

Grade 6 - English Language Arts: Writing Historical Biographies

Overview

Students write biographies about interesting historical figures or scientists in connection with a content-area subject being studied. Students research to find information and use elements common to biographies to write and share their information using an appropriate presentation tool.

Activate

Students browse a variety of biographies of historical figures or scientists being discussed in the content-area subject. They ask how and why questions about biographies in general and the figures. [*Plan and Question*] Using refined searching techniques and multiple electronic sources, students make notes (e.g., LAPS or Cornell method), in their electronic journals. [*Gather and Make Sense*]

Teacher Tip:

Students should be able to identify that special character traits of an individual are linked to his/her achievements. Students browse several biographies to become aware of a figure they would like to research for their own biography.

Black Line Masters:

Do Your Laps

Teacher Links:

- Notetaking Systems
<http://www.sas.calpoly.edu/asc/ssl/notetaking.systems.html>
- Notemaking: What They Are for and What To Do With Them?
<http://ics.leeds.ac.uk/icsmodsb/ay2005/STSK1020.pdf>
- Cornell Method
<http://www.wcupa.edu/academics/cae.tut/TCornell.htm>

Student Links:

- Biography Maker
<http://www.bham.wednet.edu/bio/biomak2.htm>
- Biographies
<http://www.blupete.com/Literature.htm>
- Biography.com
<http://www.biography.com/>
- Encyclopedia Britannica
<http://www.britannica.com/>
- Encarta Online
<http://encarta.msn.com>

Outcomes and Big Ideas:

English Language Arts

2.1.2 *Comprehension Strategies* - use comprehension strategies [such as asking questions, making notes, adjusting reading rate...] appropriate to the type of text and purpose [including summarizing, outlining, remembering ideas, and responding personally]

3.1.2 *Ask Questions* - formulate relevant questions to focus information needs for an inquiry

3.2.4 *Access Information* - use a variety of tools [including bibliographies, thesauri, and technology] to access information and ideas; use visual and auditory cues [such as captions, intonation, staging...] to identify relevant information

3.2.5 *Make Sense of Information* - use organizational patterns of oral, visual, and written texts [including main ideas and supporting details, explanation, comparison and contrast, cause and effect, and sequence] to construct meaning; skim, scan, and read closely to gather information

LwICT Big Ideas

Plan and Question

Gather and Make Sense

Acquire

Using class-established criteria and based on characteristics of biographies, students look up one person's biography from a video, a website, and a print or electronic encyclopedia. [*Produce to Show Understanding*] They note information about that person and record which source it came from. [*Gather and Make Sense*] Using a Compare and Contrast Frame, they compare the information gleaned. In their electronic journals