


eslactive

Guess The Biography

Tags: [advanced](#), [entertainment](#), [intermediate](#), [passive](#), [past simple](#), [present perfect continuous](#), [present perfect simple](#), [present simple](#)

In the Guess The Biography ESL activity, students create five-part biographies then have to guess the people their classmates describe.

 2+  20-40 mins  Internet (can be accessed as homework)

Setup

Start by modelling an example five-part biography. For example for Johnny Depp:

- 1) He was born in the USA.
- 2) He is a famous movie actor.
- 3) He has been acting since the 1980s, but he became famous in the 1990s.
- 4) He has worked with Tim Burton.
- 5) He starred in Pirates of the Caribbean.

Reveal one sentence at a time and see when the students can guess who it is.

Students can complete the Guess The Biography ESL activity individually or in pairs.

Activity

1. Students use the Internet to research a famous person and create a similar biography, consisting of five separate sentences. They could do this as a homework activity if you wish. The biography should include examples of all the different target grammar you wish to practise. Note that the person should be living if you wish to practise the present perfect.
2. Importantly, the students should write and arrange their sentences so that guessing becomes gradually easier. As such more general information comes earlier, and more specific/obvious clues come later (as shown in the example).
3. The students/pairs take turns coming to the front to read their biography, one sentence at a time. After each sentence, the other students write down a guess,

and the readers privately check each one to see if it is correct (the answer must be kept secret until the end).

4. If students guess correctly after one sentence, they receive five points, after two sentences four points, after three three points and so on.
5. The process is repeated for all the biographies. The student(s) with the most points at the end wins.

Target Language

The Guess The Biography ESL activity is a good way to practise any grammar used in a biography. For low intermediate students this may just be the [present simple](#) and [past simple](#).

Higher level students on the other hand should include the [present perfect simple](#), the [present perfect continuous](#), and/or the [passive voice](#).

You could also use this activity with the topic of [entertainment](#), with the choice or famous person limited to actors, musicians etc. It can be a good opportunity to practise some commonly used verbs for this field, e.g. starred, awarded, released, recorded etc. Pre-teach this vocabulary if necessary.