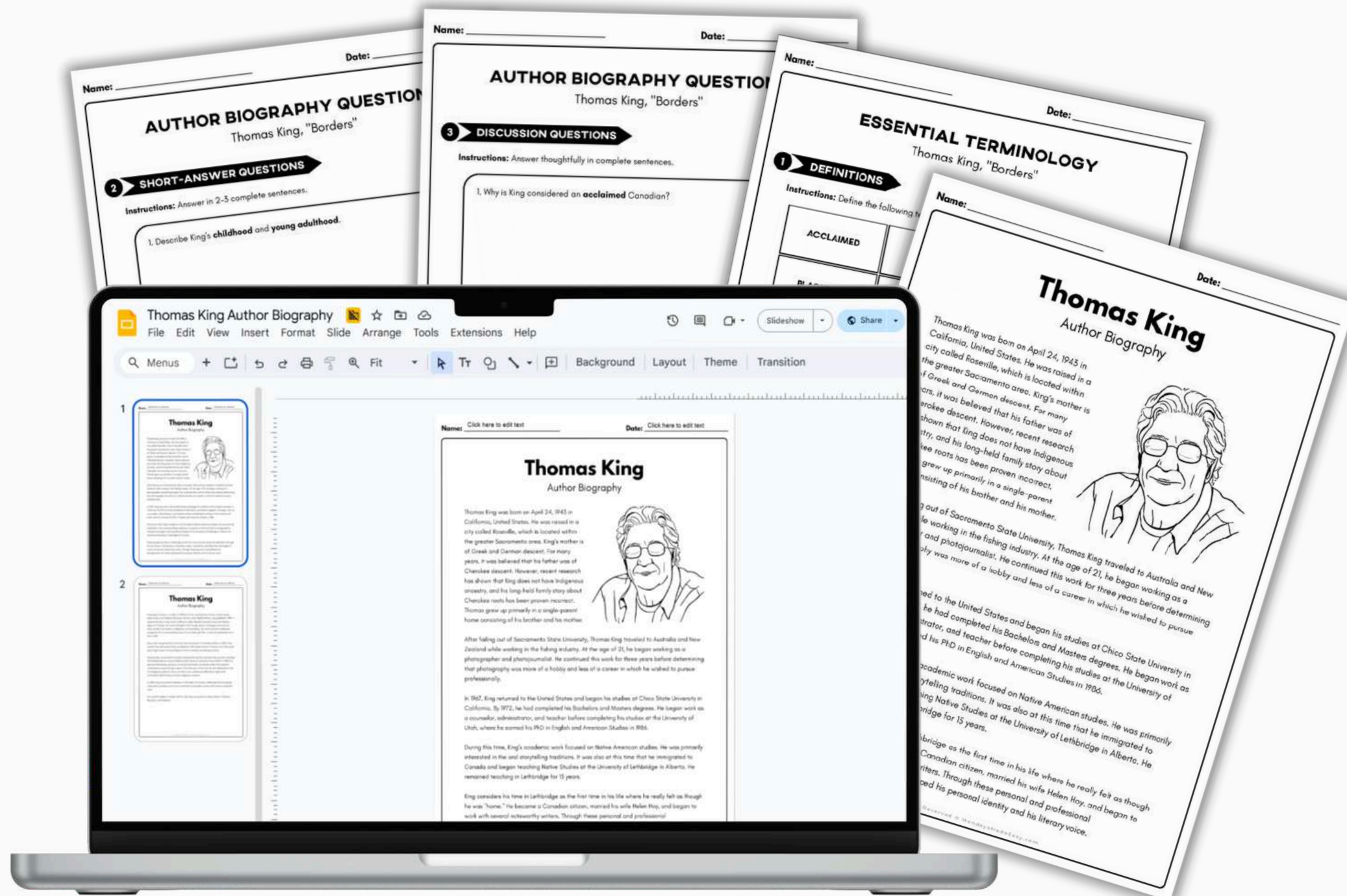


# Thomas King Author Biography

This author biography shares about King's childhood and upbringing, his education, history, and current scholarship identifying Thomas King as non-Indigenous



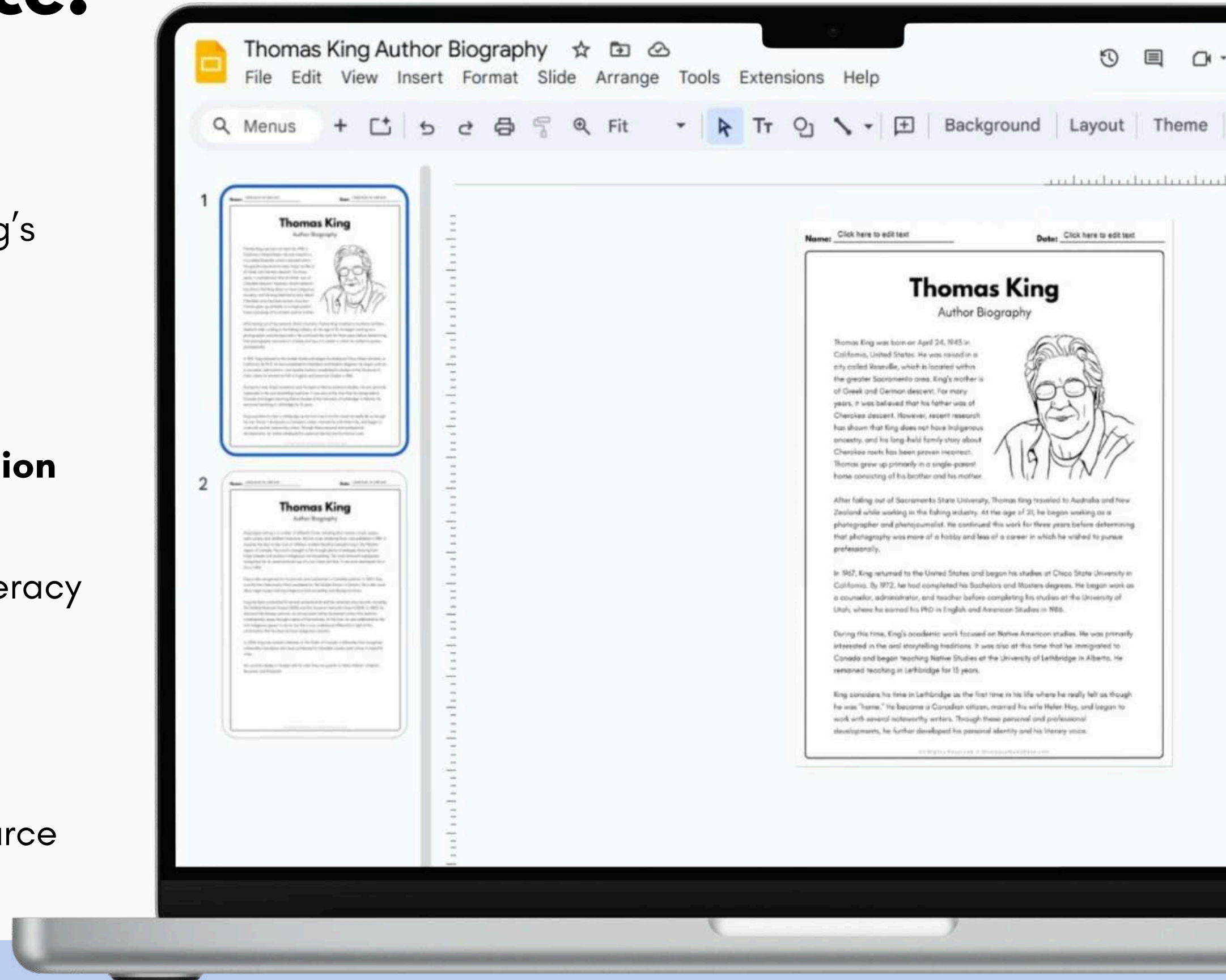
- **Introduce students to Thomas King's life and literary journey** to build cultural context before reading his work.
- **Strengthen nonfiction reading skills** through guided biography questions that reinforce vocabulary, key facts, and close-reading habits.
- **Support respectful, informed discussions** about identity and authorship with updated scholarship that deepens students' understanding of the text.

**Explore the life of Thomas King!**

**PURCHASE HERE**

# Included with this resource:

- ✓ Thomas King Author Biography **Informational Handout**
  - Provides a concise overview of Thomas King's life, career, and cultural contributions
- ✓ Author Biography **Vocabulary Worksheet**
- ✓ Author Biography **Short-Answer Comprehension Questions**
  - Reinforces close reading and nonfiction literacy skills
- ✓ **Answer Key** for Comprehension Questions
- ✓ **Teacher Instructions** for how to use this resource



Includes Digital Version for Google Drive®


# Informational Biography about Thomas King

Explore the life and experiences of Thomas King, including his development as a writer, his immigration to Canada, his political activism, and his cultural identity.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Thomas King

Author Biography



Thomas King was born on April 24, 1943 in California, United States. He was raised in a city called Roseville, which is located within the greater Sacramento area. King's mother is of Greek and German descent. For many years, it was believed that his father was of Cherokee descent. However, recent research has shown that King does not have Indigenous ancestry, and his long-held family story about Cherokee roots has been proven incorrect. Thomas grew up primarily in a single-parent home consisting of his brother and his mother.

After failing out of Sacramento State University, Thomas King traveled to Australia and New Zealand while working in the fishing industry. At the age of 21, he began working as a photographer and photojournalist. He continued this work for three years before determining that photography was more of a hobby and less of a career in which he wished to pursue professionally.

In 1967, King returned to the United States and began his studies at Chico State University in California. By 1972, he had completed his Bachelors and Masters degrees. He began work as a counselor, administrator, and teacher before completing his studies at the University of Utah, where he earned his PhD in English and American Studies in 1986.

During this time, King's academic work focused on Native American studies. He was primarily interested in the oral storytelling traditions. It was also at this time that he immigrated to Canada and began teaching Native Studies at the University of Lethbridge in Alberta. He remained teaching in Lethbridge for 15 years.

King considers his time in Lethbridge as the first time in his life where he really felt as though he was "home." He became a Canadian citizen, married his wife Helen Hoy, and began to work with several noteworthy writers. Through these personal and professional developments, he further developed his personal identity and his literary voice.

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## Thomas King

Author Biography

King began writing in a number of different forms, including short stories, novels, essays, radio scripts, and children's literature. His first novel, *Medicine River*, was published in 1989. It explores the day-to-day lives of different modern Blackfoot people living in the Western region of Canada. The novel is brought to life through plenty of dialogue, drawing from King's interest and studies in Indigenous oral storytelling. The novel received widespread recognition for its unconventional use of a non-linear plot line. It was even developed into a film in 1993.

King is also recognized for his activism and involvement in Canadian politics. In 2007, King was the New Democratic Party candidate for the Guelph District in Ontario. He is also vocal about legal issues involving Indigenous land ownership and aboriginal status.

King has been nominated for several achievements and has received many awards, including the McNally Robinson Award (2005) and the Governor General's Award (2014). In 2003, he delivered the Massey Lectures—an annual event led by acclaimed writers that explores contemporary issues through a series of five lectures. At the time, he was celebrated as the first Indigenous person to do so, but this is now understood differently in light of confirmation that he does not have Indigenous ancestry.

In 2004, King was named a Member of the Order of Canada, one of the highest honors bestowed on noteworthy Canadians who have contributed to Canadian society.

King currently resides in Guelph with his wife; they are parents of two children, Benjamin and Elizabeth.

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**2-PAGE  
AUTHOR  
BIOGRAPHY!**

# Targeted Comprehension Activities

Define key terms and assess students' understanding of Thomas King's biography

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## ESSENTIAL TERMINOLOGY

Thomas King, "Borders"

**1 DEFINITIONS**

Instructions: Define the following terms in your own words.

|                    |  |
|--------------------|--|
| ACCLAIMED          |  |
| BLACKFOOT          |  |
| CHEROKEE           |  |
| CONTEMPORARY       |  |
| FELLOWSHIP         |  |
| PHOTOJOURNALIST    |  |
| POLITICAL ACTIVISM |  |
| UNCONVENTIONAL     |  |

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Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## AUTHOR BIOGRAPHY QUESTIONS

Thomas King, "Borders"

**2 SHORT-ANSWER QUESTIONS**

Instructions: Answer in 2-3 complete sentences.

1. Describe King's **childhood** and **young adulthood**.

2. When did King begin to develop his **literary voice**? What **factors** do you think contributed to this development?

3. How does King's first novel connect to his **academic work**? How does it draw on **Indigenous culture** and storytelling, even though King himself is not Indigenous?

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Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## AUTHOR BIOGRAPHY QUESTIONS

Thomas King, "Borders"

**3 DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

Instructions: Answer thoughtfully in complete sentences.

1. Why is King considered an **acclaimed** Canadian?

2. What makes King's identity **complex**, especially in light of the **recent discovery** about his ancestry?

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Includes **Vocabulary Terms** and **Short-Answer Questions!** ←