

# BIOGRAPHIES

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**These picture book biographies are great choices for ALL levels – for sharing aloud or independent reading!**

Adler, David A. **America's champion swimmer:** Gertrude Ederle. Orlando, Fla.: Harcourt, Inc., 2005. Summary: Describes the life and accomplishments of Gertrude Ederle, the first woman to swim the English Channel and a figure in the early women's rights movement.

Adler, David A. **Lou Gehrig: the luckiest man.** San Diego: Gulliver Books, 1996. Summary: Traces the life of the Yankees' star ballplayer, focusing on his character and his struggle with the terminal disease amyotrophic lateral sclerosis.

Berne, Jennifer. **Manfish: a story of Jacques Cousteau.** San Francisco: Chronicle Books, c2008. Summary: A biography of oceanographer Jacques Cousteau featuring colorful full-page illustrations. Describes how his movies about the underwater world raised awareness about saving the oceans.

Bowen, Fred. **No easy way: the story of Ted Williams and the last .400 season.** New York: Dutton Children's Books, c2010. Summary: An illustrated account of the 1941 season when baseball player Ted Williams hit .406, a feat that hasn't been repeated since. Describes the pressure on him during the last days of the season and how he decided not to take the easy way out.

Bowman, Donna Janell. **Step right up: how Doc and Jim Key taught the world about kindness.** New York, Lee & Low Books Inc., [2016]. Summary: Presents a picture book featuring the true story of William "Doc" Key, a former slave and self-taught veterinarian, and his horse, Beautiful Jim Key, whom Doc taught to count and spell.

Bryant, Jennifer. **A river of words: the story of William Carlos Williams.** Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans Books for Young Readers, 2008. Summary: This picture book biography of William Carlos Williams traces childhood events that lead him to become a doctor and a poet.

Bryant, Jennifer. **Six dots: a story of young Louis Braille.** New York, Alfred A. Knopf, [2016]. Summary: Picture-book biography of Louis Braille, inventor of an alphabet system for the blind. Includes a pronunciation guide and a diagram of the Braille alphabet.

Crowe, Ellie. **Surfer of the century: the life of Duke Kahanamoku.** New York: Lee & Low Books, c2007. Summary: Explores the life, courage, and sportsmanship of Hawaiian surfer Duke Kahanamoku.

D'Agnese, Joseph. **Blockhead: the life of Fibonacci.** New York: Henry Holt, 2010. Summary: Tells the story of Leonardo Fibonacci, a boy who was once called a "blockhead" for his habit of daydreaming, and his great mathematical discoveries.

Davis, Kathryn. **Mr. Ferris and his wheel.** New York, New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, [2014]. Summary: Presents a picture book story about George Washington Gale Ferris and the opposition he faced on the way to inventing his famous Ferris wheel.

Glaser, Linda. **Emma's poem: the voice of the Statue of Liberty.** Boston [Mass.]: Houghton Mifflin Books for Children/Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2010. Summary: The story of Emma Lazarus, who, despite her life of privilege, became a tireless advocate for the immigrants who arrived in New York City in the 1880s and wrote a famous poem for the Statue of Liberty.

Golenbock, Peter. **Hank Aaron: brave in every way**. Orlando: Voyager Books, 2005. Summary: A biography of the Hall of Fame baseball player who broke Babe Ruth's career home run record.

Greenberg, Jan. **Action Jackson**. New York: Square Fish, 2007. Summary: Imagines Jackson Pollock at work during the creation of one of his paint-swirled and splattered canvasses.

Heiligman, Deborah. **The boy who loved math: the improbable life of Paul Erdos**. New York, New York: Roaring Brook Press, 2013. Summary: Presents a biography of Paul Erdos, exploring his love of math and numbers and revealing how he eventually became one of the world's most accomplished mathematicians.

Keating, Jess. **Shark lady: the true story of how Eugenie Clark became the ocean's most fearless scientist**. Naperville, Illinois, Sourcebooks Jabberwocky, 2017.

Summary: Presents an illustrated true story of pioneer ichthyologist Eugenie Clark. As a young girl, Clark loved sharks and devoted her life to studying them despite being told that women shouldn't become scientists.

Landmann, Bimba. **I am Marc Chagall**. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans Books for Young Readers, 2006. Summary: Picture book biography tracing the life of twentieth-century painter, Marc Chagall. Charts his life from his childhood in Vitebsk, Russia and his 1941 emigration to the U.S. through his return to France after the war and his work in Nice, Jerusalem, Chicago, and New York. Includes three-dimensional illustrations highlighting key influences on his life and art.

Levy, Debbie. **I dissent: Ruth Bader Ginsburg made her mark**. New York, Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers, [2016].

Summary: Explores the life and career of Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, and highlights the changes she's brought about by disagreeing with the general consensus. Includes photographs and notes on Supreme Court cases mentioned in the book.

Macy, Sue. **Basketball belles: how two teams and one scrappy player put women's hoops on the map**. New York: Holiday House, c2011. Summary: Describes how Agnes Morley led her Stanford University basketball team to the first ever women's college basketball championship. Includes a timeline, author's note, and further resources.

Malaspina, Ann. **Heart on fire: Susan B. Anthony votes for president**. Chicago, Ill.: Albert Whitman & Co, 2012. Summary: Showcases Susan B. Anthony's illegal voting in the presidential election of 1872 and examines how her subsequent arrest and trial helped shape the suffrage movement.

Maurer, Tracy. **Noah Webster's fighting words**. Millbrook Press, 2017. Summary: A brief biography of educator and writer Noah Webster, famous for writing the first dictionary of the English language, with fictitious editing remarks by Noah.

McCarthy, Meghan. **Strong man: the story of Charles Atlas**. New York: A.A. Knopf, c2007. Summary: Uses a comic strip format and simple sentences to present the life of strong man Charles Atlas. Focuses on his childhood, friendships, life on the streets, small size, and how he trained to get stronger building his own weights and developing his own exercises. Later on Atlas entered several competitions and developed his own fitness system known as "Dynamic Tension."

McCully, Emily Arnold. **Marvelous Mattie: how Margaret E. Knight became an inventor**. New York: Farrar Straus Giroux, 2006. Summary: Although she lived in a time when people believed that women couldn't understand mechanical equipment, Mattie Knight invented and patented a machine that made paper bags which are still processed today.

Mosca, Julia Finley. **The girl with a mind for math: the story of Raye Montague.** Seattle, WA, The Innovation Press, 2018.

Summary: Presents a rhyming picture book biography of Raye Montague who, after touring a submarine in the 1940s, decided to use her mathematical skills to become an engineer. Although she faced sexism and racism, Montague persisted in her career and eventually succeeded in writing a computer program for the U.S. Navy that designed a submarine in just nineteen hours. Includes an inspirational note from Montague, facts about her life, an illustrated timeline, biographical information, and further resources.

Moss, Marissa. **Nurse, soldier, spy: the story of Sarah Edmonds, a Civil War hero.** New York: Abrams Books for Young Readers, 2011. Summary: Presents the story of Sarah Emma Edmonds, a woman disguised as a man who joined the Michigan infantry during the Civil War and became a spy for the Union Army. Includes photos of Sarah dressed in a woman's clothing and also as the man known as Frank Thompson. Provides a glossary and an index.

Moss, Marissa. **The eye that never sleeps: how Detective Pinkerton saved President Lincoln.** New York, Abrams Books for Young Readers, 2018.

Summary: Chronicles the work of Allan Pinkerton and the Pinkerton National Detective Agency who in the 1850s reportedly thwarted a secessionist assassination plot against Abraham Lincoln on the train ride to his inauguration. Includes a timeline, and an author's note on the life of Allan Pinkerton.

Murphy, Claire Rudolf. **Marching with Aunt Susan: Susan B. Anthony and the fight for women's suffrage.** Atlanta: Peachtree, c2011. Summary: Not allowed to go hiking with her father and brothers because she is a girl, Bessie learns about women's rights when she attends a suffrage rally led by Susan B. Anthony.

Nivola, Claire A. **Planting the trees of Kenya: the story of Wangari Maathai.** New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2008. Summary: Presents the story of Wangari Maathai who left Kenya to go to college in America. When she returned home she was struck by how the clearing of land had harmed both the land and the people of Kenya. She started a movement to reforest the nation.

Pimentel, Annette Bay. **Girl running: Bobbi Gibb and the Boston Marathon.** New York, NY, Nancy Paulsen Books, 2018.

Summary: Presents an illustrated biography of the first woman to run the Boston Marathon, Bobbi Gibb. Describes how in 1966, when it was considered dangerous for women to run that distance, Gibb snuck into the race to prove everyone wrong--receiving recognition from athletes and politicians alike, and inspiring millions of women to participate in long-distance running.

Pinborough, Jan. **Miss Moore thought otherwise: how Anne Carroll Moore created libraries for children.** Boston: Houghton Mifflin Books for Children, 2013. Summary: Presents a picture book biography of Anne Carroll Moore who promoted the idea of a children's room in New York public libraries. Describes her pioneering efforts and legacy today.

Pinkney, Andrea Davis. **Duke Ellington: the piano prince and his orchestra.** New York: Jump at the Sun/Hyperion Paperbacks for Children, 2007. Summary: A brief recounting of the career of this jazz musician and composer who, along with his orchestra, created music that was beyond category.

Potter, Alicia. **Jubilee! : one man's big, bold, and very, very loud celebration of peace.** Somerville, Massachusetts: Candlewick Press, 2014. Summary: After the Civil War ends, a young man named Patrick Sarsfield Gilmore organizes and hosts the largest, loudest, and longest concert the world had known up to then. He called it a peace jubilee.

Reich, Susanna. **Fab four friends: the boys who became the Beatles.** New York, Henry Holt and Company, 2015. Summary: Presents a picture book describing how four ordinary British boys growing up in postwar England joined together over their love of music to create the Beatles.

Rodríguez, Rachel. **Building on nature: the life of Antoni Gaudí.** New York: H. Holt, 2009. Summary: Contains a biography for young readers on the life of Antoni Gaudi and his architectural influences around the world. Includes color illustrations.

Rosenstock, Barb. **The streak: how Joe DiMaggio became America's hero.** Honesdale, Pennsylvania: Calkins Creek, [2014]. Summary: Chronicles the summer of 1941 when Yankee baseball player Joe DiMaggio went on a streak of fifty-six hits, setting the record that stands today. Includes newspaper headlines, quotes, and statistics.

Rosenstock, Barbara. **Thomas Jefferson builds a library.** Honesdale, Pennsylvania: Calkins Creek, [2013]. Summary: Chronicles Thomas Jefferson's efforts to read and collect books from his childhood through his adult years. Reveals how his hobby eventually enabled him to build a library to house all his books and how this library eventually became the groundwork for the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C.

Rubin, Susan Goldman. **Jean Lafitte: the pirate who saved America.** New York: Abrams Books for Young Readers, 2011. Summary: Examines the life of pirate Jean Laffite, a Jewish privateer who sailed the seas of the Caribbean preying upon Spanish vessels. After being marooned, an American ship came and saved him, and ever since Laffite showed loyalty to the United States, most notably in his defeat of the British in the Battle of New Orleans in the War of 1812.

Rusch, Elizabeth. **For the love of music: the remarkable story of Maria Anna Mozart.** Berkeley [Calif.]: Tricycle Press, c2011. Summary: Depicts the life and musical talent of the sister of Wolfgang Mozart and describes her love of music. Both Maria and Wolfgang were declared child geniuses on their piano recitals throughout Europe. Includes color illustrations and a short biography of Maria Mozart.

Schroeder, Alan. **Ben Franklin: his wit and wisdom from A to Z.** New York: Holiday House, 2011. Summary: A collection of alphabetical entries describing Ben Franklin's life, accomplishments, and anecdotes.

Shetterly, Margot Lee. **Hidden figures: the true story of four black women and the space race.** New York, NY, Harper, 2018. Summary: Presents a picture book profiling four African-American women mathematicians--Katherine, Dorothy, Mary, and Christine--who were hired by NASA to do the math work that would help the U.S. send the first astronauts into space.

Stone, Tanya Lee. **Who says women can't be doctors? : The story of Elizabeth Blackwell.** New York: Holt, 2013. Summary: An introduction to the life and achievements of the first American female doctor describes the limited career prospects available to women in the early nineteenth-century, the opposition Blackwell faced while pursuing a medical education, and her pioneering medical career that opened doors for future generations of women.

Wallmark, Laurie. **Grace Hopper: queen of computer code.** New York, Sterling Children's Books, 2017.

Summary: Picture book biography of Grace Murray Hopper, the woman who coined the term "computer bug" and invented the programming language that taught computers how to recognize English words, which is the basis for all modern computer software.

White, Linda Arms. **I could do that: Esther Morris gets women the vote.** New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2005. Summary: In 1869, a woman whose "can-do" attitude had shaped her life was instrumental in making Wyoming the first state to allow women to vote, then became the first woman to hold public office in the United States.

Wing, Natasha. **An eye for color: the story of Josef Albers.** New York: Henry Holt & Co, 2009. Summary: A biography of artist Josef Albers whose experiments with color combinations changed the art world.

Winter, Jonah. **Ruth Bader Ginsburg: the case of R.B.G. vs. inequality.** Abrams Books for Young Readers, 2017. Summary: Presents a picture book biography of Ruth Bader Ginsburg, from her childhood in the 1930s and 1940s in Brooklyn, where she grew up resenting the fact that women were valued less than men, and determined to grow up and change that and fight discrimination and injustice by becoming a lawyer--ultimately becoming a U.S. Supreme Court Justice.

Wise, Bill. **Silent star: the story of deaf major leaguer William Hoy.** New York: Lee & Low Books, c2012. Summary: Depicts late-nineteenth-century baseball star William Hoy who succeeded in making his dream come true to play in the major leagues in spite of being deaf. Describes him as one of the most inspirational baseball players and an example of persistence, drive, and determination.