

Alicia Keys Blue Banner Biographies

Highlights the life and career of Grammy-winning singer Alicia Keys.

Discusses the life and musical career of Grammy winning R&B artist Alicia Keys.

Bruno Mars was born to be a performer. Ever since he was a little kid, he has been up on the stage performing for audiences. As a child and teen, he performed other people's music with his family's entertaining troupe. As an adult, he started writing his own. Now, he and his business partners—a trio called The Smeezingtons—are considered some of the best songwriters in the business. With his singing and songwriting success, Bruno is living up to his self-given last name. He's definitely out of this world!

Russell Westbrook grew up loving the game of basketball. But he never imagined that he would actually play professionally. But his hard work and determination made it possible. As a young boy, he would practice the sport for hours at a time. As a high school freshman, he would play among the seniors on his team. His natural talent and his drive to succeed led him to play as a freshman on his college team as well. Two years later, he decided to enter the NBA draft and his life would never be the same.

Few people would have guessed that William James Adams, Jr. would grow up to be famous. Born in the poor Boyle Heights area of Los Angeles, statistically, Will was more likely to join a gang than to become Will.i.am, the famous rapper and songwriter from the wildly popular Black Eyed Peas. Will might have had an idea of what lay ahead of him, though. At the age of 11, he promised his mother that he would buy her a house one day. Once he made it big, he did just that—and one for his grandmother as well. It is no wonder that the words i.am are the end of this amazing artist's name. Today, Will is known for being many things to many people. In addition to performing with the Peas, he writes music for both his own group and for many other well-known artists, as well. He also acts in films, supports presidential candidates, and heads several charities. His story is truly one of inspiration.

Jason Derulo

Ke\$ha

JJ Watt

Selena

Megan Fox

Drew Brees never had it easy. He had to wait until his junior year to play for his high school varsity team. College football teams from his home state, Texas, didn't want him. Some experts thought he was too short to play in the National Football League. Some coaches didn't believe he'd recover from an injury. In the end, he proved them wrong to become a record-setting quarterback for Purdue University and the NFL's New Orleans Saints. He led Purdue to its first Rose Bowl appearance in 34 years. He led New Orleans to the 2010 Super Bowl victory over the favored Indianapolis Colts with a near-perfect performance. Along the way he used his Brees Dream Foundation to help the city of New Orleans rebuild after Hurricane Katrina. Based on interviews by veteran sportswriter Pete DiPrimio, this action-packed sports biography tells how Drew Brees became a real-life hero for a community that badly needed one.

CC Sabathia is one of the most outstanding pitchers in professional baseball. He was the talk of the sports world when he was offered a record \$161 million contract—a sign of just how valuable he is to a team. However, there is more to CC than just a big contract. As a boy he used his athletic skills to escape from a tough neighborhood. Then as a young professional baseball player he had a brush with death that made him rethink his life. Today he is a family man who runs a charity for inner-city children. His story is an inspiration for anyone who wants to follow a dream, no matter how tough the road.

This book profiles the music-loving teenage boy band from Sydney, Australia.

Biography of star pop singer and entertainer Pitbull. Blue Banner Biographies are up-to-date, well-written, and colorful. Series titles include people in the news from sports, entertainment, movies, and music. Students read with sufficient accuracy and fluency to support comprehension and read on-level text with purpose and understanding. Series titles have been developed to address many of the Common Core specific goals, higher level thinking skills, and progressive learning strategies for middle grade and junior high level students.

Alicia Keys
Mitchell Lane Pub Incorporated

Shia LaBeouf

CC Sabathia

Jennifer Hudson

Luke Bryan

"Who is LL Cool J?" Ask a teenage music fan or a grandmother who watches NCIS: Los Angeles this question, and chances are very good that either one can tell you the answer. LL Cool J rose to fame in the early 1980s as a young rap singer with dreams of making it big. Little did he know then that he would also become a successful actor. LL's life was not an easy one. He survived an abusive childhood and learned many lessons about forgiveness along the way. Most importantly, he never gave up on his dreams—and after 30 years, he is still making them come true.

From his earliest days as a geeky boy sent to juvenile camp in *Holes* to the suave and sophisticated stockbroker in *Wall Street: Money Never Sleeps*, Shia LaBeouf has come a long way. From a difficult childhood, he learned the power of entertaining people—a talent he used in every way he possibly could. Read about how this young man used his charm to bluster his way into getting jobs and getting an agent. Then find out how a few simple roles developed into leading roles in some of the biggest blockbusters of the decade. Discover how, along the way, this young man has had to deal with weighty matters, from serious injuries to run-ins with the law. As the years go by, LaBeouf's star continues to rise—and it seems the future will bring huge films that will keep him in the spotlight.

Kevin Durant was usually the tallest boy in his class. By the time he was 13, he was taller than most adults. Playing basketball was a natural

choice. Yet he wanted to be the best. He wanted to play basketball as a career. That meant hard work. It also meant giving up free time and playing the way he wanted to. The hard work paid off. When he was nineteen, Kevin Durant was drafted by the Seattle Supersonics. This is his story.

When Luke Bryan was nineteen, he was ready to become a country music star. His bags were packed. He had an apartment waiting for him in Nashville. Then his older brother Chris was killed. Everything changed. He remained in his hometown of Leesburg, Georgia. It looked like his dreams might never come true. It would be a long, hard journey to Nashville to become a hit singer.

Biography of country singer Blake Shelton. Blue Banner Biographies are up-to-date, well-written, and colorful. Series titles include people in the news from sports, entertainment, movies, and music. Students read with sufficient accuracy and fluency to support comprehension and read on-level text with purpose and understanding. Series titles have been developed to address many of the Common Core specific goals, higher level thinking skills, and progressive learning strategies for middle grade and junior high level students.

Mike Trout

Kevin Durant

Blake Shelton

One Direction

Robert Pattinson

Orianthi is a musical force of nature. Single-minded and driven, she began playing guitar as a young child with one simple goal: to be the best. Considered a child prodigy in her native Australia, by the time she reached her mid-teens, Orianthi was performing with some of the music industry's most respected musicians, including Carlos Santana. Her jaw-dropping guitar-playing skills brought Orianthi to the United States, where she became an overnight sensation after performing with Carrie Underwood at the 2009 Grammy Awards. Since then her life has been a nonstop whirlwind of travel and music. With the release of her CD Believe and its hit single "According to You," Orianthi is the music industry's latest phenomenon. Her inspiring story of daring to be different to make her dreams come true proves that anything is possible if you just believe.

As hard as it may be for some people to imagine a Mormon mother of three writing one of the bestselling vampire love stories in the world, it was even harder for Stephenie Meyer. After all, she had never really done any writing before, and although she knew something was missing in her life, she did not know what it was. It wasn't until she had an unusual, unexpected dream about a romantic young vampire who sparkled in the sunlight that her journey from small-town mother to worldwide author began. Today, Meyer is one of the most recognized writers across the

globe. Her stories have not only created a series of bestselling novels, but also blockbuster movies that have earned millions at the box office. Find out how Meyer, like the heroines of countless fairy tales, went from rags to riches, thanks to a handsome vampire named Edward and a gentle human girl named Bella. Her adventure is almost as exciting as theirs—but without the fangs!

At first they were just five teenagers auditioning for Great Britain's biggest singing competition, The X Factor. But when the five young men were eliminated from the competition, something amazing happened. Given a second chance to return to the competition as a group, Harry Styles, Louis Tomlinson, Liam Payne, Niall Horan, and Zayn Malik joined together to form One Direction. Although they didn't win The X Factor, One Direction achieved even more. They became one of the most popular bands in England and quickly turned into a phenomenon in the United States as well. From disappointment to triumph, follow the story of Harry, Louis, Liam, Niall, and Zayn as they delight their fans and take their career in One Direction—straight to the top!

Dwyane Wade grew up on the South Side of Chicago where poverty, drugs, and gangs dominated the neighborhood. Thanks to the sacrifice of his sister Tragil, Wade's life took another path when she took him to live with his father. Basketball helped Wade and his father connect. Through the support and advice of Wade's basketball coaches during his youth, he became a better basketball player and a better man. Wade is the first NBA player to win full custody of his children. Wade ranks fatherhood first. The rest of his time is dedicated to his team the Miami Heat and his work with Wade's World Foundation.

Singer, producer, songwriter, fashion designer...Pharrell Williams has become a superstar in not just one area of pop culture, but in many. From his early days as a music producer who was too nerdy to be taken seriously to his record-breaking chart hits, this talented artist has created some of today's most popular songs and worked with major recording artists in hip hop, pop, and rock music. Learn the story behind the man who doesn't see the point of bragging about his success at the same time his music has made millions of people "Happy" in this story of a creative artist who definitely marches to the beat of his own drummer.

Bruno Mars

Will.i.am

Prince William

Russell Wilson

LL Cool J

Biography of United States female soccer star goalie and Olympic gold medal winner Hope Solo. Blue Banner Biographies are up-to-date, well-written, and colorful. Series titles include people in the news from sports, entertainment, movies, and music. Students read with sufficient accuracy and fluency to support comprehension and read on-level text with purpose and understanding. Series titles have been developed to address many of the Common Core specific goals, higher level thinking skills, and progressive learning strategies for middle grade and junior high level students.

J.J. Watt is one of the most remarkable players to ever play in the NFL. He makes big plays in almost every game for the Houston Texans, winning new fans as he goes. He is rewriting the record books for many defensive statistics, but he has shown he can be deadly on offense as well, catching several touchdown passes in 2014. He is a generous and friendly giant off the field, donating money through his J.J. Watt Foundation to many middle schools in Wisconsin and Texas. And he is a bone-crushing monster on the field, striking fear in the hearts of his opponents. His motto is to "Dream Big, Work Hard" and he has done both. Watt inspires others to follow their own big dreams through hard work.

At age four, Lady Gaga was learning to play piano without formal instruction. By age fifteen, she was already starting to live her musical dream by performing in New York nightclubs. At age seventeen, she entered into one of the world's most prestigious art schools. And before the age of twenty-five, she had multiple music awards in her pocket, has singles that topped the charts, had performed before royalty and world leaders, and was even named one of Barbara Walters' Most Fascinating People of 2009. Lady Gaga didn't rise to the top by blending in. Her unique style—sometimes risqué and controversial—reveals her personality, her love of art, and her belief that it is important to be comfortable with who you are. While others are trying to find their spot in the world, Lady Gaga is proof that you can make your own, that persistence pays off, and that you can live your biggest dream!

Even from a young age, Selena was a star. As soon as she opened her mouth to sing, her family and friends could not believe the beauty and power of her voice. Accompanied by her family, Selena was soon performing throughout her home state of Texas and becoming a star of the Tejano music scene. By the time she was a teenager, she was known as the Queen of Tejano and was loved by fans around the world. Just as Selena was enjoying her greatest success and finding true

love, her life was cut short in a terrible act of violence. Now, more than fifteen years after her death, she is still one of the most famous and beloved music stars in the world. This book traces Selena's rise to fame, her shocking murder, and the love her fans still have for her. Adele has taken the world by storm ever since the release of her debut album, 19. Named for her age, the CD introduced her powerful vocals and strong songwriting skills to the millions of people who would quickly become her adoring fans. Through her music she has shared some of the most private experiences of her life with her listeners. They have responded to her deeply personal lyrics by making each song a sensational hit. Another album and numerous awards later, Adele is still touching the hearts and lives of those fans through her music. In 2011, her unique singing voice was silenced due to a vocal cord injury. Many of her fans feared she might not return to making music, but after facing one of the scariest challenges of her life, she is now back—and clearly at her best.

A History of Hip-Hop

Dwyane Wade

Nicki Minaj

Lady Gaga

The Roots of Rap

Colorful, outspoken, unique—these are just three of the words that come to mind when one thinks of Ke\$ha. Her music is as original as she is. It is almost impossible to hear one of Ke\$ha's songs without moving along to the beat. But what is the story behind this outrageous artist? Where did she come from? What inspires her to write such catchy, honest lyrics? You may be shocked to learn that this talented rap artist was an honors student in high school. She also likes listening to country music in her spare time. In fact, many things about Ke\$ha will probably surprise you. Find out what makes her "Tik" in this colorful biography.

As a Little Leaguer, David Wright didn't get to play his favorite position: shortstop. His dad was his coach and he believed young David needed to prove he could make the big plays out in right field before being moved infield. The plan worked. David put in dozens of hours of extra time practicing his fielding and hitting. He was determined to be the best. That dedication—and talent—put him on the fast-track through the minor leagues and, at age 22, earned him the role of third baseman for the New York Mets. A fan favorite, Wright played on MLB's National League All-Star Team in 2006, 2007, 2008, and 2009. In 2010, he became the youngest Mets player ever to

reach 1,000 hits. Learn what motivates this hardworking player with the million-dollar smile. Growing up in one of the toughest neighborhoods in Miami, Florida, rapper Flo Rida could have easily run with gangs, taken drugs, or carried a weapon. He had a different idea, though. As a boy, he knew that he wanted a music career. Reaching his dream wasn't easy. After graduating from high school and spending some time in college, he ventured to Los Angeles to pursue a record deal. With no money in his pockets, he was often working several odd jobs at a time, scraping together whatever he could to live. His life changed when he received a call from the CEO of Poe Boy Entertainment. After a trip back to Miami and a few meetings with record companies, his debut album was released. It quickly launched Flo Rida to international fame. This music artist, who became famous for his songs "Low" and "Right Round," has begun the path of a long and prosperous career.

The life of a prince is all leisure and ease—or is it? Breaking with tradition, Prince William's mother, Princess Diana, made sure her sons William and Harry would have a more normal childhood than their father, Prince Charles. William went to public schools and universities and joined many sports teams, from swimming to soccer and polo. His life still wasn't completely normal, though, with heavy media attention and always having to mind his p's and q's. The media didn't let up when he fell in love, either. William and his fiancée, Kate Middleton, were followed closely in the months leading up to their wedding. The world was grateful for the coverage of the extravaganza, as an estimated two billion people watched them exchange vows in a fairy-tale ceremony at Westminster Abbey. Find out how Prince William manages to balance his royal responsibilities and his career as a search and rescue pilot all while "keeping his feet firmly on the ground."

There are all kinds of superheroes. Some we love in movies, and some we find in real life. Robert Downey Jr. has been both kinds. He has won the hearts of moviegoers as the invincible Iron Man, but only after defeating the true villain in his life, a career-threatening drug addiction. Journey with Downey through his stellar career and personal life, from acting in his father's films at age five through his Oscar-nominated role playing the great Charlie Chaplin and beyond. You'll be amazed by this heroic actor, whose inner character is stronger than iron.

Stephenie Meyer

Alicia Keys

Pharrell Williams

Tim Tebow

Pitbull

Blake Lively was born into a family full of actors, but the last thing she wanted was to be an actress herself. Blake was enjoying the life of an average high school student when her brother convinced her to audition for a movie called *The Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants*. Even though Blake had no real acting experience, she got a part in the movie—and the rest is Hollywood history! Soon Blake was appearing in many different films. Then she got her biggest break when she was cast as super-rich but troubled Serena van der Woodsen in the hit TV series *Gossip Girl*. Learn how the life of this glamorous star changed completely and how she stays true to herself and her family in this exciting biography of one of today's hottest stars.

You might say that baseball runs in Mike Trout's blood. His father, Jeff Trout, once played minor league ball for the Minnesota Twins. Mike was hitting monster homeruns as early as Little League. People who watched him on that field are not surprised by his success in the major leagues today. But it is what his parents taught him that may have helped Mike get to where he is today. They told him to study hard, be humble yet confident, and never give up. By following this advice, he became a member of the National Honor Society, a rookie with 25 career home runs, and the youngest-ever American League player to hit for the cycle.

Superstar Katy Perry grew up singing in church, knowing that she had a future in the music industry, but the road to success was paved with many bumps. Still, she never gave up on her dreams, and she never gave up on herself. Brought up by very strict Christian parents, Katy first tried to make it in the Christian music industry, but those efforts failed. Pressing forward, she finally got her big break with the controversial song "I Kissed a Girl" in 2008, and fans have been blowing her kisses ever since. By the time she was 26, she was happily married to Russell Brand, a star in his own right, and was living the star-studded dream that so many tried to squash along the way. Recognized for her stellar singing, songwriting, and guitar playing, as well as for her eclectic fashion sense, Katy is one "California Gurl" who has made it big!

Tim Tebow is regarded by many as the greatest college football player ever to hit the gridiron. He set all types of records at the University of Florida where he was part of two national championship teams. Tebow has also enjoyed success as a pro quarterback for the Denver Broncos and New York Jets. But Tebow, born to missionary parents in one of the poorest parts of the world, has always tried to help those less fortunate. It is that work that he does off the field, helping children and raising money for charity, that makes him a superstar on another level.

Nicki Minaj was a little girl with big dreams. As a child she wanted to be a soap opera star in order to buy her mother a beautiful house far away from the violence and drugs that plagued their neighborhood. Instead, Minaj began creating music. After years of struggle, Minaj began to get noticed by some of the brightest stars in hip-hop and soon an amazing career was born. Minaj combined her love of music, fashion, and business to build a fascinating career and prove to everyone that girls can succeed in anything if they just try hard enough. This book features quotes, photos, and information to bring Nicki Minaj and her incredible story to life.

Blake Lively

Drew Brees

Adele

Flo Rida

Robert Downey Jr.

Whether he's playing the brave Cedric Diggory in the Harry Potter films or the dark Edward Cullen in the Twilight series, Robert Pattinson has caught the eye of countless movie fans. From the time he was very young, Pattinson had a way of charming people. His first job was modeling—at the age of twelve! After his role as Cedric Diggory, Pattinson used his acting talents to become a war veteran, an artist, and a vampire. Meanwhile, he has pursued his talents on the piano and guitar—abilities he's been honing since before he was five years old. Besides playing in a band with fellow actors, he performs songs in some of his movies. In this book, you will find out how Pattinson got started in acting, the toughest parts of some of his roles—and what he has planned for his future.

Biography of star pop singer Jason Derulo. Blue Banner Biographies are up-to-date, well-written, and colorful. Series titles include people in the news from sports, entertainment, movies, and music. Students read with sufficient accuracy and fluency to support comprehension and read on-level text with purpose and understanding. Series titles have been developed to address many of the Common Core specific goals, higher level thinking skills, and progressive learning strategies for middle grade and junior high level students.

Describes the history of rap music and the hip-hop culture.

He's sold over 15 million albums, won Grammys and other awards, starred in popular movies and television shows, and brought the Dirty South style of hip-hop music to audiences far and wide. Chris Bridges grew up loving hip-hop and house parties, but it wasn't until he changed his name to Ludacris that he found fame and recognition all over the world. He found controversy along the way as well, but he never let anything stand in the way of his dreams. Bridges is also a serious actor who has starred in some of the most critically acclaimed movies of the early 2000s. Meet the man who brings his special gifts to two different worlds in this biography of Ludacris, rap star and actor.

From the time she was a baby, music was the most important thing in Jennifer Hudson's life. After years of singing in church choirs, Jennifer burst onto the national stage as a contestant on American Idol. Viewers were stunned and angry when Jennifer was voted off the show, but her days on Idol were just the beginning. Jennifer would go on to become an award-winning actress and singer, as well as a motivation to millions after a public battle with her weight. On her way to becoming a star, she endured an unspeakable tragedy, proving that she can handle anything life throws at her. Learn about Jennifer Hudson and her inspiring life in the story of one of today's brightest stars.

David Wright

Hope Solo

Katy Perry

Ludacris

5 Seconds of Summer Ebook

Megan Fox is the poster child for empowered women: she's part glamour girl and part action-adventure heroine. Outspoken and controversial, Fox has a disarming sense of humor about herself and is the first to admit she has yet to prove herself a serious actress. Despite her movie star looks, life wasn't always easy for Fox. Born and raised in a very strict Tennessee family, Fox was bullied badly in school she started eating her lunch while hiding in a bathroom stall. Being an outcast in school prompted her to put all her energies into performing. She appeared in her first movie at sixteen and never looked back. Within five years she was starring alongside Shia LaBeouf in Transformers, the movie that made her a star and one of the most photographed women in the world. This book recounts her journey from the hills of Tennessee to international fame and reveals the girl-next-door side of Fox rarely seen.

Orianthi