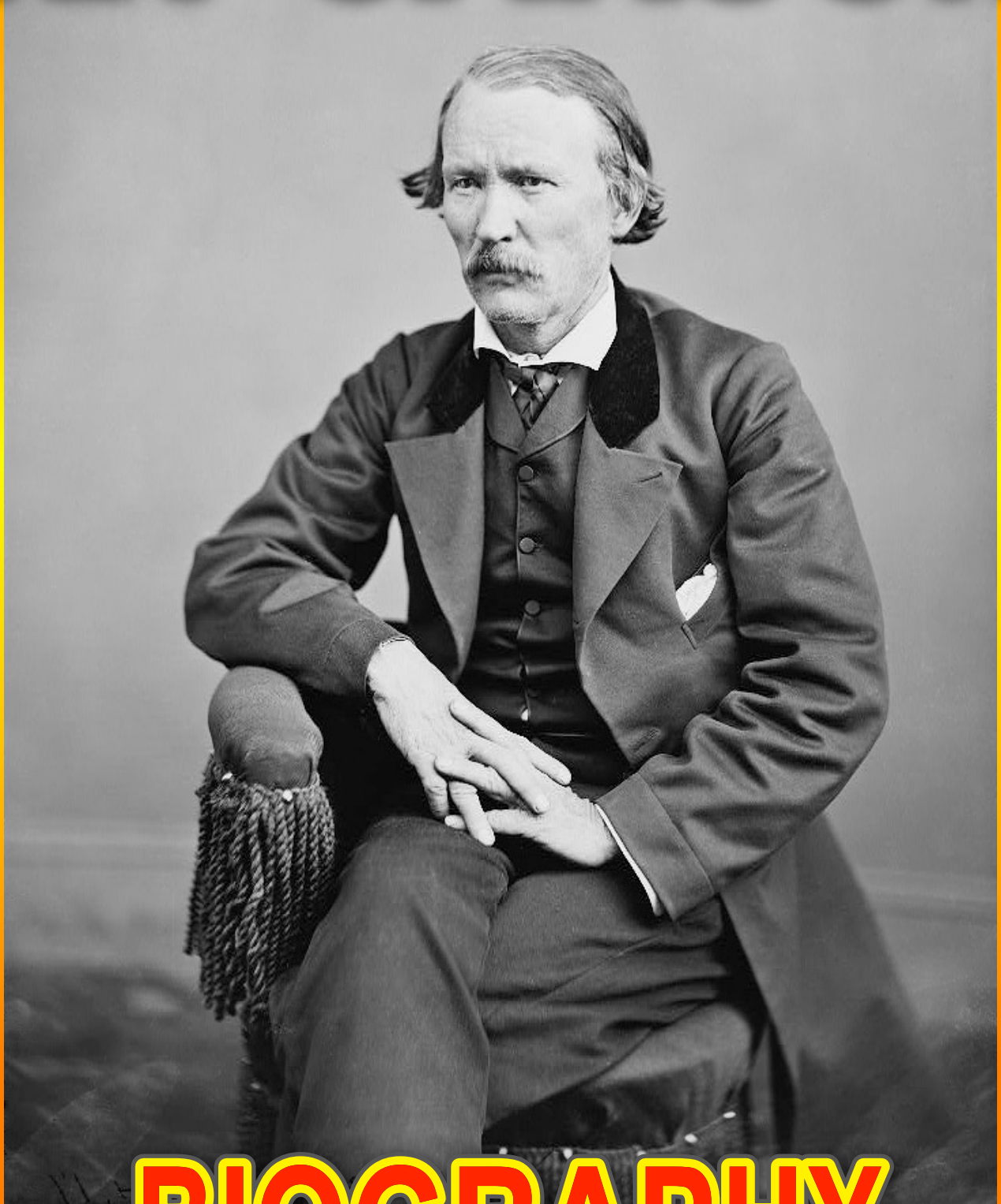


KIT CARSON



BIOGRAPHY

KIT CARSON

Kit Carson grew up on frontier land, mostly in Missouri. He was born on December 24, 1809, in Kentucky, and was originally called Christopher Carson. Carson's father died when Kit was a child, so he worked to support the family instead of getting an education. As a teenager, Carson worked as a saddlemaker in Franklin, Missouri, for a while. However, he did not enjoy it, and he soon headed back to the wilder lands.

Carson spent time in the mountainous wilderness, living off the land and working as a trapper in Arizona and California. During this time Carson learned Spanish, French, and languages spoken by Native Americans. He also married a Native American woman, and they had a daughter.

Carson made friends with John C. Frémont, who was exploring and surveying the area for the government in the 1840s. Frémont asked Carson to be his guide through the Rocky Mountains. The expedition was a success, and Frémont spread Carson's reputation as a frontiersman and reliable guide. The two men went on more expeditions together, in Utah, California, and Oregon.

Later on, Carson became involved in the Mexican War when he acted as a guide for American troops moving through New Mexico and California. They fought with Mexicans, and were nearly defeated. But Carson escaped and brought back reinforcements in time.

After the war, Carson settled in New Mexico for a time. He worked as a rancher, and also tried to improve relations between American settlers and native Americans, who frequently clashed. Carson did not want the Native Americans to be driven out completely, so he argued for reservations to be built for them to live on.

In 1861, Carson also became involved in the Civil War. He fought on the Union's side, and he clashed with Confederate forces and some Native American tribes. Carson also oversaw the Long Walk, which saw the Navajo Native Americans marched 300 miles to a reservation in New Mexico. With little rest and food on the way, hundreds of them died.

After the Civil War, Carson lived in Colorado. Now a military figure, Carson commanded a fort and tried to keep the peace with Native Americans. In the final months of his life, he traveled across America, before returning to Colorado, where he died on May 23, 1868.

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 'reinforcements'.

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

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

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

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

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: clashed	fought

Sequencing

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

In 1861, Carson fought on the Union side in the Civil War.

Carson lived in the wilderness, and learned Native American languages.

After the Civil War, Carson lived and worked in Colorado.

Carson was involved in the Mexican War.

Then Carson settled in New Mexico, where he tried to improve relations between American settlers and Native Americans.

In the 1840s, Carson met John C. Frémont, and acted as a guide for him.

Kit Carson was born in 1809 and grew up in Missouri.

Get to the facts

1 What did Kit Carson work as in Arizona and California?

2 Who did Carson meet in the 1840s?

3 Which war was Carson involved in in 1861?

4 How far did the Navajo Native Americans march during the Long Walk?

5 Where did Carson command a fort?

Make a story...

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

The Mexican War

The situation was desperate. The Mexican troops were overwhelming us. We wouldn't hold out much longer. Kit Carson had gone to get reinforcements, but he had to get here soon... (now complete the story)

Below is a plain text version for printing:

Understanding words:

- a Write the sentence in which you found the word 'reinforcements'.
- b From that sentence, suggest what 'reinforcements' means.
- c Write a new sentence using the word 'reinforcements'.
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Finding key words:

Read the story and underline the key words. Write the most important of these key words in a list. Write next to it a word that means a similar thing (a synonym).

For example:

Key word – clashed Synonym – fought

Sequencing:

Write these sentences in the correct order, so they make sense:

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