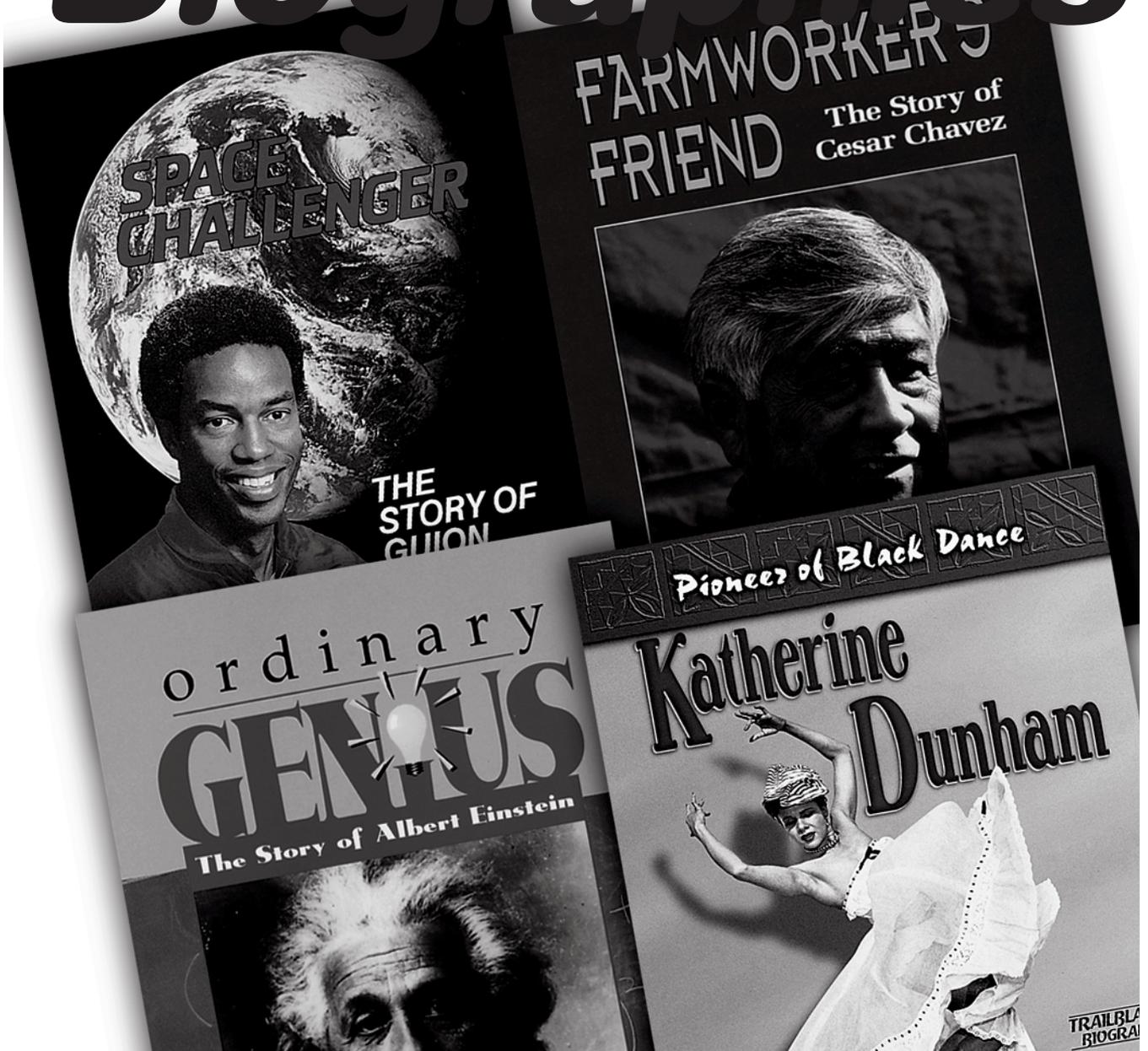


TEACHING

Trailblazers Biographies



6th Grade Reading Level

Standards

- Writing**
- Demonstrates competence in the general skills and strategies of the writing process.
 - Demonstrates competence in the stylistic and rhetorical aspects of writing.
 - Uses grammatical and mechanical conventions in written compositions.
 - Gathers and uses information for research purposes.
- Reading**
- Demonstrates competence in the general skills and strategies of the reading process.
 - Demonstrates competence in the general skills and strategies for reading a variety of literary texts.
 - Demonstrates competence in the general skills and strategies for reading a variety of informational texts.
- Listening and Speaking**
- Demonstrates competence in speaking and listening as tools for learning.
- Theater**
- Demonstrates competence in writing scripts.
 - Uses acting skills.
 - Designs and produces informal and formal productions.
 - Understands how formal and informal theater, film, and electronic media productions create and communicate meaning.

Multiple Intelligences Utilized

- Spatial, linguistic, logical-mathematical, interpersonal, and intrapersonal

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Go to www.lernerclassroom.com
 for a list of all *Trailblazers*
Biographies titles.

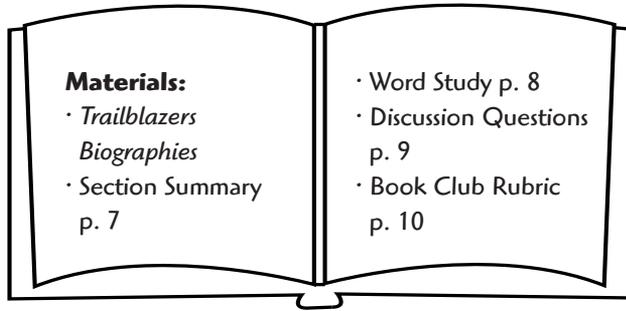
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Lesson 1 Book Club

Purpose: Students will read, analyze and discuss their reactions and interpretations of a biography.



Objectives

- Read, recall, and respond to a biography.
- Identify topics to discuss.
- Interpret the meaning of a text.
- Analyze the feelings and experiences of others.
- Formulate opinions.
- Support opinions with the text.

Activity Procedures

Prepare

(teacher)

- Copy Section Summary p. 7, Word Study p. 8, Discussion Questions p. 9, and Book Club Rubric p. 10 for each student.
- Have students preview the biographies. Have each student write down their first, second, and third choice of the biography that they would like to read.
- Put students into groups of four to six based on the book they chose.

Pretest

(teacher, class)

- What is a book club?
- Why do people participate in book clubs?
- What can you do to prepare for a successful book club?

Model

(teacher, class)

- Introduce book club groups. Discuss how to participate in a book club discussion in an insightful and respectful way.
- Introduce Section Summary p. 7 and how to use it.
- Show students how to keep track of unfamiliar words using Word Study p. 8.
- Distribute Discussion Questions p. 9. Instruct students to use the questions as a guide for investigating a person's life.
- Distribute Book Club Rubric p. 10. Discuss the criteria you will be looking for in their discussions.

Read

(student)

- Read a chapter from the chosen *Trailblazers Biography*.
- Students should use Discussion Questions p. 9 as a guide for taking notes.
- Students should use Word Study p. 8 to record unfamiliar words.

Practice

(student, small group)

- Before forming book clubs, each student should complete Section Summary p. 7.
- Students meet with their book clubs and discuss the first section of the book. Students may want to start off by reading their summaries, answering discussion questions, or discussing unfamiliar words.
- During book club meetings, the teacher should rotate among the groups and participate or observe. While observing, note participation, insightful comments, respectfulness, and topic.

Discuss

(class)

- Ask the students how their understanding of the subject has increased through open discussion.

Evaluate

(teacher, student)

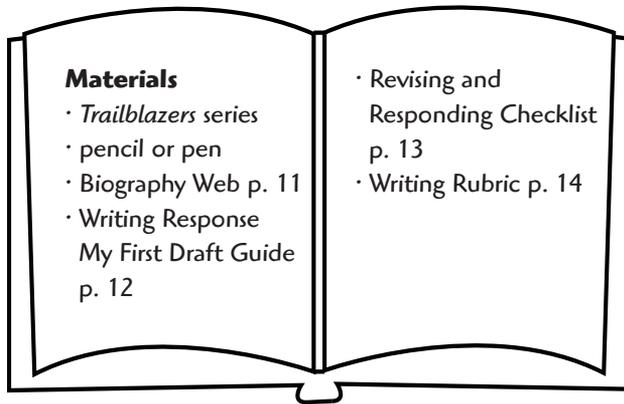
- Use the Book Club Rubric p. 10 to evaluate each student.
- Use the rubric as a guide during conferences with the student.



Lesson 2

Writing Activity

Purpose: Using the writing process, students will respond to the biography by writing a polished paper which will summarize important elements.



Objectives

- Read, recall, and respond to the chosen biography.
- List physical characteristics, personality traits, obstacles, and accomplishments.
- Apply skills to improve writing.
- Analyze one's quality of writing.
- Compose a first draft, a revision, and a final copy.
- Compare and share summaries with the teacher or the group.

Activity Procedures

Prepare

(teacher)

- Copy the Biography Web p. 11 for each student.
- Copy the Writing Response My First Draft Guide p. 12 for each student.
- Copy Revising and Responding Checklist p. 13 for each student.
- Copy the Writing Rubric p. 14 for each student.

Prestest

(teacher /student)

- Ask students what they would need to include in a summary of a biography to make the character interesting and easy to understand.

Read

(student)

- Students should read the chosen biography and use the Biography Web to list significant people, places, events, and accomplishments in the life story.

Model

(teacher)

- Distribute the Biography Web p. 11, and show students that it's designed to help them keep track of important facts about the subject.
- Show students how to use the Biography Web as a source for sentences and as a demonstration of sentence development.

Practice

(students)

- Complete Writing Response My First Draft Guide p. 12 using the Revising and Responding Checklist p. 13.
- Write the second draft and include all the improvements.
- Proofread their second draft using editor's marks.
- Write the final draft.

Discuss

(class)

- How do summaries help us understand a story?

Evaluate

(teacher, student, small group)

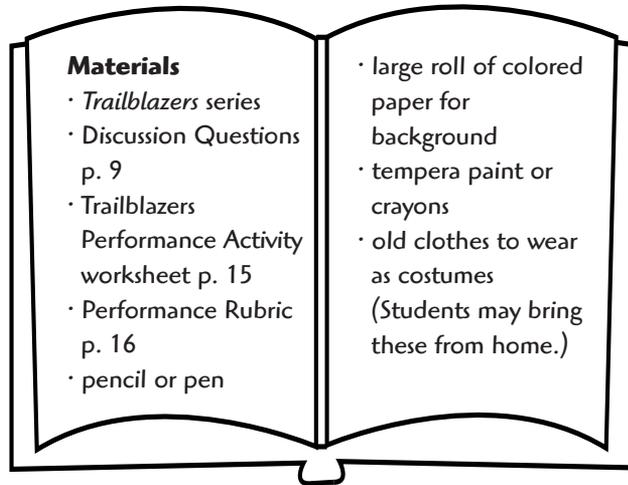
- Conduct a book conference with each student or have students read their summaries aloud to their group.
- Use the Writing Rubric p. 14 to assess the papers.





Lesson 3 Performance Activity

Purpose: Through the book-sharing strategy of a one-person show, students will demonstrate reading comprehension of a chosen biography.



Objectives

- Read and comprehend a chosen biography.
- Recall and review the text.
- Dramatize the subject's background, feelings, and goals.
- Describe some of the obstacles in the subject's life.
- Analyze how the subject overcame those obstacles.
- Prepare the show in a timely manner.
- Evaluate the production.

Activity Procedures

Prepare

(teacher)

- Copy Discussion Questions p. 9 for each student.
- Copy the Trailblazers Performance Activity worksheet p. 15 for each student.
- Copy the Performance Rubric p. 16 for each student.
- Select a book from the *Trailblazers* series.

Pretest

(student)

- Define and describe skit, theater, first person, goals, and obstacles.

Read

(student)

- Students should read their biographies and use the Discussion Questions p. 9 as a guide for taking notes.

Model

(teacher)

- Give your own performance. (An easy way to do this is to select a passage from a book, change the story's voice to first person singular, and simply read to the class with emotion and vitality. This creates the effect of the character speaking directly to the class.)

Practice

(student)

- To organize the ideas, have students complete the Trailblazers Performance Activity worksheet p. 15.
- Prepare costumes and backdrop

Discuss

(teacher, student)

- When the students have reviewed the books and finished their worksheets, meet with them to go over their plans. Make any changes at this time.
- Set the date for the performance.

Evaluate

(teacher)

- Complete the Performance Rubric p. 16 while enjoying the show, or use it during a post-performance conference.



Additional Resources

WEB SITES

African-American History Biographies

<http://afroamhistory.about.com/library/blbiographies.htm?PM=ss13_afroamhistory>
This site contains the biographies of many famous African Americans, organized alphabetically. It also contains a list of links to topics such as the Black Panthers, Civil Rights, the Civil War, the Harlem Renaissance, slaves, and inventors.

Biographies of Notable Women

<http://womenshistory.about.com/library/bio/blbio_list.htm>
This site has links to hundreds of biographies about women. Biographies can be searched alphabetically or by topic, profession, history, or event.

Eric Weisstein's World of Scientific Biography

<<http://scienceworld.wolfram.com/biography/>>
This site contains hundreds of scientific biographies, which are grouped by scientific branch, gender/minority status, historical period, nationality, and prize winners.

History Channel.com

<<http://www.historychannel.com/>>
This site has links to hundreds of historical topics, events and people. For biographical information, simply put a name in the search box, and a list of biographical links is provided. This site offers access to information about famous men and women throughout history.

Innovative Lives

<<http://www.si.edu/lemelson/centerpieces/ilives/index.html>>
This kid-friendly website features inventors of everything from pacemakers to Scotchguard and robots. It has a special link to women inventors and gives students the option of searching for inventors by name.

Multnomah County Library – Biography page

<<http://www.multcolib.org/homework/biohc.html#invbio>>
This site provides links to all kinds of biographies, organized by type, including women, astronauts, entertainers, heroes, Hispanics, women of the west, playwrights and more. It has links to "biography megasites." Also kid-friendly.

Women's History Month

<<http://www.historychannel.com/exhibits/womenhist/program.html>>
This site has links to hundreds of women's biographies, including female writers, artists, scientists, activists and military officers.

BOOKS

- Cheney, Lynne. *A Is for Abigail: An Almanac of Amazing American Women*. New York: Simon & Schuster Children's, 2003.
Each letter of the alphabet is represented by an important woman in the history of the United States. With each letter students can discover the stories of amazing women of our country.
- Katz, William Loren. *Black Women of the Old West*. New York: Atheneum Books for Young Readers, 1995.
This book explores the history of African American women during the western expansion of the United States.
- Ravage, John W. *Black Pioneers: Images of the Black Experience on the North American Frontier*. Salt Lake City, UT: University of Utah Press, 1997.
This book features nearly 200 images of early African Americans in North America, dating back to the early 1800s. It shows the important roles of African Americans in the settlement of the Western United States.
- Sullivan, Otha Richard. *Black Stars: African American Women Scientists and Inventors*. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley, John & Sons, Incorporated, 2001.
This book profiles 25 black American women who have made significant contributions to science and technology, explaining that many more are unknown.
- Thimmes, Catherine. *Girls Think of Everything: Stories of Ingenious Inventions by Women*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2000.
This book tells the story of how women throughout the ages have responded to situations confronting them in life by inventing such items as correction fluid, space helmets, and disposable diapers.



Section Summary

Name _____ Date _____

Directions:  Write a summary of the section or chapter you read. Write the date you completed reading the section or chapter. Write the page numbers included in that section or chapter.

| Chapter | Pages | Date Completed |
|---------|-------|----------------|
| | | |

Summary (What happened?)

Word Study

Name _____ Date _____

Directions: 1.  As you read your biography, write down any word that you don't know the meaning of. Write what page you found it on and what you think it means. 2.  Look the new word up in the dictionary. 3.  Write down the dictionary definition that seems to fit how the word is used in the biography.

| |
|---|
| Page # _____ New Word _____ My Definition _____ _____ Dictionary Definition _____ _____ |
| Page # _____ New Word _____ My Definition _____ _____ Dictionary Definition _____ _____ |
| Page # _____ New Word _____ My Definition _____ _____ Dictionary Definition _____ _____ |

Discussion Questions

The Events:

1. What happened in the person's life? What happened first, then next, and last?
2. What obstacles did this person overcome?
3. Choose a certain event in the book. What might have happened if this had not taken place?

The Settings:

1. Where did the events in this person's life take place?
2. When did this person live? How was that time different from ours?
3. What details did the author use to help you experience the setting?

The Person:

1. How did the author describe the person? Find and read a passage that shows the person's personality.
2. How did the person change?
3. What did you like best about this person? Why?

The Author's Attitude:

1. Did the author admire this person? Find a passage that shows this.
2. What do you like about this author?
3. Is there a famous person whom you would like this author to write about?

What You Feel:

1. Why did you choose this book to read?
2. What was your favorite part? Why?
3. How did you feel while reading the book? Why did you feel that way?

Book Club Rubric

The following rubric can be used during your observation to evaluate the student's participation in the discussion. Assign points possible for each objective before evaluating the student.

Student _____

Oral Language Skills: Total points possible for each task _____

- ___ Participated in the discussion.
- ___ Expressed thoughts clearly and logically.
- ___ Spoke in turn during the discussion.
- ___ Ignored distractions.

Literacy Skills:

- ___ Distinguished events of importance.
- ___ Described the setting.
- ___ Located descriptive details in the author's writing.
- ___ Described the subject of the biography.
- ___ Demonstrated an understanding of the author's role.
- ___ Revealed feelings about the biography subject.

Total points achieved _____

Total points possible _____

Comments: _____

Biography Web

Physical Characteristics

Directions:  Write the name of the person you read about in the circle. Write 3 or 4 details from the book for each topic.

Accomplishments

Personality Traits

Obstacles

Relationships with Others

Attitudes and Values

Writing Response My First Draft Guide

Directions: On a separate sheet of paper,  write several sentences for each topic below. Then use the Revising and Responding Checklist to revise your writing.

I would like to introduce you to _____ (the person's name).

1. Write a physical description.
2. Write a description of their relationships with others.
3. Describe what they think and feel.
4. Describe some of the problems the person encountered.
5. Explain what this person accomplished. Why were they important?
6. Did reading about this person teach you anything about your own life? Explain.

Revising and Responding Checklist

Ask yourself . . .

- Do my topic sentences express the main ideas of the paragraphs? If not, rewrite your topic sentences to state the main idea more clearly.
- Have I supported my topic sentences with strong examples? If not, add examples to make the paragraph clearer and more interesting.
- Does every sentence in every paragraph support the topic sentence? If not, cut sentences that do not support the topic.
- Are the sentences in a clear, logical order? If not, move any sentences that seem out of place.
- Are the meanings of ALL the pronouns clear? If not, replace the confusing pronouns with nouns.
- Are there any dull or overused words? If yes, replace them with vivid, colorful words.

My Second Draft—The Revision

Use this proofreading checklist:

- Check for errors in capitalization.
- Check for errors in punctuation.
- Circle any words you think are misspelled.
- Be sure that your paragraphs are indented.
- Check your grammar.

Use these Editor's Marks

- Capitalize ≡
- Add a period ⊙
- Add something ^
- Add a comma ^,
- Add quotation marks “ ”
- Cut something ✂
- Transpose ~
- Spell correctly sp
- Indent paragraph □
- Make a lower-case letter /
- New paragraph ¶

Writing Rubric

The following rubric can be used during the student's writing. Assign points possible for each objective before evaluating the student.

Student _____

Writing Skills: Total points possible for each task _____

- ___ Writing has few or no errors.
- ___ Student completed each step of the writing process.
- ___ Topic sentences clearly tell the main idea of each paragraph.
- ___ Detail sentences support the main idea.

Literacy Skills:

- ___ Physical characteristics are described.
- ___ Relationships with others are explained.
- ___ Attitudes and values are established.
- ___ Obstacles are described.
- ___ Accomplishments are recounted.

Total points achieved _____

Total points possible _____

Comments: _____

Trailblazers Performance Activity

Dress as the subject of the biography and talk about “your” life.

Use this guide to help you plan your performance. To get ready for your performance, read and enjoy your book. Think about the questions as you read. After you finish reading your book, answer each question on a separate piece of paper. Use your answers to help you write your script. Then rehearse!

1. Book title
2. Author
3. My character’s name and age
4. What will I need to wear in order to show my audience when and where my character lived?
5. How will I need to speak to show my character’s age?
6. What accent and special words will I need to use?
7. When I perform, what will I show the audience about my character?
8. Where my character came from
9. What my character thinks and feels
10. What my character wants in life
11. What some of the obstacles were
12. How my character overcame the obstacles
13. What props will I need?
14. What kind of backdrop will I need?
15. Will I need any helpers?

Performance Rubric

The following rubric can be used during a student's performance. Assign points possible for each objective before evaluating the student.

Student _____

Performance Skills: Total points possible for each task _____

- ___ Spoke clearly and with expression.
- ___ Used accents appropriately.
- ___ Used gestures, props, or costumes to portray the character.
- ___ Delivered the performance on schedule.

Literacy Skills:

- ___ Completed the planning guide.
- ___ Used language that showed the character's background.
- ___ Related the setting of the character's life.
- ___ Revealed a goal of the character.
- ___ Described an obstacle in the character's life.
- ___ Explained how the character overcame the obstacle.

Total points achieved _____

Total points possible _____

Comments: _____
