

Biography

Students were proud of the results and were surprised by how much they learned about people they thought they knew well. Because they cared about the person they interviewed, several students took much more care on the final product, revising numerous times, going back to have their subjects elaborate on earlier answers, and polishing the final draft. Using the tape recorders and being trusted with them, elevated the importance of the project for the students.

Curriculum/State Standard

Improves spoken and written communication, improves listening skills, creates greater understanding in the community.

Overview

Students first read and then wrote about a published autobiography or biography. We then compiled a list of questions to ask to find out about someone's life, interviewed family members or people in the community, and, following some guidelines, wrote short biographies.

Objectives

- The student will understand what makes biography interesting to the reader.
- The student will be able to ask open-ended questions, listen carefully to responses, and ask follow-up questions to expand information.
- The student will organize information gained into several categories, arrange them in a purposeful manner, and select an interesting opening.
- The student will include a quotation, accurately punctuated, in his or her biography.
- The student will set up and conduct the interview on his own, using initiative and good manners.

Continued on the back...

9-12

GRADE LEVEL



ARTS



LANGUAGE



MATH

Misc

MISCELLANEOUS



SCIENCE



HISTORY



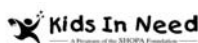
SOCIAL STUDIES

3-5

WEEKS

\$700

TOTAL BUDGET



THIS WINNING LESSON PLAN WAS SUBMITTED BY:

Jill Grubb
Mt. Gilead High School
338 Park Avenue, Mt. Gilead, OH 43338

“Biography” project continued...

Materials

A tape recorder and tape and a list of questions.

Readiness Activity

Students read biographies/autobiographies. Included were “*Monster*” by Cody Scott; “*Black Like Me*” by Griffin; and biographies of Mark Maguire, Drew Barrymore, Tiger Woods, Princess Diana, and others. After reading, students prepared posters that included brief descriptions of the subjects' characters and activities, one anecdote in some detail, and a warning. These they presented to the class with a follow-up question-and-answer period.

Strategies/Activities

We brainstormed for things we wanted to know about older relatives or people from other cultures, as we had just also read a multicultural novel. I compiled a list of their questions.

Students checked out a tape recorder and tape, set up an interview time, and, using their lists of questions, interviewed people.

We talked about several categories of information that could be included in a biography: a physical description of the person and/or place of the interview, a collection of details about their lives, a lengthy anecdote of some interest, a comparison of their lives with our own, any surprises, and direct quotations. We then decided that it would be interesting to open with either a physical description or a quotation. Then, depending on who they interviewed, they would use one of several strategies for organizing information.

They wrote their biographies, shared with friends for feedback, and gave them to me. I read and responded to first drafts with praise and questions, sending some back to find out more, not needing to in other cases because they already wanted to find out something else to develop it.

I made no marks on the final copies, as they wanted to share them with the people about whom they wrote.

Culminating Activity

Some students read theirs aloud, while others asked me to. Students were attentive and asked serious questions, showing some listening skills.

Evaluation

Their papers were graded on organization and content, with emphasis on specific details and the use of at least one quotation illustrating the person in some way. I could also listen to the tapes and determine how energetic they were in their follow-up questions and obvious listening.