

## Grade 5 English Language Arts

Week of February 1 – February 5

### Lesson 4: It's All About Who?

The world is full of people who have achieved great things or made important contributions. In this section you will choose one such person and create a report (biography) about his or her life. Who knows? Maybe in the future someone will write about you!

Over the next several lessons, you will research the life of a person of your choice and write a biography (life story) about that person. The biography will have an illustrated title page and four sections of content. In total, you should spend about ten hours researching and writing your biography.

### Sample Biography

Here is a biography for Chan Hon Goh, a member of the National Ballet of Canada. Your biography will be similar to this one.

*Chan Hon Goh was born in Beijing, China on February 1st, 1969. Her grandfather had been a famous painter, her uncle had been a famous choreographer, and her parents were famous dancers with the Central Ballet of China. An artistic life seemed to be her destiny.*

*Chan grew up watching rehearsals and seeing her father perform. At home, she would sneak into her mother's ballet slippers and pretend to dance. "I loved everything about ballet," Chan remembers, "the movement, the stories, and the music."*

*But Chan's parents didn't want her to become a ballerina. They thought life was too hard for a dancer.*

*When Chan was eight, she moved to Canada with her parents. She was excited about life in Vancouver. However, Chan couldn't speak English and she didn't understand the games at recess. Her classmates thought she was stupid. Chan was lonely and embarrassed. Things were better after school. That's when she studied dance with her parents at their new studio, the Goh Ballet Academy. Chan*



*had natural grace but she had trouble controlling her long arms. Her father didn't think she could become a good dancer. Chan was determined to try.*

*By the time she was eleven, she had passed the dance exams for Grades 2 and 3. By thirteen, her movements had improved tremendously. But her parents never corrected or praised Chan like they did the other students. Chan was upset and discouraged. She told her parents she dreamed of becoming a dancer. They finally agreed to help her in any way they could.*

*One day, the legendary dancer Anton Dolin visited The Goh Ballet Academy. Taking Chan's father aside, he pointed out one of the students. "She has it," he said. "She is going to be a beautiful dancer." The dancer he pointed to was Chan Hon Goh.*



*By the time Chan was in high school, she was on the honour roll and she studied by correspondence. Schoolwork was done in the early morning and again at night. Days were reserved for ballet. "All I ever thought about," Chan recalls, "was ballet." She vowed that one day she would be a dancer and travel the world! Meanwhile, Chan performed in local festivals and competitions. She also spent a few months studying ballet in both France and New York. Chan's last year in high school marked a turning point. First, she earned the Solo Seal Award*

*which allowed her to work as a professional dancer. Then, Chan became the first Canadian to win a silver medal at the Genee Competition, one of the most important ballet competitions in the world.*

*Chan knew she had to leave her family to become a successful dancer. She didn't want to move far so she applied to be a dancer with the Pacific Northwest Ballet in Seattle. She was turned down. Then, she auditioned for the National Ballet of Canada.*

*Chan's audition was successful! In 1988, nineteen-year-old Chan Hon Goh became a member of the National Ballet of Canada. She had set her goal and worked hard to achieve it. Now she was about to realize her dream of becoming an internationally recognized ballerina!*

## Questions

See if you can answer these questions about Chan. Look on the previous page if when you need to reread for details.

1. Describe Chan's childhood and her family.
2. What were the biggest challenges Chan had to overcome to meet her goals?
3. What was the major accomplishment in her life?
4. What personality traits do you think helped Chan accomplish her goals?