events that shaped this person) <ul style="list-style-type: none">•••
Education: (Comment on the role of education or significance of it in later life)
Major accomplishments: (Provide dates) <ul style="list-style-type: none">•••
Significance: (Explain why and to whom this individual is well-known, and how they made a difference to the lives of others.)
People: (Who influenced and/or worked with this person) <ul style="list-style-type: none">••
List the resources you have used: <ul style="list-style-type: none">••

Assessment of notetaking sheet completed by _____

	No	Yes
Has the writer written in a shortened form?		
In writing in a shortened form, the writer has used: * keywords/phrases (not full sentences) * bullet points/lists/mindmaps/charts * abbreviations/symbols like:		
Do the notes cover all of the key information needed in a biography?		
Is there at least one main point made about each key area of information?		
Has the writer shown that they can expand on their notes?		
Could somebody else find the resources that are listed?		

What action should the writer take before writing their biography?

Signed: _____