

Amelia Earhart

by Ashleigh Young



Book Summary

Amelia Earhart overcame many obstacles: the challenge of long-distance flight as well as the restrictions placed on women. Her achievements inspired people all over the world. This book explores her life and legacy.

Features of the Book

- Biography
- Historical photographs
- Connections with world events
- Mystery

Purpose

Amelia Earhart can be used to introduce and reinforce the following skills and understandings:

- S** summarising;
- S** analysing and synthesising information;
- S** exploring the contribution and achievements of early women aviators.

Investigation Tools

- Digging Deeper – Women’s Rights in the Early Twentieth Century, page 6
- Looking Closer – Biplanes, page 11
- What’s the Background? – First Across the Atlantic Ocean, page 15
- Making Connections – Bessie Coleman, page 19
- Weighing Both Sides – Life in the Spotlight, page 22
- Step by Step – The Last Flight, page 26

The Guided Reading Lesson

- S** Summarising
- S** Analysing and synthesising information

Introducing the text

Review the strategies for summarising a text. These could include skimming and scanning, using text structure to find important points, identifying main ideas and supporting details, restating information in their own words, and ordering the main ideas in a cohesive way. The students may also make notes as they read to record main points.

Tell the students that as they read the biography *Amelia Earhart*, they will be using these strategies to write a summary of the book. They will also be able to think about her life and compare it with the lives of other famous people.

Examine the cover with the students, and discuss what they already know about Amelia Earhart.

- Why do some people have biographies written about them and others don't?
- Why do you think authors would want to write about Amelia Earhart?

Reading and discussing the text

Read the contents with the students and point out how the book will probably follow the chronology of Amelia Earhart's life. This can be used as a guide to writing a summary of the book.

Ask the students to read the introduction on page 3 and to suggest why the book starts in this way.

- Why would the author not start at the beginning of her life?

Tell the students to read Chapter 1, thinking about which ideas are the most important. List their ideas on the board.

- How did you decide on their importance?
- What details support your decisions?
- How does the author hint that Amelia's early life may be important to her later achievements? (the selection of details and the foreshadowing of the last paragraph)

Ask the students to read the rest of the book, noting the main ideas in each chapter. Ask them to consider why each idea is important and how the author has shown its importance. You may need to guide the students through this chapter by chapter. Reduce the level of support as soon as they are able to find the main ideas in pairs or independently.

Review the students' suggestions, questioning them on how they made their decisions and which features of the text helped them.

- Look at the chapter headings. How do they help to tell the story?
- Page 13 includes descriptions of Amelia. How does the rest of the chapter support these descriptions?
- What text features in Chapter 6 help point to the main ideas?
- Is the conclusion on page 30 the same as a summary? Why/why not?

Discuss the choice of Amelia Earhart as the subject for a biography.

- To what extent was Amelia's fame due to her being a woman?

- Do you think that being a woman made it easier or harder for her to do what she did? Why do you think that?
- Do you think that more men or more women are the subjects of biographies? Why? How could you find out?
- The author makes connections between Amelia's achievements and the progress of women at the time. How relevant do you think these connections are?
- Thinking about biographies you have read, what are some of the key characteristics of their subjects?


Revisiting the Text

The activities below can be used immediately after the guided reading lesson, during later reading sessions as mini-lessons, or as independent activities.

S Analysing and synthesising information

Ask the students to select several biographies and to compare the character traits of their subjects. They can prepare a debate or write an argument to support or deny the motion "only people who do extraordinary things have biographies written about them".

S Summarising

 Show the students a biographical dictionary, which includes brief biographies. The students can use these as models as they record their summaries of each chapter of the book along with a timeline. They can then write a brief biography (summary) of Amelia Earhart. They can use the blackline master to record their work.

S Exploring the contribution and achievements of early women aviators

The students can compare the achievements of Amelia Earhart and other early women aviators with those of male aviators such as Glenn Curtis, Charles Lindbergh, William Stultz, and Louis Gordon (all mentioned in this book). They should take into account the prevailing attitudes towards women and the restrictions imposed on them by laws and traditions. They can investigate people's opinions about the contributions and achievements of the women and formulate their own opinions.