

Biography of a Historical Figure

LANGUAGE ARTS



Book Builder

Overview

Students research a real person and build an illustrated biography, practising research, sequencing and citation.

Steps for Teachers

1. Students choose or are assigned a historical figure
2. Students research using at least two sources and note where each fact came from
3. Students build a timeline of the figure's life from birth to legacy
4. Students select the six to eight moments that best explain why the person matters
5. Students plan one page per moment and write it in third person
6. Students choose actors and period backgrounds, or add photographs of real artefacts
7. Students add a final page listing their sources
8. Print the biographies and shelve them as a classroom reference library

Example

A student's biography of Marie Curie runs eight pages: a childhood in occupied Warsaw, the secret Flying University, arriving in Paris hungry, the shed where she isolated radium, two Nobel Prizes, the mobile X-ray units of the First World War, and the notebooks still too radioactive to touch. The last page lists three sources.

Grading Rubric

Criteria	Excellent	Proficient	Developing
Research Quality	Facts are accurate, specific and drawn from more than one source	Facts are mostly accurate, drawn largely from a single source	Facts are thin, unsourced or inaccurate
Significance	Chosen moments clearly explain why this person matters	Chosen moments are relevant but some are minor	Chosen moments don't add up to an argument for significance
Sequencing	Events are ordered clearly; the reader always knows when they are	Order is mostly clear with a confusing jump or two	Chronology is hard to follow
Book Craft	Text is easy to read, art supports every page, and the layout is consistent throughout	Pages are readable with some crowding or uneven placement	Text overlaps art or is hard to read; layout is inconsistent