Lesson #8 - Researching and Writing Biographies of Important People in Newport from 1820-1880

Subject Area: Social Studies/Reading/Writing/Computer

Grade: 4/5

Time Frame: 4-6/45 minute class periods plus outside work

Objectives: By this lesson, the students will learn how to research and write a biography. The students will also learn the correct work cited format, appropriate to your school’s standards.

Standards: III

Materials:

- Your school’s standards for the work cited format (provided by the teacher).
- Sample Biography format (Enclosed).
- Research materials for the students to use. A list of books and websites included.
- Non-Fiction worksheet to be used for organization of research. (Enclosed)
- Qualities Teachers Look for in Writing—The Six-Trait Creative/Personal Writing Format and Rubric (Enclosed)

Learner Factors: This activity will benefit all learners by the on hands participation in researching through books and the computer on their famous person.

Motivational Activity: The teacher will read the biography “Ida Lewis to the Rescue”, from Puritans, Pioneers and Pacesetters. (Enclosed).

Lesson Development: As a whole class, the teacher will direct a lesson where the students will learn how to write a good biography (format enclosed). Biographies will
include: Ida Lewis, Edward Bannister, Clement C. Moore, William Ellory Channing and Commodore Perry. The teacher will break the class into equal small groups. In their small groups the students will research their assigned person and answer the “Biography Questions” (Enclosed). The students will individually write their biographies following the format (enclosed).

**Closure:** As individuals, each student will hand in their written biography which will be graded according to the rubric. In the original small groups the students will work together to make up and perform a short skit on one part of their person’s life.

**Follow Up:** This last lesson will conclude with a Walking Tour of Newport. Contact Newport Historical Society for tour times, by calling 401-846-0813.

**Extended Activities:**

- Individual oral presentations.
- Field trip to Ida Lewis Yacht Club, Channing statue and Channing Memorial Church on Pelham Street, and Clement C. Moore’s house on 25 Catherine Street.
- Visit to Newport Art Museum, exhibition by Edward Bannister.

**Student Assessment:** Writing assignment rubric (enclosed) or teacher made — up written test to tie up unit.
The Biography

Just what is a biography?

The story of someone's life?
A tale of accomplishment?
A tale of woe?

Or is it a boring list of facts that nobody cares about?

A good biography brings the person to life . . . makes us care about what she or he did with time and opportunity.

A great biography is driven by great questions. Boring questions produce boring answers. Boring answers put readers to sleep. Simple lists of facts are a bit like dry cereal . . . no milk . . . no fruit . . . no taste!
Biography Questions

1. In what ways was the life remarkable?
2. In what ways was the life despicable?
3. In what ways was the life admirable?
4. What human qualities were most influential in shaping the way this person lived and influenced his or her times?
5. Which quality or trait proved most troubling and difficult?
6. Which quality or trait was most beneficial?
7. Did this person make any major mistakes or bad decisions? If so, what were they and how would you have chosen and acted differently if you were in their shoes?
8. What are the two or three most important lessons you or any other young person might learn from the way this person lived?
9. Some people say you can judge the quality of a person's life by the enemies they make. Do you think this is true of your person's life? Explain why or why not.
10. An older person or mentor is often very important in shaping the lives of gifted people by providing guidance and encouragement. To what extent was this true of your person? Explain.
11. Many people act out of a "code" or a set of beliefs which dictate choices. It may be religion or politics or a personal philosophy. To what extent did your person act by a code or act indepently of any set of beliefs? Were there times when the code was challenged and impossible to follow?
12. What do you think it means to be a hero? Was your person a "hero?" Why? Why not? How is a hero different from a celebrity?
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Name Class</th>
<th>Activity Evaluation Form</th>
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<td>Knowledge of Content</td>
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<td>Organization</td>
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<td>Mechanics</td>
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<td>Presentation</td>
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<td>Creativity</td>
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COMMENTS:
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<th>Exemplary</th>
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<th>Minimal</th>
<th>Attempted</th>
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<tr>
<td>Knowledge of Content</td>
<td>You have a lot of information. Shows that you did extra research. The details that you selected support the main idea.</td>
<td>You have used enough important information. You have shown enough research. The details are correct and support the main idea.</td>
<td>Some of the information you used has nothing to do with your project. Showed some research, but not much. The main idea was only supported by few details.</td>
<td>You have shown little or no use of information. You have shown little or no research. Your main idea was not supported by detail.</td>
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<td>Organization</td>
<td>Very well organized. The way you set up your project is easy to follow, it explains and points out the main ideas.</td>
<td>Good organization. You focused on the main ideas.</td>
<td>Some what organized, but some ideas were not presented clearly.</td>
<td>Your set up is confusing. Several key ideas were missing.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mechanics</td>
<td>The spelling, labeling and dates are all perfect.</td>
<td>You just have a few spelling, labeling, or date errors.</td>
<td>There are some errors in spelling, dates and labeling.</td>
<td>Many errors in spelling. Labeling or dates.</td>
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<td>Presentation</td>
<td>You have told the information in an excellent way. It seems that you understand your audience.</td>
<td>Clear and nice looking. No clutter or mess. You have shown that you somewhat know your audience.</td>
<td>Your information can be understood but your project is messy. You do not know your audience.</td>
<td>This is very messy. Your information can not be understood. You have shown no understanding of your audience.</td>
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<td>Creativity</td>
<td>Your project shows that you put a great deal of creative energy into it.</td>
<td>Somewhat creative and original.</td>
<td>Some creative touches but you have not shown very much originality.</td>
<td>You have put very little creativity in this project. Nothing about this shows any originality.</td>
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COMMENTS:
NONFICTION WORKSHEET........Name________________________Date________

Topic for this poem/piece ____________________________________________

- Make a sketch of your topic. Carefully include important details you observe.

- Five things I know about this topic
  1) ____________________________________________________________
  2) ____________________________________________________________
  3) ____________________________________________________________
  4) ____________________________________________________________
  5) ____________________________________________________________

- Five questions I have about this topic
  1) ____________________________________________________________
  2) ____________________________________________________________
  3) ____________________________________________________________
  4) ____________________________________________________________
  5) ____________________________________________________________
- Research sources:
  1.)
  2.)
  3.)
  4.)
  5.)

- Five things I learned about this topic
  1)
  2)
  3)
  4)
  5)

- Five powerful verbs that apply to this topic
  1)
  2)
  3)
  4)
  5)

- Five "show and take" adjectives that apply to this topic.
  1)
  2)
  3)
  4)
  5)
QUALITIES TEACHERS LOOK FOR IN WRITING

IDEAS
- Clarity
- Focus—a small, easy to manage topic
- Good information—from experience, imagination or research
- A fresh perspective
- Important, helpful details that go beyond the obvious

ORGANIZATION
- A snappy lead that gets the reader's attention
- Order and logic
- Clear connections to a main idea
- In tech or business writing, gets to the point!
- Easy to follow—but not too predictable
- A graceful ending—doesn't just STOP

VOICE
- Sounds human—not like technospeak
- Has the mark of this particular writer
- Brings the topic to life
- Is appropriate for the audience, topic, purpose
- Shows conscious concern for reader's interests, informational needs
- In tech writing, doesn't bore the reader, but doesn't get in the way either
WORD CHOICE
- Moments that stick with you
- Relies on strong verbs and precise nouns—not modifiers
- Creates word pictures
- "Just right" language—suits the topic, the audience, the purpose
- Simple language used well—never tries to impress with jargon or overblown language
- Minimal redundancy
- Technical terms are defined, as needed

SENTENCE FLUENCY
- Rhythmic
- Easy to read aloud—inviting
- Varied sentence length—some long, some short
- Tendency toward shorter, crisper sentences in tech/business writing
- Purposeful sentence beginnings:
  Now, After a while, Because of this, Nevertheless, As a result, Consequently, However, Therefore...

CONVENTIONS
- Looks clean, edited, proofread
- Easy to decode & follow—conventions enhance meaning
- No BIG, GLARING errors that distract the reader or distort the message
- Specifically (at a minimum)—
  - Spelling correct on simple words, correct or close on difficult words
  - Terminal punctuation correct; internal punctuation not misleading
  - Paragraphs for new topics, new speakers
  - Quotation marks to set off dialogue
  - Capitals on all proper nouns and to begin all sentences
  - Noun-verb agreement
  - No arbitrary shifts in tense
  - Layout has eye appeal

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<tr>
<th>Traits</th>
<th>Scores</th>
<th>Comments</th>
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<tr>
<td>Ideas</td>
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<td>Organization</td>
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<td>Voice</td>
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<td>Word Choice</td>
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<td>Sentence Fluency</td>
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<td>Conventions</td>
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Rhode Island

Official Name: State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations
Official Nickname: "The Ocean State"
Traditional Nickname: "Little Rhody"
State Motto: "Hope"

This is only a partial bibliography. If you need more information, please ask a staff member.

PICTURES BOOKS:
Barry Roben. Mr. Willowby's Christmas Tree. jE/Bar

FICTION:
Avi. The Man Who Was Poe. j/Avi/YA
Avi. Something Upstairs. j/Avi
Barry, Robert. Riddle of Castle Hill. j/Bar
Bjerregaard, Marcia. First Heroes for Freedom. j/Bje
Brown, Slater. Gray Bonnets in the Days of Roger Williams. j/Bro
Cheney, Cora. Christmas Tree Hessian. j/Cheney
Curtis, Alice Turner. A Little Maid of Narragansett Bay. j/Cur
Emmett, Elizabeth. The Land He Loved. j/Emm
Flood, E.L. Secret in the Moonlight. j/M/Flood
Gale, Marie Josephine. Alice Brenton: A Tale of Old Newport in Revolutionary Days. j/Gal
Jaspersohn, William. The Scrimshaw Ring. j/Jas
Landers, Judith. Timothy and the King's Ship "Liberty". j/Lan
Lisle, Janet Taylor. The Art of Keeping Cool. j/Lisle
Manes, Stephen. Some of the Adventures of Rhode Island Red. j/Man
Nicholson, Peggy and John F. Warner. The Kerry Hill Casecrackers Series. j/Nicholson
Simister, Florence Parker. Girl with a Musket. j/Sim
Simister, Florence Parker. The Pewter Plate. j/Sim

NON-FICTION:
Avi. Finding Providence: the Story of Roger Williams. j/E 974.5 Avi
Burnett, Constance Buel. Let the Best Boat Win: The Story of America's Greatest Yacht Designer. j/290/Herreshoff
Chapin, Howard M. Sachems of the Narragansets. j/74.5
Cwiklik, Robert. King Philip and the War with the Colonists. j/290/Philip
Fisher, Leonard Everett. To Bigotry No Sanction: The Story of the Oldest Synagogue in America. j/296/Fis
Fleming, Candace. Women of the Lights. j/291/Fle
Fradin, Dennis B. The Rhode Island Colony. j974.5/F
Gaustad, Edwin S. Roger Williams: Prophet of Liberty. j974.5 Gau
Heinrichs, Ann. Rhode Island. j974.5/H
Historie Newport. j974.57 Law
Jordan, Sandra. Christmas Tree Farm. j635.9/Jor
Klein, Ted. Celebrate the States: Rhode Island. j974.5/Kle
Koller, Jackie. Nickomomo!: A Thanksgiving Celebration. j394.26/Kol
Macaulay, David. Mill. j677/M
McNulty, Faith. Orphan: The Story of a Baby Woodchuck. j599.3/McN
Morse, Suzanne. Ida Lewis: Heroine of Lime Rock Light. j920/Lew
Nelson, Winifred. The Hero of Aquidneck: A Life of Dr. John Clarke. j920/Cla
Nichols, Joan Kane. A Matter of Conscience: The Trial of Anne Hutchinson. j920/Hutchinson
Olsen, Stephen. An Interpretive Atlas of Narragansett Bay. j551.4/Ols/Ref
Pyle, Karin. Once Upon A Time in Rhode Rhode Island. j974.5/Pyl
Rothaus, James. Squanto: the Indian Who Saved the Pilgrims. j920/Squa
Scharbach, Alexander. Boy Sailor: Matthew Galbraith Perry. j920/Perry
Uroff, Margaret Dickie. Becoming a City: from Fishing Village to Manufacturing Center. j974.52
Webb, Robert N. The Colony of Rhode Island. j917.45/W
Welch, Wally. The Lighthouses of Rhode Island. j387.1/Wel/Ref
Whitehurst, Susan. The Colony of Rhode Island. j974.5/Whi
Women in Rhode Island History: Making a Difference. j974.6/Wom

NON-PRINT COLLECTION:
A Lively Experiment. Adult Non-fiction videos
Our Neighbors, the Narragansetts. Adult Non-fiction videos
Portrait of America. Rhode Island. Adult Non-fiction videos

PROFESSIONAL COLLECTION:

PERIODICALS:
ADULT COLLECTION:
Clifford, Mary Louise. Women Who Kept the Lights: an illustrated history of female lighthouse keepers. VK1023./.c57/1993
Lippincott, Bertram. Indians, privateers and high society. F79. L5
Schroder, Walter K. Defenses of Narragansett Bay in World War II. UG412.N3Sx (3 copies: 2 circulate and the other must be asked for at the Adult Services Reference desk).
What Did You Do in the War, Grandma?: An Oral History of Rhode Island Women During WWII. Written by students in the honors English program at South Kingstown High School. HQ1458.R4W52 1989

INTER-LIBRARY LOAN:
Tales of an October Moon: Haunting Tales from New England. Created and performed by Marc Joel Levitt. Audiobook j/Levitt
Welter, Linda. Down by the Old Mill Stream: Quilts in Rhode Island.

ADULT REFERENCE COLLECTION:
Wright, Marian I. And Robert J. Sullivan. The Rhode Island Atlas. F79.W75x (3 copies: at adult reference desk, reference collection, and Sargent Special Collections Room)

For information on Jean Baptiste Donatien de Vimeur, Comte de Rochambeau: Use the Redwood Library notables site or look in the CLAN database using the name Rochambeau as a subject. There are several adult level books in both the circulating collection and in the Newport Room.

INTERNET SITES:
http://www.redwood1747.org/notables/nntitle.htm (Redwood Library)
http://www.newporthistorical.org (Newport Historical Society)
http://www.maine.com/lights/links.htm (Links to lighthouse websites)
http://www.state.ri.us/submenus/rihstlnk.htm (R.I. History)
http://www.nsnpt.navy.mil/ (Naval Station Newport- excellent history section)
http://www.rihs.org/index.shtml (RI Historical Society)
http://www.rootsweb.com/~rigenweb/cemetery/ (RI Historical Cemetery Transcription Project)
http://www.ri.gov/index.php RI Government Portal

Please ask us about the Sargent Special Collections Room, home of many books, articles and pamphlets on the history of Newport, Rhode Island and it’s citizens.
Some Newport authors that children will enjoy: Robert Barry, Natalie Savage Carlson, Rosalys Hall, and Jay Williams.

**Winter Hours:**
- Monday: 12:30 – 9 pm
- Tuesday – Thursday: 9:30-9:00pm
- Friday – Saturday: 9:30 am – 6 pm
- Sunday: 1 – 5 pm

www.newportlibraryri.org
847-8720 extension 204

**Summer Hours:**
- Monday: 11 am – 8 pm
- Tuesday – Thursday: 9 am – 8 pm
- Friday & Saturday: 9 am – 6 pm

**Important notes:**
Ref. = Reference, in-library use only
P.C. = Professional Collection

Compiled by Rowena Burke
Children's Librarian & School Liaison

July 2004