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# UNIT 2

## Life Stories

### Pre-Class Tasks

#### 1 Mini-Research

Search the Internet for information about biography and answer the following questions.

1. What is biography? What are the major elements of a biography?
2. What are the main forms of biography? What are the features of these forms?

#### 2 Co-Learning

Appreciate the following quotes about biography and discuss which one you agree with in a group.

Biography is the only true history.

—Thomas Carlyle

Biographies are but the clothes and buttons of the man.  
The biography of the man himself cannot be written.

—Mark Twain

#### 3 Presentation

Have you ever read any biography? Read a biography such as *The Gay Genius: The Life and Times of Su Tungpo* or *The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin* and give a brief report on your reading.





Jenny Medeiros

# Stephen Hawking's Life Story: The Peculiar Physicist Turned Global Icon



AUDIO CLIP

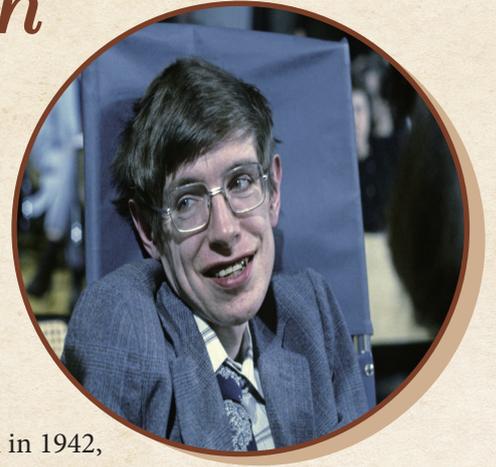
- 1 Even though he could only communicate using a muscle in his cheek, Stephen Hawking made himself into a world-renowned physicist thanks to his groundbreaking work, impish wit, and refusal to let his disability stifle his potential.

### An eccentric from birth

- 2 Stephen William Hawking was born on January 8th in 1942, in Oxford, England. His arrival was in the midst of WWII and a financial rough patch for his well-educated parents. But Stephen took great pride in knowing that he was born on the 300th anniversary of the death of Galileo Galilei.
- 3 His subtle peculiarities can be traced back to his family, who were often described as an “eccentric” bunch. Their family car was an old London taxi. They housed bees in the basement, and produced fireworks in the greenhouse. At dinner, each Hawking would intently read a book while the family ate in complete silence.
- 4 Stephen’s father was a researcher in tropical medicine and tried to nudge his son into studying medicine too. But Stephen’s fascination was for the stars and beyond. He often lay in the backyard along with his mother and siblings, staring up at the stars during warm summer evenings. It was here that young Stephen began to question *why* the universe is how it is, and *why* it exists at all.

### Surprisingly ordinary at school

- 5 In 1952, Stephen attended St. Albans School in Hertfordshire, where his sharp mind won him the nickname of “Einstein” amongst his peers, although his grades were ranked among the worst in his class and his untidy classwork was the despair of his teachers.
- 6 Stephen’s favorite subject by far was math. His teacher inspired him and a group of fellow intellectuals to build a computer out of recycled parts for solving basic mathematical equations. This interest in math later motivated him to pass a scholarship exam, earning



him a spot at his father's old college—Oxford. The scholarship was greatly appreciated by his parents, who didn't have the money to send him without one.

- 7 A degree in Mathematics was his first choice, but this wasn't offered at Oxford. So he settled for a degree in what they did offer: Physics. At 17, he began his first year at this prestigious college. It was quite boring for Stephen's proficient mind. He found the work "ridiculously easy" and could do it without peering over at his classmates or asking tutors for help. He quickly found himself feeling isolated and lonely.
- 8 But during his second and third year, his personality met a turning point. Stephen joined the college rowing club which encouraged him to cultivate a witty, lively and popular image. He wasn't very fit, so he was left in charge of steering the boat. But he soon became the most daring member of the club—steering his team into risky courses which often resulted in damaged boats.

### **Facing a life-changing diagnosis**

- 9 In 1963, Stephen's postgraduate studies of Cosmology began at Cambridge—but so did the first signs of his disease. During his last year at Oxford, he had noticed a few unfamiliar difficulties while rowing. Sometimes he would trip for no apparent reason or slur his speech unexpectedly. But Stephen decided to keep these symptoms to himself.
- 10 However, it didn't take long for his symptoms to worsen. His speech became noticeably slurred and he was becoming much "clumsier" than usual. It was only when he returned home for Christmas that his family caught on to his symptoms. They promptly sent him to the doctor, where Stephen was tediously examined for two long weeks.
- 11 Just after his 21st birthday, Stephen Hawking was given the devastating news that he had ALS (Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis), a neurodegenerative disease where sufferers progressively lose control over their voluntary muscles. His doctor gave him two years to live.
- 12 Stephen Hawking now spent his days in his hospital bed, among the beeps of machines and the occasional bustle of passing nurses. He lay there thinking about his studies, his hobbies, and the intriguing girl he met at the New Year's party. It all seemed so pointless now. Why bother doing anything when he was just going to die within two years?
- 13 He turned to look at the patient in the bed next to him, seeking a distraction. The patient in the bed nearby was a young boy suffering from leukemia. Gradually, the boy's saddening state pushed Stephen to see his own diagnosis in a different light. Maybe earning his Ph.D. and marrying that girl wouldn't be so pointless after all. In fact, there were many things he wanted to do with his life—before it was all over. So Stephen Hawking left his hospital bed, proposed to Jane Wilde, and returned to Cambridge to continue his studies.

### Reshaping Cosmology while battling ALS

- 14 In 1966, Stephen Hawking's Ph.D. thesis "Properties of Expanding Universes" was approved. He was now happily married, determined to continue his research, and optimistic about his unpredictable future.
- 15 His initial work sent the first of many shockwaves throughout the scientific community. In 1974, he was elected as one of the youngest Fellows of the Royal Society thanks to his unprecedented radiation theory. This same year, Stephen Hawking also accepted a professorship at the California Institute of Technology. He continued his work with renowned physicists on groundbreaking theories that would forever change the way we perceive the universe.
- 16 But his achievements were on a par with the progress of his disease. Stephen began to use a cane to help him walk. His speech became so slurred that only close family and friends could understand him. Soon enough, he needed help to get out of bed and feed himself. After much persuasion, he was finally convinced to use a wheelchair to aid his mobility. But Stephen was fiercely independent and determined not to be restricted by his disability.
- 17 In 1979, Stephen Hawking became the Lucasian Professor of Mathematics at Cambridge, a distinguished post once held by Isaac Newton. He went on to receive a host of honorary titles, degrees, and awards from major universities and scientific societies. His academic career was shooting upward, but his physical health was declining.

### Losing his speech and becoming a best-seller

- 18 In 1985, he suffered a life-threatening bout of pneumonia and required a tracheotomy—which removed the last remnants of his speech. Stephen Hawking's ability to work was in great peril, and he now required around-the-clock care. A handful of nurses and a select few of his graduate students rose up to the occasion.
- 19 The following year, his dire case of speech impediment was helped by a voice synthesizer. This device allowed him to select words on a screen that would then be read out by a computer. Being Stephen, he frequently put his new toy to use by telling groan-worthy "science jokes." At the end of one particular interview, he asked an unsuspecting crewman "What is a black hole?" After a dramatic pause, he quipped "Something you find in a black sock."
- 20 It took him a full minute to write one word and ten minutes per sentence. But this setback in his writing didn't stop Stephen Hawking from documenting his astounding research. In 1988, he became a sort of "physics rockstar" with his controversial book *A Brief History of Time: From the Big Bang to Black Holes*. To his surprise, this complex book on Cosmology sold over a million copies—becoming the best-selling nonfiction book. Even more surprisingly, it maintained this position for over a year.

### Celebrity status and a peaceful passing

- 21 Despite his condition, Stephen Hawking wrote and published over 15 books which remain hugely popular today. Their lasting impact on the fields of modern astronomy and theoretical physics made him one of the most distinguished thinkers of our time. Moreover, his efforts in making this knowledge widely accessible to the non-scientific community also made him into the best-known living physicist in the world.
- 22 His confinement to a wheelchair did nothing to subdue his adventurous spirit. Stephen traveled the world, was submerged in a submarine, and even suspended in a zero-gravity flight. He lent his voice and personality to popular TV series such as *The Simpsons*, *The Big Bang Theory*, and *Star Trek*. His wit and child-like humor stole the spotlight in interviews. He hosted and narrated *Genius*, a series on tackling historically scientific questions. Stephen even saw his marriage and career unfold before his eyes during the Oscar-winning portrayal of his life *The Theory of Everything*.
- 23 At 76 years old, Stephen had long exceeded his goals and life expectancy. But on the morning of March 14th, 2018, the brilliant human being that was Stephen Hawking passed away peacefully at his home in Cambridge. Curiously enough, just as his birth was on the deathday of Galileo, Stephen's own death coincided with the birthday of Albert Einstein.

## Notes to the Text

### 1. Royal Society

In full Royal Society of London for Improving Natural Knowledge, it is the oldest national scientific society in the world and the leading national organization for the promotion of scientific research in Britain. Its fellows are usually the most eminent scientists, engineers, and technologists from the U.K. and the Commonwealth.

### 2. Lucasian Professor of Mathematics at Cambridge

The Lucasian Chair of Mathematics is an honorary post in the University of Cambridge and its holder is known as the Lucasian Professor. The post is designed for researchers who have contributed greatly to the development of mathematics and physics, and is one of the most prestigious academic posts in the world.

## New Words and Expressions

**impish** /'ɪmpɪʃ/ *adj.* showing a lack of respect or seriousness in a way that is amusing rather than bad 调皮捣蛋的, 淘气的

**stifle** /'staɪfəl/ *v.* to stop sth from happening or developing 抑止, 阻止, 压制

**eccentric** /ɪk'sentɪk/ 1) *n.* someone who behaves in a way that is different from what is usual or socially accepted 行为古怪的人; 2) *adj.* behaving in a way that is unusual and different from most people (行为) 怪异的, 古怪的

**a rough patch** (*informal*) a period of time when you are having a lot of difficulty 艰难时期

**basement** /'beɪsmənt/ *n.* a room or area in a building that is under the level of the ground 地下室, 地库

**nudge** /nʌdʒ/ *v.* to gently persuade or encourage someone to take a particular decision or action 劝说, 鼓励

**equation** /ɪ'kweɪʒən/ *n.* a statement in mathematics that shows that two amounts or totals are equal 等式, 方程式

**prestigious** /pre'stɪdʒəs/ *adj.* admired as one of the best and most important 有威望的, 有声望的, 有威信的

**steer** /stɪə/ *v.* 1) to control the direction a vehicle is going, for example by turning a wheel 驾驶 (车、船等); 2) to guide someone's behavior or the way a situation develops 引导, 指导 (某人的行为), 引领 (局势的发展)

**cosmology** /kɒz'mɒlədʒi/ *n.* the study of the nature and origin of the universe 宇宙论, 宇宙学

**trip** /trɪp/ *v.* to hit sth with your foot by accident so that you fall or almost fall 绊, 绊倒

**slur** /slɜː/ *v.* to speak unclearly without separating your words or sounds correctly 含糊不清地说 (话)

**progressively** /prə'ɡresɪvli/ *adv.* gradually over a period of time 逐渐地, 逐步地

**beep** /bi:p/ *n.* a short high sound such as that made by a car horn or by electronic equipment 嘟嘟声

**bustle** /'bʌsəl/ *n.* busy and usually noisy activity 忙碌, 熙攘, 喧闹

**intriguing** /ɪn'trɪɡɪŋ/ *adj.* very interesting because of being unusual or mysterious 非常有趣的, 迷人的

**leukemia** /lu:'ki:mɪə/ *n.* (also *leukaemia* in *BrE*) a type of cancer of the blood, that causes weakness and sometimes death 白血病

**be on a par with** to be as good, bad, important, etc. as sb/sth else 与……相同

**a bout of** a short period of time during which you suffer from an illness (病痛的) 发作

**tracheotomy** /,træki'təʊmi/ *n.* (*technical*) an operation to cut a hole in someone's throat so that they can breathe 气管切开术

**remnant** /'remnənt/ *n.* (usually *plural*) a small part of sth that remains after the rest of it has been used, destroyed, or eaten 残余部分, 剩余部分

**peril** /'perəl/ *n.* (*literary* or *formal*) great danger, especially of being harmed or killed 巨大的危险

**dire** /'daɪə/ *adj.* extremely serious or terrible 极其严重的, 极可怕的

**impediment** /ɪm'pedəmənt/ *n.* a physical problem that makes speaking, hearing, or moving difficult 言语 (听觉, 行动) 障碍

**synthesizer** /'sɪnθesaɪzə/ *n.* (also *synthesiser* in *BrE*) an electronic instrument that produces the sounds of various musical instruments 电声合成器

**quip** /kwɪp/ *v.* to say sth clever and amusing 说俏皮话, 说妙语

**astounding** /ə'staʊndɪŋ/ *adj.* so surprising that it is almost impossible to believe 令人震惊的

**subdue** /səb'djuː/ *v.* (*formal*) to prevent your emotions from showing or being too strong 克制, 抑制

**submerge** /səb'mɜːdʒ/ *v.* to go under the surface of the water and be completely covered by it 潜入水中, 没入水中

**be suspended in sth** (*technical*) to float in liquid or air without moving 悬浮在某物中

**portrayal** /pɔː'treɪəl/ *n.* the way sb/sth is described or shown in a book, film, play, etc. 描绘, 表现

**exceed** /ɪk'si:d/ *v.* (*formal*) to be more than a particular number or amount 超过, 超出

**life expectancy** the length of time that a person or animal is expected to live 预期寿命

**coincide** /kəʊn'saɪd/ *v.* to happen at the same time as sth else, especially by chance 同时发生

## Lexical and Grammar Notes

- A. Even though he could only communicate using a muscle in his cheek, Stephen Hawking made himself into a world-renowned physicist...**

**B. He wasn't very fit, so he was left in charge of steering the boat.**

The verbs *make* and *leave* are causative verbs used to indicate that a person, place, or thing is causing an action or an event to happen. The structure *make sb into sth* means changing someone's character, job, position in society, etc. More examples of causative structures with *make*:

*I made her cry.* (make sb do sth)

*She had to shout to make herself heard.* (make sb done)

*The rain made the grass wet.* (make sb/sth + adjective)

The structure *leave sb in charge of sth* means giving someone responsibility to deal with something. More examples of causative structures with *leave*:

*Lucy drove off, leaving Jane surveying the scene.* (leave sb doing sth)

*I'd better leave you to get on with it.* (leave sb to do sth)

*Did you leave the door open last night?* (leave sb/sth + adjective)

- In 1963, Stephen's postgraduate studies of Cosmology began at Cambridge—but so did the first signs of his disease.**

Here, *so did the first signs of his disease* is an inverted structure. And *so* is used before the verbs *be*, *do*, *have*, and other auxiliary verbs to express the meaning “in the same way” or “in a similar way.” More examples:

*I've got an enormous amount of work to do. So has Tom.*

*I'm allergic to nuts, and so is my brother.*

- This same year, Stephen Hawking also accepted a professorship at the California Institute of Technology.**

Here, *-ship* in *professorship* is a noun suffix indicating a status, honor, or quality. More examples include “authorship,” “internship,” “ownership,” “championship,” and “friendship.”

The suffix *-ology* in *technology* is commonly used to denote a science or a branch of knowledge. Another example frequently used in the text is *cosmology*. More examples include “biology,” “ecology,” “anthropology,” and “bacteriology.”

- He continued his work with renowned physicists on groundbreaking theories that would forever change the way we perceive the universe.**

In this sentence, *the way* is the antecedent of the relative clause “we perceive the universe.” There are generally three ways to combine a relative clause with the antecedent *the way*, that is, *that*, *in which*, and */* (zero conjunction). Of the three ways, *in which* is the most formal. More examples:

*The way that the teacher gives his lessons is fascinating.*

*I don't like the way in which he speaks to me.*

## Comprehension

**1** Find out information about the following and share your findings in a group.

- 1 ALS
- 2 black hole

**2** Analyze the text structure and complete the following table.

Opening (para. 1)	The author summarizes Hawking's life: a world-famous _____ despite his _____.
Body (paras. 2-20)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 (paras. 2-8) The author presents the early stages of Hawking's life: his birth in a(n) _____ family, his childhood, and his _____ years.</li> <li>2 (paras. 9-20) The author presents Hawking's _____ against ALS, along with his academic _____, and his emergence as a(n) _____ in spite of the _____ of his speech.</li> </ol>
Ending (paras. 21-23)	The author mentions the _____ status of Hawking and his _____ death at the age of 76.

**3** Answer the following questions.

- 1 What was eccentric about Hawking's family?
- 2 How did Hawking begin to be interested in the cosmos in his childhood?
- 3 Based on paragraphs 5-8, do you think Hawking was really ordinary at school? Why did the author choose "Surprisingly ordinary at school" as the section heading?
- 4 What was his reaction when Hawking was diagnosed with ALS? Was there any change in his attitude toward the disease? If yes, what was the change?
- 5 How did Hawking manage to communicate with other people after he had lost his speech?
- 6 What brought Hawking's popularity in the non-scientific community according to paragraphs 21-22? Find some examples from the text.
- 7 Why did the author emphasize that Hawking's birth was on the deathday of Galileo, and his death coincided with the birthday of Albert Einstein?
- 8 After reading the text, how do you understand the subtitle "The Peculiar Physicist Turned Global Icon"? Why is the adjective "peculiar" used to modify Hawking?

## Word Application

**1** Complete the sentences with the proper form of the words in parentheses.

- 1 The boy's \_\_\_\_\_ gaze at the blackboard caught the lecturer's attention. (intently)
- 2 It was his competence in foreign affairs that gained him international \_\_\_\_\_. (prestigious)
- 3 The test will measure what the learner knows about the particular subject matter and their language \_\_\_\_\_. (proficient)
- 4 Jeffery appeared at the conference hall more than 40 minutes late, wearing dark glasses and speaking in a slow, \_\_\_\_\_ voice. (slur)
- 5 The disease led to her \_\_\_\_\_ loss of memory. (progressively)
- 6 Readers will be \_\_\_\_\_ by the idea that in the blink of an eye one can make a valid and justifiable decision. (intriguing)
- 7 Green plants \_\_\_\_\_ carbohydrates from carbon dioxide and water. (synthesizer)
- 8 The police \_\_\_\_\_ that he had some connection with the robbery. (unsuspecting)
- 9 The athlete's completion of his routine with skill and ease \_\_\_\_\_ even the harshest judges. (astounding)
- 10 Like many university teachers, she insists that the progress of a student should never be \_\_\_\_\_ to academics alone. (confinement)

**2** Paraphrase the following sentences, paying special attention to the underlined parts.

- 1 Stephen attended St. Albans School in Hertfordshire, where his sharp mind won him the nickname of "Einstein" amongst his peers.
- 2 The scholarship was greatly appreciated by his parents, who didn't have the money to send him without one.
- 3 But he soon became the most daring member of the club—steering his team into risky courses which often resulted in damaged boats.
- 4 Gradually, the boy's saddening state pushed Stephen to see his own diagnosis in a different light.
- 5 Stephen Hawking's ability to work was in great peril, and he now required around-the-clock care.
- 6 A handful of nurses and a select few of his graduate students rose up to the occasion.
- 7 Stephen traveled the world, was submerged in a submarine, and even suspended in a zero-gravity flight.
- 8 His wit and child-like humor stole the spotlight in interviews.

**3** Complete the sentences with the proper form of the words or expressions given below.

impish	peer	bustle	exceed	coincide with
trace...back to	dire	stifle	impediment	accessible to

- 1 As the businessman walked down the street, he noticed a group of \_\_\_\_\_ teenagers yelling at the passersby.
- 2 The opening ceremony of the Beijing 2022 Winter Olympics \_\_\_\_\_ the day of the Beginning of Spring.
- 3 He covered his mouth to \_\_\_\_\_ a giggle so that he did not disturb others in the reading room.
- 4 Increasing housing prices will have \_\_\_\_\_ consequences for the poor.
- 5 There are many paintings on display, the styles of which can \_\_\_\_\_ the early medieval influences.
- 6 John's slight speech \_\_\_\_\_ made it difficult for his classmates to understand him.
- 7 This place is very quiet, quite different from the hustle and \_\_\_\_\_ of the city.
- 8 She proposes to build a library in this community where all the books are \_\_\_\_\_ the public.
- 9 Just now, she \_\_\_\_\_ over her sunglasses to see Taylor walk directly past her.
- 10 The success of our campaign has \_\_\_\_\_ our wildest expectations.

**4** Complete the sentences with appropriate prepositions or adverbs.

- 1 Robert was the only one \_\_\_\_\_ them who had ever ridden a horse.
- 2 Henry couldn't afford the expensive headphones, so he decided to settle \_\_\_\_\_ the lower-quality set.
- 3 \_\_\_\_\_ the space of five days, the fire destroyed over 16 square kilometers of land.
- 4 The project will not start on time since there are some restrictions \_\_\_\_\_ building an industrial park.
- 5 Breathing in the sweet air, I feel this is the place where I would like to settle \_\_\_\_\_ and live a happy life.
- 6 If you don't take professional pride \_\_\_\_\_ your work, you're probably in the wrong job.
- 7 You can have the whole set of stamps for next \_\_\_\_\_ no cost.
- 8 Frank decided to keep \_\_\_\_\_ himself what he had heard about the further development scheme.
- 9 He opened the envelope and read \_\_\_\_\_ the name of the winner.
- 10 She said that she was optimistic \_\_\_\_\_ the future of the company.

## Grammar Application

- 1** Decide which of the words given in the box below would best complete the passage if inserted in the corresponding blanks. The words can be used **ONCE ONLY**.

A. general	B. concerned	C. drawing	D. perspective	E. which
F. controversial	G. promising	H. seeks	I. definitely	J. sense
K. comparatively	L. including	M. offered	N. distinct	O. that

Biography, as one of the oldest forms of literary expression, **1** \_\_\_\_\_ to recreate in words the life of a human being—as understood from the historical or personal **2** \_\_\_\_\_ of the author—by **3** \_\_\_\_\_ upon all available evidence, **4** \_\_\_\_\_ that retained in memory as well as written, oral, and pictorial material.

Biography is sometimes regarded as a branch of history, and earlier biographical writings have often been treated as historical material rather than as literary works. Yet there is **5** \_\_\_\_\_ recognition today that biography and history are quite **6** \_\_\_\_\_ forms of literature. History usually deals in generalizations about a period of time, about a group of people in time, about an institution. Biography more typically focuses upon a single human being and deals in the particulars of that person's life.

Both biography and history are often **7** \_\_\_\_\_ with the past, and it is in the hunting down, evaluating, and selection of sources **8** \_\_\_\_\_ they are akin. In this **9** \_\_\_\_\_, biography can be regarded as a craft rather than an art: Techniques of research and general rules for testing evidence can be learned by anyone and thus involve **10** \_\_\_\_\_ little of that personal commitment associated with art.

**2** Complete the sentences by circling the correct words in parentheses.

- 1 The events of the past few hours had left the girl (confused, confuse, confusing) and incoherent.
- 2 The mountain climbers were made (stop, to stop, stopping) halfway by the heavy snowstorm.
- 3 The man has the talent and power to make his friends (laughed, laugh, laughing), loosen up, and feel at ease.
- 4 The manager is away on business leaving her daughter (in charge of, in the charge of, under the charge of) the company.
- 5 The eight-week intensive training program has made the laziest person (out of, into, onto) a marathon runner.
- 6 Everyone was shouting all at once, so Jessica could barely make herself (hearing, hear, heard) at the meeting.
- 7 You can't leave such confidential information just (lying, lie, lain) around the office—someone could see it.
- 8 The mother couldn't get the children (sleep, to sleep, slept) at bedtime, for they didn't seem to be tired.

**3** Choose the right answer from the options given in parentheses.

- 1 Can you tell me the way \_\_\_\_\_ you adopt to improve the design? (which; in which)
- 2 The teacher is always talking to his students just the way \_\_\_\_\_ he would talk to the children of his own. (which; /)
- 3 The man shared with his fellows the way \_\_\_\_\_ he solved the problem. (which; that)
- 4 Rebecca was becoming increasingly despondent about the way \_\_\_\_\_ things were going. (which; /)
- 5 People think highly of the way \_\_\_\_\_ the author develops the plot. (which; in which)
- 6 The way \_\_\_\_\_ we advocated at the meeting is quite effective to establish business relations. (which; in which)
- 7 Wallace and Darwin agreed on the way \_\_\_\_\_ different forms of life had begun. (which; in which)
- 8 Lynn could not hide her amusement at the way \_\_\_\_\_ her idol was dancing. (which; /)

**4** Translate the following sentences into English, using the proper form of the words or expressions in parentheses.

- 1 这个创业公司刚刚经历了一段有点艰难的日子。(a rough patch)
- 2 她试着鼓励她的学生多阅读国学经典。(nudge...into...)
- 3 杰克静坐了几个小时，望着天花板，想着什么样的职业适合他的个性。(stare up at)
- 4 如果约翰意识到他的朋友在利用他，他就不会上当受骗了。(catch on to)
- 5 如果你正寻找一位能与世界著名设计师相媲美的国内时装设计师，她肯定会榜上有名。(be on a par with)
- 6 随着经济的发展，社会对各类人才的需求也急剧上升。(shoot upward)
- 7 冬春季流感发作时，记得出门要戴口罩、勤洗手，避免去人员密集的地方。(a bout of)
- 8 昨天晚餐的剩菜还摆在桌子上。(remnant)
- 9 越来越多的人聚集在这里，没有人能够抑制住等待奥运圣火到来的兴奋之情。(subdue)
- 10 由于个人健康意识的不断增强和医疗保健水平的不断提高，多年来人们的预期寿命一直在增加。(life expectancy)

## Oral Practice

Work in a group and discuss the following topic.

The text gives a brief and vivid description of Stephen Hawking's life story. With this biography, we can see how he became one of the most well-known physicists although he was confined to a wheelchair and could only communicate using a muscle in his cheek, and we have a close understanding of how he made great efforts to popularize the knowledge of cosmology to ordinary people and manifested his sense of humor in a variety of activities. In what way did Hawking's life story inspire you? Share your views with your partners.

## Writing

People write biographies for many reasons: in memory of close family or friends, leaving inspiration or reflection for the reader, enriching people's knowledge of history and literature, etc. Write a mini biography for someone you know well in no less than 200 words. The following instructions are for your reference.

- 1 Choose the person you are going to write.
- 2 Give some basic information about this person.
- 3 Summarize the major accomplishments of this person.
- 4 Give an overview of why the person is interesting or important.



# The Key to Language

Helen Keller

- 1 The morning after my teacher came she led me into her room and gave me a doll. The little blind children at the Perkins Institution had sent it and Laura Bridgman had dressed it; but I did not know this until afterward. When I had played with it a little while, Miss Sullivan slowly spelled into my hand the word “d-o-l-l.” I was at once interested in this finger play and tried to imitate it. When I finally succeeded in making the letters correctly I was flushed with childish pleasure and pride. Running downstairs to my mother I held up my hand and made the letters for *doll*. I did not know that I was spelling a word or even that words existed; I was simply making my fingers go in monkey-like imitation. In the days that followed I learned to spell in this uncomprehending way a great many words, among them *pin*, *hat*, *cup* and a few verbs like *sit*, *stand* and *walk*. But my teacher had been with me several weeks before I understood that everything has a name.

- 2 One day, while I was playing with my new doll, Miss Sullivan put my big rag doll into my lap also, spelled “d-o-l-l” and tried to make me understand that “d-o-l-l” applied to both. Earlier in the day we had had a tussle over the words “m-u-g” and “w-a-t-e-r.” Miss Sullivan had tried to impress it upon me that “m-u-g” is *mug* and that “w-a-t-e-r” is *water*, but I persisted in confounding the two. In despair she had dropped the subject for the time, only to renew it at the first opportunity. I became impatient at her repeated attempts and, seizing the new doll, I dashed it upon the floor. I was keenly delighted when I felt the fragments of the broken doll at my feet. Neither sorrow nor regret followed my passionate outburst. I had not loved the doll. In the still, dark world in which I lived there was no strong sentiment or tenderness. I felt my teacher sweep the fragments to one side of the hearth, and I had a sense of satisfaction that the cause of my discomfort was removed. She brought me my hat, and I knew I was going out into the warm sunshine. This thought, if a wordless sensation may be called a thought, made me hop and skip with pleasure.
- 3 We walked down the path to the well-house, attracted by the fragrance of the honeysuckle with which it was covered. Some one was drawing water and my teacher placed my hand under the spout. As the cool stream gushed over one hand she spelled into the other the word *water*, first slowly, then rapidly. I stood still, my whole attention fixed upon the motions of her fingers. Suddenly I felt a misty consciousness as of something forgotten—a thrill of returning thought; and somehow the mystery of language was revealed to me. I knew then that “w-a-t-e-r” meant the wonderful cool something that was flowing over my hand. That living word awakened my soul, gave it light, hope, joy, set it free! There were barriers still, it is true, but barriers that could in time be swept away.
- 4 I left the well-house eager to learn. Everything had a name, and each name gave birth to a new thought. As we returned to the house every object which I touched seemed to quiver with life. That was because I saw everything with the strange, new sight that had come to me. On entering the door I remembered the doll I had broken. I felt my way to the hearth and picked up the pieces. I tried vainly to put them together. Then my eyes filled with tears; for I realized what I had done, and for the first time I felt repentance and sorrow.
- 5 I learned a great many new words that day. I do not remember what they all were; but I do know that *mother*, *father*, *sister*, *teacher* were among them—words that were to make the world blossom for me, “like Aaron’s rod, with flowers.” It would have been difficult to find a happier child than I was as I lay in my crib at the close of that eventful day and lived over the joys it had brought me, and for the first time longed for a new day to come.
- 6 I had now the key to all language, and I was eager to learn to use it. Children who hear

acquire language without any particular effort; the words that fall from others' lips they catch on the wing, as it were, delightedly, while the little deaf child must trap them by a slow and often painful process. But whatever the process, the result is wonderful. Gradually from naming an object we advance step by step until we have traversed the vast distance between our first stammered syllable and the sweep of thought in a line of Shakespeare.

- 7 At first, when my teacher told me about a new thing I asked very few questions. My ideas were vague, and my vocabulary was inadequate; but as my knowledge of things grew, and I learned more and more words, my field of inquiry broadened, and I would return again and again to the same subject, eager for further information. Sometimes a new word revived an image that some earlier experience had engraved on my brain.
- 8 I remember the morning that I first asked the meaning of the word, "love." This was before I knew many words. I had found a few early violets in the garden and brought them to my teacher. She tried to kiss me; but at that time I did not like to have any one kiss me except my mother. Miss Sullivan put her arm gently round me and spelled into my hand, "I love Helen."
- 9 "What is love?" I asked.
- 10 She drew me closer to her and said, "It is here," pointing to my heart, whose beats I was conscious of for the first time. Her words puzzled me very much because I did not then understand anything unless I touched it.
- 11 I smelt the violets in her hand and asked, half in words, half in signs, a question which meant, "Is love the sweetness of flowers?"
- 12 "No," said my teacher.
- 13 Again I thought. The warm sun was shining on us.
- 14 "Is this not love?" I asked, pointing in the direction from which the heat came. "Is this not love?"
- 15 It seemed to me that there could be nothing more beautiful than the sun, whose warmth makes all things grow. But Miss Sullivan shook her head, and I was greatly puzzled and disappointed. I thought it strange that my teacher could not show me love.
- 16 A day or two afterward I was stringing beads of different sizes in symmetrical groups—two large beads, three small ones, and so on. I had made many mistakes, and Miss Sullivan had pointed them out again and again with gentle patience. Finally I noticed a very obvious error in the sequence and for an instant I concentrated my attention on the lesson and tried to think how I should have arranged the beads. Miss Sullivan touched my forehead and spelled with decided emphasis, "Think."
- 17 In a flash I knew that the word was the name of the process that was going on in my head. This was my first conscious perception of an abstract idea.

## Working with Words and Expressions

Look up the following words and expressions in a dictionary and find out their meaning in the text.

- 1 Helen Keller
- 2 Perkins Institution (para. 1)
- 3 Miss Sullivan (para. 1)
- 4 tussle (para. 2)
- 5 persist in (para. 2)
- 6 repentance (para. 4)
- 7 Aaron's rod (para. 5)
- 8 engrave (para. 7)
- 9 symmetrical (para. 16)

## Understanding the Text

**1** Answer the following questions.

- 1 What personality of Keller was exhibited in paragraph 2?
- 2 What made Keller think that barriers could be swept away?
- 3 Why did Keller's eyes fill with tears in paragraph 4?
- 4 Why is the simple present tense used in paragraph 6?
- 5 How did Keller get her first conscious perception of an abstract idea?

**2** Translate the following paragraph into Chinese.

I had now the key to all language, and I was eager to learn to use it. Children who hear acquire language without any particular effort; the words that fall from others' lips they catch on the wing, as it were, delightedly, while the little deaf child must trap them by a slow and often painful process. But whatever the process, the result is wonderful. Gradually

from naming an object we advance step by step until we have traversed the vast distance between our first stammered syllable and the sweep of thought in a line of Shakespeare.

## Voicing Your Views

Work in a group and discuss the following topic.

Helen Keller overcame the adversity of being deaf and blind, and finally became a world-famous writer and educator. As can be seen from the text, Miss Sullivan, who instructed her in language acquisition, helped her a lot on her way to success.

Discuss and summarize the qualities that good teachers like Miss Sullivan have.

## Reading Between the Lines

Read the paragraphs carefully and appreciate the vividness of the questions raised by the author. Then answer the following questions.

I smelt the violets in her hand and asked, half in words, half in signs, a question which meant, "Is love the sweetness of flowers?"

"No," said my teacher.

Again I thought. The warm sun was shining on us.

"Is this not love?" I asked, pointing in the direction from which the heat came. "Is this not love?" (paras. 11-14)

- 1 Why do you think the questions raised by the author are vivid?
- 2 How did the author acquire the abstract concept of "love"?