

# JIM BOWIE



# BIOGRAPHY

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Jim Bowie was born in Kentucky in around 1796, although his family moved around before settling in Louisiana. Jim Bowie helped out on the family plantation, and grew up with the skills needed to survive on the frontier.

By the time Bowie was a young man, Louisiana's population was increasing. Bowie wanted to capitalize on this by buying up land, and then selling it on for a profit. But first he needed money to buy the land. Bowie did this by making use of a loophole in slave trading laws at the time. Bowie continued to make money from buying and selling land, until disputes over land ownership damaged his reputation.

But Bowie became notorious for a feud with Norris Wright, a sheriff and banker. Wright had refused to lend Bowie money, and the two men clashed in the street. In 1827, Bowie and Wright decided to settle their differences in a duel in Mississippi. They started off using guns, but the duel quickly descended into an all-out brawl. An injured Bowie finished it using a large knife to kill Wright. Knife-fighting like this made Bowie famous, and the kind of knife he used became known as a Bowie knife.

After the fight, Bowie moved to Texas. He joined the Texas Rangers, whose job was to protect settlers in Texas from attacks by Native Americans. He also set out to find a legendary lost silver mine, but he and his men ended up fighting for their lives against Native Americans.

Bowie was in Texas during the time of its revolution against Mexican rule. He fought in many battles, and helped defend the Alamo when it was under siege. But he was ill in bed by the time of the final battle on March 6, 1836, and he could only defend himself against Mexican soldiers for so long before they killed him.

# Understanding words

Before we can understand a story we have to know what all of the words mean. Let's try one...

a Write the sentence in which you found the word 'capitalize'.

b From that sentence, suggest what 'capitalize' means.

c Write a new sentence using the word 'capitalize'.

d Use a dictionary to find words with a similar meaning (synonyms) to 'capitalize'.

e Draw a small picture showing what you think 'capitalize' means.

Try this for other words, too. 2

# Finding key words

Next, we need to find the key words that tell us what the story is about...

Read the story and underline the key words. Write the most important of these key words in a list like the one below. Write next to it a word that means a similar thing (a synonym). You don't have to use all the spaces, but you should not use more.

Key word	Synonym (similar word)
Example: legendary	mythical

# Sequencing

Sequencing means getting the events in the right order. Write these sentences in the correct order, so they make sense.

Bowie got into a feud with a banker, which ended with a duel.

In 1836, Bowie was killed at the Battle of the Alamo.

Bowie's family moved to Louisiana, and Bowie got used to frontier life.

Jim Bowie was born in Kentucky around 1796.

When Louisiana's population increased, Bowie bought and sold land to make money.

Bowie's knife-fighting skills during the duel made him famous.

After that, Bowie moved to Texas.



# Get to the facts

1 Where did Jim Bowie buy and sell land?

2 What damaged Bowie's reputation?

3 Where did Bowie and Norris Wright duel?

4 What did the knife Bowie used become known as?

5 In which battle did Bowie die?

# Make a story...

When you read a description it often gives you ideas about how the event might be described differently.

## The legendary silver mine

Last night I heard tales of a mine containing so much silver it could make countless men rich for the rest of their lives. I decided to search for this mine... (now complete the story)

**Below is a plain text version for printing:**

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For example:

Key word – legendary

Synonym – mythical

## Sequencing:

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