

Biography of a Historical Figure

LANGUAGE ARTS



Overview

Students research and present the life story of an important historical figure, developing research skills and understanding of how individuals shape history.

Steps for Teachers

1. Provide a list of historical figures or let students propose their own
2. Students research their figure using multiple sources
3. Students identify key life events, achievements, and challenges
4. Students write a script covering birth, major accomplishments, and legacy
5. Students find or create an image to represent their historical figure
6. Students record their biography with appropriate backgrounds for different life stages
7. Host a 'living history' presentation day

Example

A student creates a biography of Harriet Tubman. The video shows her as a child in slavery, her escape to freedom, her return trips on the Underground Railroad, and her later work as a spy during the Civil War. Narration includes: 'I freed over 300 enslaved people and never lost a single passenger. I carried a rifle and told people, "You'll be free or die." Freedom was worth any risk.'

Grading Rubric

Criteria	Excellent	Proficient	Developing
Research Depth	Rich details from multiple sources; goes beyond basic facts	Good information from reliable sources	Limited research; relies on basic or unreliable sources
Life Coverage	Covers full life arc with key events and turning points	Covers major life events adequately	Missing significant life events or periods
Historical Significance	Clearly explains why this person matters to history	Mentions the person's historical importance	Fails to convey why this person is significant
Engaging Presentation	Brings the person to life; viewers feel connected	Reasonably engaging presentation	Dry recitation of facts without engagement