

Learn how to write a short biography for a conference programme.

## Before reading

Do the preparation task first. Then read the text and tips and do the exercises.

## Preparation task

Match the definitions (a–h) with the vocabulary (1–8).

### Vocabulary

1. .... fellowship
2. .... leading
3. .... prestigious
4. .... peer-reviewed
5. .... profitable
6. .... bankrupt
7. .... to suck (informal)
8. .... to start from scratch

### Definition

- a. one of the most important in the area
- b. officially approved by other academics
- c. respected and admired
- d. an academic membership or position of status in a university
- e. officially declared unable to pay what you owe by a court of law
- f. makes money
- g. to start from the very beginning with nothing
- h. to be very bad

## Reading text: Conference bios

### Julie Wong

Julie Wong is a leading researcher in the field of Robotics and AI. She has been published extensively as author and co-author of over 50 papers in highly regarded, peer-reviewed journals. She frequently speaks at international conferences and was awarded the prestigious Royal Academy Simone Fielding fellowship in 2012. Julie lives with her family in a smart home she designed herself.

### Terrie Sharp

Best-selling author Terrie Sharp knows how to tell a good story or two, having twice won the Olive Crime Writer Award. Born on the housing estate with the highest crime rate in Glasgow, she learned to keep quiet, stay out of trouble and how to open car doors with a knife. Luckily, she only used her knowledge to write her novels and she's not so quiet these days, appearing on popular daytime shows like Police Today and at writing conferences throughout the UK.

### Ahmed Modine

Ahmed Modine started his first business at age 14 and retired at 32. Along the way he went bankrupt twice and lost his house and car once. What he learned about starting again from scratch became the number one most popular online course on U-Learn.com: *From up to*

*down to up again – How to succeed when everything sucks.* What he doesn't know about turning an idea into a profitable business isn't worth knowing.

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## Tips

1. Bios are often written in the third person, especially for conferences, events and books. Social media bios can be less formal and in the first person.
2. Use your full name in the first sentence and refer to an accomplishment to help people remember who you are. (*Julie Wong is a leading researcher ... / Best-selling author Terrie Sharp ... / Ahmed Modine started his first business at age 14 ...*)
3. Keep it short and interesting so people get all the key information before they stop reading.
4. If the bio is for an event like a conference, only include the details that are relevant to this particular audience. For a general bio, for example on your website, you can provide links for readers to find out more.
5. One or two personal details (e.g. *Julie lives with her family in a smart home she designed herself ... / She learned how to open car doors with a knife. / ... he lost his house and car once*) help create interest and a connection with the reader.

## Tasks

### Task 1

Circle the best answer.

1. Which person hasn't always been successful at what they do?  
a. Julie                                      b. Terrie                                      c. Ahmed
2. Which person used their childhood experiences as an inspiration for their work?  
a. Julie                                      b. Terrie                                      c. Ahmed
3. Which bio tells you the least about the person's life?  
a. Julie                                      b. Terrie                                      c. Ahmed
4. Which person has been on television?  
a. Julie                                      b. Terrie                                      c. Ahmed
5. Which person has academic writing experience?  
a. Julie                                      b. Terrie                                      c. Ahmed

6. Which person teaches people how to do what they do?

a. Julie

b. Terrie

c. Ahmed

### Task 2

Are the sentences true or false?

	<b>Answer</b>	
	True	False
1. You should make sure people know who you are by writing your full name at the beginning.	True	False
2. You should write about yourself in the first person, using 'I'.	True	False
3. It's important to include all the impressive things you have done.	True	False
4. You should tailor your bio to your audience.	True	False
5. You can share personal information to make it more engaging.	True	False
6. If your bio is online you can include links.	True	False

### Task 3

Complete the bio with the missing adjectives and adverbs.

prestigious	peer-reviewed	leading
profitable	extensively	best-selling

Charlie Hanczuk is a (1)..... authority on the impact of industrial pollution on rivers. He has spoken (2)..... at international conferences and written over 100 (3)..... articles in (4)..... scientific journals. He is also the author of the (5)..... book *How to run a* (6)..... *business without killing the planet.*

### Discussion

When was the last time you had to write a short bio?

## Answers

### Preparation task

1. d
2. a
3. c
4. b
5. f
6. e
7. h
8. g

### Task 1

1. c
2. b
3. a
4. b
5. a
6. c

### Task 2

1. True
2. False
3. False
4. True
5. True
6. True

### Task 3

1. leading
2. extensively
3. peer-reviewed
4. prestigious
5. best-selling
6. profitable