

American Authors

Biography Assignment Sheet



Phase 1: Reading

1. Choose an American author that you would like to study.
2. Select a biography about the author, either from the approved reading list or by gaining approval from your teacher.
3. Keep a log as you read, noting important details about your author, interesting incidents, and at least five quotations. Pay special attention to how the time period or culture influenced your author.
4. Develop a timeline of key events in your author's life, using the **Timeline** tool at <http://www.readwritethink.org/materials/timeline/>.

Phase 2: Research

1. After reading your author's biography, continue to research your author using the Internet and the recommended Web resources.
2. Evaluate your sources using the **Critical Evaluation of a Website** form.
3. Take notes and turn them in!
4. Turn in a bibliography of sources used. Include at least one Internet source, one print source, and the biography you read. See the MLA style sheet for proper format.

Recommended Web Resources:

Distinguished Women of Past and Present

<http://www.distinguishedwomen.com>

American Collection: American Writing Gateway

<http://www.ncteamercancollection.org/americanwritinggateway.htm>

Biography.com

<http://www.biography.com>

Brain-Juice.com

<http://www.brain-juice.com>

Lives, the Biography Resource

<http://amillionlives.com>



Phase 3: Activities and Assignments

Author Mixer

Date: _____

- Find (or create) a costume or prop that will help you portray your author.
- During the Author Mixer, you may use one note card, but do not plan to read the card! Include information on the card that will help you recall interesting information about the author and some quotations. Be innovative, rather than focusing on birth and death dates.



Group Panel Presentation

Date: _____

- In a group of four or five students, write a script to present your authors to the class in a panel presentation.
- Create questions to be used in your panel discussion.
- One author should be designated as the host, with the other authors appearing as guests. You can make it a “themed” show if you like or the questions can be wide ranging.
- Each author should be introduced with major works mentioned.
- Use as many quotations as possible, but try to keep the dialogue sounding natural.
- You may decide to allow questions from the audience. If so, prepare these questions in advance, so your responses can be planned too.
- Design a handout or visual display about your author using graphics and an eye-catching, easy-to-read layout (see **Biography Project Suggestions**).
- Your group will have 8–10 minutes to present your authors, so plan your panel presentation carefully!

Writing Assignments

1. Create a biopoem about your author (see **How to Write a Biopoem** handout).
2. Write a brief biographical sketch about your author to add to the collection at the **U.S. Literary Map Project website** (<http://www.ncteamericancollection.org/litmap/amcollectlitmap.html>). Include information about the author’s life, works, and influences, along with a list of your sources. Refer to the site for samples.