

Fifth Grade Biography Project
Student Packet

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Parent Note

Parents,

Our fifth grade class will write a biography paper and give a speech on a person of their choosing. In our class, each student must choose a historical figure (President, inventor, leader, etc.) from U.S. history to research for their paper and speech. Both the speech and the paper, which will be in the form of a five paragraph Expository Essay, will be graded. Although some time will be dedicated to working on this project in class, I will also schedule some of it for homework. In order for students to be successful on this project, I have found that it is imperative that parents be involved by helping their child stay on track with the deadlines, asking them questions about what they're doing, and supervising during the paper writing, visual aid creating, and speech writing processes. Before each step of the project, we will spend time discussing suggestions and expectations in class. Finally, a fun twist: your child will be expected to dress like his/her person. If it is too costly, however, then your child will need to dress nicely for the speech. Thank you, in advance, for your help!

Here is a timeline of due dates. The expectations for each phase of the project are listed in more detail on the next page.

- ❖ Brainstorming – **12/2/14 – 12/5/14**
- ❖ Research and Note Taking – **12/4/14 – 12/10/14**
- ❖ Biography Outline – Homework - **Week of 12-8-14**
- ❖ Paper Rough Draft - Homework - **Week of 12-8-14**
- ❖ Editing and Revising – **Week of 12-8-14 (done partially in class and partially at home)**
- ❖ Final Draft – **12/11/14 – 12/15/14 (done at home)**
- ❖ Speech – **practice at home**
- ❖ Visual Aid for Speech – **completed at home**
- ❖ Speeches will be given – **12/17/14 and 12/18/14 (Final Project Due 12/17/14)**

It is very important that students stay on track with the deadlines above. In order to complete the entire project within the nine weeks, it is necessary for us to keep a fairly rapid pace. Thank you again for your help and support from home.

The above information is yours to keep but please detach and return this slip:
I have seen the timeline and expectations for the biography paper and speech:

Parent/Guardian's signature

Student's name

Itinerary and Due Dates

1. Brainstorming List – **DUE 12/5/14**

Here you will brainstorm a list of at least 5 people you think you might like to research for this project. You are free to research any U.S. historical figure who has made a positive, significant contribution to society. Please turn in your list to me on the date above.

2. Finalize Topic – **DUE 12/8/14**

Your next step is to narrow down your brainstorming list to one person and to do some quick research on him/her (either online or from books) to see if there will be enough information on that person to guide you through your research. Then, you will finalize your choice. On **December 8**, I will ask you to turn in a piece of paper with one person's name on it for me to approve.

3. Researching and Taking Notes – **Week of 12/8/14**

You will begin researching your chosen person. You may use books, websites, magazines, or any other appropriate source. If you do not have internet access at home and need to use the internet at school, let me know. You will need to use 3 sources for your research (they can be any combination of internet, book, etc.) You must use at least one book. On **December 11**, you will need to turn in your three sources to me on note cards. There is an example of a bibliography note card in this packet, and we will also go over the procedure in class. You will also need to turn in the notes you've taken (which will be formatted on note cards). Your notes should be taken on 3 categories:

1. Childhood
2. Adulthood
3. Greatest accomplishments

4. Biography Outline – **DUE 12/12/14**

You will turn in a biography outline to me as a pre-writing exercise for your paper. I have included copies of the biography outline in this packet.

5. Rough Draft – **You will begin this process in class and complete at home. You do not have to submit your rough draft. However, it is a useful piece as you compose your final paper.**

Using your biography outline, you will write a rough draft for your paper. Your paper must be a 5 paragraph Expository Essay.

6. Editing and Revising - **(done in class and at home)** –

We will spend time in class editing and revising your paper. You will also have someone at home edit it for homework.

7. Final Draft – **DUE 12/17/14**

You will write a final draft of your paper. Your paper must be a 5 paragraph Expository Essay. The paper may be typed or handwritten (in blue or black ink). You will also have a bibliography page (MLA style).

8. Speech – **In Class: 12/17/14 and 12/18/14 (I will assign you a day to present)**

You will not have to do any new research for your speech. You will need to complete your speech before working on your visual aid.

9. Visual Aid for Speech – **Needs to be completed (at home) for presentation**

Your visual aid can be a poster, slide show, Wordle, or any other creative idea. If you do not have access to poster board, let me know. We will talk in class about what makes a good visual aid, but keep in mind the following:

- a. Your audience should be able to read your information from a distance
- b. Your visual aid should be directly related to what you will say in your speech
- c. This should be of professional quality (no misspelled words, no cross-outs, no big smudges or mistakes).

9. Speeches will be given on **12/17/14 and 12/18/14. I will assign you a day to present.** You may memorize your speech but are certainly not expected to. If you do not memorize it, you need to have your notes put on note cards (we have note cards in our classroom for you to use). Your speech should not be simply reading your essay, but should include the same content. You should not read off of your visual aid because you will not be able to look at the audience if you do so. For your speech, you will be graded on:

- a. having an attention-grabbing introduction
- b. your eye contact
- c. posture
- d. good voice rate (not talking too fast or too slow)
- e. good volume
- f. how well your audience can understand you
- g. the quality of your visual aid
- h. how well you use your visual aid (without reading off of it)
- i. having an effective conclusion
- j. how well you can answer a question posed by your teacher

Biography Essays: Getting Started

1. Where do I start? You must have at least 3 sources to get your information from. Here is a list of some things you can use as a resource:

- ❖ Encyclopedias
- ❖ Books from libraries
- ❖ Magazine articles
- ❖ Newspaper articles
- ❖ Websites
- ❖ Any other factual publications you come across

2. Learning about the person: Although you may find numerous books and countless websites on the person you are researching, you do not need to read every part of every source. Instead, look at all the resources you've found and sort through bits and pieces of each. If you look at a source you've found more closely and realize it will not be helpful to you, then you should not list it as a source on a bibliography card. Pick the best parts from each resource.

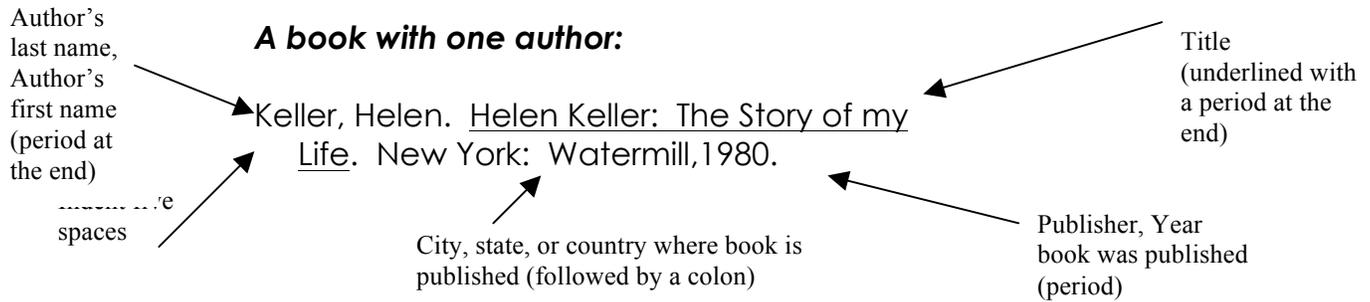
3. Make a Bibliography Card for EACH resource you use (see the example in this packet). Each source needs to be labeled as A, B, C, D, etc..

4. Taking Notes: You will take notes on 3 major areas of your person's life: Their early life (childhood and adolescence), their later life (their adulthood), and their accomplishments or how they overcame obstacles. Try to look for an overarching theme about your person because this will help your paper flow. Was your person curious from a young age? Did your person always have a heart that loved to serve others? When you find an interesting fact, put it on a note card (see the example in this packet on how to format it). You should only put one fact on each note card. You will be striping the note card with a color to indicate which of the three major topics (early life, later life, or accomplishments) your note card relates to. You will also include the letter of the resource you got the information from. You will NOT need to use every fact you write down on a note card in your paper.

5. Putting it together: You will sort your note cards into piles (one for early life, one for later life, and one for accomplishments). Then you will want to look at each pile to see if any of your facts are related. You'll then put your note cards into some sort of order (leaving out but NOT throwing away the ones you're not using). Once you've got that done, you're ready to start filling out your biography outline.

6. What will your paper look like? Your paper will be a 5 paragraph Expository Essay. You will have an introduction paragraph, a conclusion paragraph, and 3 body paragraphs (one will talk about your person's early life, one his later life, and one his accomplishments and how he overcame obstacles in his life). You will also have a bibliography page (MLA style).

How to Cite Your Sources in MLA Format

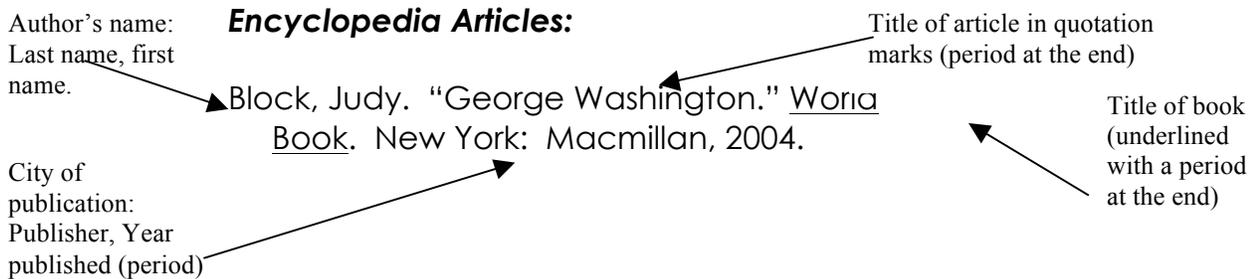


Authors' names in the order they appear on the title page. Only the first author's name goes last name, first name. Put commas between each author's name and a period at the end of the list.

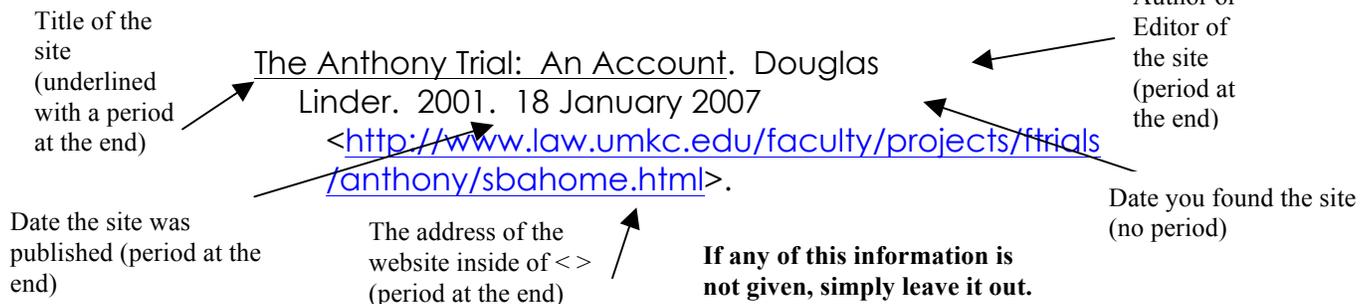
A book with two or more authors:

Smith, Arnold, Steve Jones, and Ken Anderson. Thomas Jefferson. CA: Puffin, 1993.

The rest of the citation works the same as a book with one author.



Website:



Name: _____

Date: _____

Biography Outline

I. Introduction Paragraph: Briefly describe who the person was and what notable thing he/she did. Remember . . . your lead needs to grab the reader's attention!!

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

II. Early Life:

A. Birth date and birthplace:

B. Family Life (What did his/her parents do for work? Siblings?):

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

III. Significant events that led to achievement (Education, Occupation, Experiences):

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

IV. Major Contributions/Accomplishments (Why is he/she famous?):

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

V. Character Traits/Qualities that made he/she worth researching (include evidence to support each trait)

- _____
- _____
- _____

VI. Conclusion:

A. Is he/she still living? If not, include date of death and cause of death.

- _____
- _____

B. How did he/she make a difference in the world?

- _____
- _____
- _____

C. How would our lives be different if he/she did not achieve his/her goals?

- _____
- _____
- _____

D. Why should he/she be remembered?

- _____
- _____
- _____

VII. Author's Note: Would you like to be like him/her? Why/Why not? Has he/she influenced your life?

- _____
- _____
- _____

VIII. Bibliography: List below all the books, Web sites, etc. where you found your information. For online resources, do NOT list search engines (Google, Yahoo!igans, Ask Jeeves, etc.) . . . instead, list specific sites where you found your information. You will be given a specific format for your bibliography, so be sure to follow it!

Editing Checklist

This will be done at home with a parent, some other adult, or a much older sibling (after our rough drafts are finished). Please see the key on the back for what marks to make on the rough draft while proofreading.

Student's Name: _____

Date: _____

Editor's Name: _____

Title of Paper: _____

The editor should check items that need attention before the final draft	Checked by editor if item needs attention	Student checks when corrections have been made
Capitalization		
❖ Sentences start with capital letters		
❖ Names and proper nouns (cities, states, etc.) begin with capitals		
❖ Each important word in the title begins with a capital		
Punctuation		
❖ Each sentence ends with a period or other appropriate punctuation		
❖ Commas are used appropriately		
❖ Quotation marks are used when someone talks or if you quote directly from a book		
General		
❖ Words are spelled correctly		
❖ There are five paragraphs		
❖ There are no run-on sentences		
❖ There are no fragment sentences		
❖ Transitions are used at the beginning of a paragraph		
❖ A lot and all right are both separate words		
❖ Sentences do not begin with numbers (use two instead of 2)		
❖ Its (shows ownership) / It's (means it is)		
❖ Their (ownership) / There (a location) / They're (they are)		
❖ Boring words are not used (good, really, very, bad, little, big, stuff, things, sad, nice, etc.)		
Other items that need attention		
❖		
❖		
❖		

Tips for Creating Your Visual Aid

- ❖ You visual aid will accompany your speech.
- ❖ You should not read off of your visual aid during your speech.
- ❖ All text on your visual aid should be big enough so that someone on the other side of the room can still see it.
- ❖ You should not put an excessive amount of text on your visual aid because people will be reading your poster instead of listening to your words.
- ❖ Your visual aid should not be a random jumble of words and pictures. Your speech will be organized into three parts (early life, later life, and major accomplishments) so your poster should be designed to match your speech.
- ❖ You should not (before your speech, during your speech OR after your speech) go over your whole visual aid at once. Instead, you'll pause at different parts of your speech, turn your audience's attention toward your visual aid and say something like, "As you can see from this graph, Roosevelt got significantly more votes during the presidential election that year." You will pause, let the audience soak in what you just said, and continue with your speech. Each time your speech mentions something that you've included on your visual aid, you will pause and reference it.
- ❖ Do not put anything on your visual aid that is not mentioned in your speech.
- ❖ Do not try to put everything in your speech on your visual aid.
- ❖ Avoid just putting a lot of pictures of the person you researched on your visual aid (pictures of him or her doing something specific or at a specific time are OK but avoid just using random portraits).
- ❖ Use colors that are bright but not obnoxious.
- ❖ If you are able to access a computer, feel free to type parts of your visual aid and then glue them onto your poster.
- ❖ There should be no misspellings, smudges, smears, or obvious mistakes on your poster. You should definitely not have words that are crossed or scribbled out.
- ❖ There should be no pencil on your visual aid (although I would recommend writing out anything you're going to put on your visual aid in pencil first before going over it in marker).

Tips for Preparing Your Speech

- ❖ Put everything you're going to say onto note cards (we have plenty available for you in the classroom).
- ❖ Your speech will not be the same thing as simply reading your five paragraph essay to the class. However, it will be similar in that you will still cover the person's early life, later life, and major accomplishments/obstacles that were overcome. You do not need to do any additional research for your speech.
- ❖ You should not fidget while speaking (have someone watch you or practice in front of a mirror).
- ❖ Make sure that even people in the back of the room can hear you clearly.
- ❖ Make sure you've read through your speech enough times that you do not need to read directly off of your note cards. You should be looking people in the eyes while speaking and only glancing down at your note cards when necessary.
- ❖ Include a mark or note on your note cards for when you want to pause and draw your audience's attention to your visual aid.
- ❖ Make sure you do not talk too fast or too slow. If you're naturally a fast talker, slowing down might feel silly to you but it sounds good to your audience.
- ❖ Definitely practice in front of family and ask them to comment on your volume, rate of speaking, eye contact, and posture before speaking in front of the class.
- ❖ Remember to try to make your speech interesting. What kind of information would you want to hear about the person you researched if you were in the audience?
- ❖ Avoid "ummms," "uhhhs," and "likes" while speaking.
- ❖ Be prepared for a question from your teacher when you're done. Have a response prepared in case you don't know the answer. (Instead of, "Uh....I don't know..." or making something up, try saying something like, "I didn't encounter that during my research. Is there anything else you'd like to know?")
- ❖ As usual, once you've finished preparing your speech, look over the rubric and see what you think you'll receive for a grade. Are you happy with that?
- ❖ Have fun and relax! 😊