

Wall of Fame

English Language Arts

Intermediate Grades 3–5

Purpose

Students will locate, evaluate, and collect information from a variety of sources. Students will use a variety of media and formats to communicate information and ideas effectively to an audience.

Description

Reading biographies is one way reluctant readers can be motivated to read and comprehend. The story of a real person's life is often more interesting to students than a fictional character with a life that is too good to be true.

In this learning activity, students read and do research in the biography genre to look for common characteristics and actions that make famous people great. Students analyze the person's life for his or her outstanding contributions to society, and then develop a symbol to represent that contribution as part of a grade-level artistic representation of famous people.

Activities

PREPARATION

- ▶ Collaborate with the library media specialist to schedule time for students to select books from the biography collection and to conduct electronic research.
- ▶ Select a variety of biographical Web sites for student use.
- ▶ Develop guidelines for the multimedia presentation and an initial rubric for assessing the presentation.
- ▶ Meet with the art teacher, mentor, or specialist to plan the symbol development activity. Gather a variety of art materials and tools for the symbol creation process.
- ▶ Solicit and schedule participation by parents and other staff members to evaluate symbols.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS STANDARDS	NETS PERFORMANCE INDICATORS GRADES 3–5
---------------------------------------	---

PROCEDURE

- | | | |
|---|---|------------------------------|
| <p>1 To engage students, have them research several famous people from different times and cultures using a variety of Web sites, electronic resources, and print reference works (e.g., encyclopedias, databases, collections of biographies).</p> | <p>ELA 1, 3, 7, 8, 9</p> | <p>1, 2, 4, 6,
8, 10</p> |
| <p>2 Students present their findings and reflect on what makes a person famous or great. At this stage, the presentations can be created electronically or simply be given as quick oral reports. (The time spent and level of sophistication depends on each class's objectives.)</p> | <p>ELA 3, 4, 11</p> | |
| <p>3 Based on the findings, develop class criteria for fame or greatness.</p> | <p>ELA 11</p> | |
| <p>4 Working alone or in small groups, students select an individual biography to read. Students also look for information on their person using the Web sites and electronic resources used in the first activity. Using the information they have located and their criteria, students determine the important aspects of the person's life. Students can complete this work during Silent Sustained Reading (SSR) time.</p> | <p>ELA 2, 11</p> | |
| <p>5 On a class Wall of Fame timeline, have students place pictures of their famous people in the most appropriate decades. Have students place pictures of their famous people, and flag pins for their places of birth, on a large wall map of the world.</p> | <p>ELA 3, 12</p> | |
| <p>6 Have students discuss what a symbol is and how it can represent important characteristics of a person or place. Use examples such as an apple with numbers for a math teacher, palm trees for a city, and so on. Have students design a personal symbol for their famous person. Students may use clip art or participate in an art lesson focusing on technique and design features. The creation of a personal symbol for the selected person can be added to the Wall of Fame timeline.</p> | <p>ELA 4, 12</p> | |
| <p>7 Students or groups develop a multimedia presentation on the famous person's life, to share with classmates, emphasizing characteristics and actions that make the person famous. Present this to the entire class. Students can evaluate each person presented using the agreed upon criteria for fame.</p> | <p>ELA 4, 5, 6,
8, 12
IL 3, 5</p> | <p>1, 2, 4, 5,
9, 10</p> |

Tools and Resources

SOFTWARE:

- ▶ Multimedia encyclopedia, Kid Pix Studio or other graphics

WEB SITES:

Role Model on the Web (current figures):

www.newsltr.com/rolemodel/welcome.html

The White House:

www.whitehouse.gov/

(Click White House History and Tours for information on presidents and first ladies.)

Presidential Libraries:

www.nara.gov/nara/president/address.html

POTUS (Presidents of the United States):

www.ipl.org/ref/POTUS/

Super Scientists:

www.energy.ca.gov/education/scientists/

National Women's History Project:

www.nwhp.org/

Classical Insites' Hall of Fame (classical musicians and composers):

www.classicalinsites.com/live/hallfame/

The American West (cowboys, outlaws, authors, and frontiersmen and -women of the states west of the Mississippi River):

www.AmericanWest.com/

The Internet African American History Challenge (19th-century African Americans):

www.brightmoments.com/blackhistory/

Find a Poet (Academy of American Poets):

www.poets.org/LIT/findfst.htm

Great Renaissance and Impressionist Artists:

www.geocities.com/BourbonStreet/Delta/2165/

American Biography (biographies written by middle school students):

www.gms.ocps.k12.fl.us/biopage/bio.html

OTHER:

- ▶ Art supplies for a variety of media: paint, clay, paper, junk objects, glue, paste, scissors, pencils, markers, crayons, pens, ink, brushes, sculpting tools, construction paper, and so on; collection of individual biographies; print reference materials on biography

Assessment

Students evaluate each other's presentations about famous people to see if the chosen individuals meet the class set of criteria for fame or greatness. Develop a rubric with students for this evaluation.

Set criteria in the rubric for the format of students' multimedia presentations.

Parents, students, and other staff members provide input on how well the symbols have been used on the Wall of Fame timeline by matching names and symbols, without help. Their success rate in matching names and symbols will be evidence of the students' level of achievement.

Credits

Erlene Bishop Killeen, Library Media Specialist, Fox Prairie Elementary, Stoughton, Wisconsin
(killeen3@aol.com)

Comments

The fourth graders at Fox Prairie Elementary, in Stoughton, Wisconsin, have researched famous people as part of their reading and language arts program while using "Meeting the Challenge," a reading unit text. They have developed criteria for fame and artistically represented their chosen famous people in a Wall of Fame each year. Their ability to use both electronic and print resources has developed well through this activity. In addition, their recognition of names as well as a sense of history has increased tremendously. Some of the most reluctant readers, even those who seemed only to look up to athletic heroes, gained a tremendous appreciation for the deep commitment of other heroes to things like improving life for others, creating something that makes life easier, or being good decision makers in times of trouble. This project broadened the students' views of the type of contributions that people can make to the world.