
Wax Museum Assignment

This event will be held on the evening of October 18th, at the Athenaeum Learning Center. All of our full-time elementary and middle school students (grades 3-8) are expected to participate in it. Any homeschoolers in that age range who would like to participate should RSVP by October 1st to ensure that there is room.

What is a Wax Museum?

A Wax Museum is a special kind of museum where statues of famous people are put on display, so that visitors can see what they look like. The most famous is probably Madame Tussaud's, in London. They were particularly popular in the days before photography, television, and movies, when it was hard for average people to see what famous people looked like.

We will be hosting a Living Wax Museum. You will pick a famous person from history, research them, complete a project about them, and dress up like this person. Then, on October 18th, you will come to the school in the evening, and be part of our museum exhibit. Your family can come and look at all of the projects on display.

How Our Museum Will Work

You will be assigned a spot, and will be required to "strike a pose" in character. When a visitor (either another student, or an adult/family member visitor to our museum) walks by, they will press a button, and you will move to give a 1 minute (60 second) presentation about your person. When you are done, you'll return to your pose, and wait for the next visitor.

What You Will Need to Display:

- A tri-fold board with information about the person you are representing. This tri-fold should include, at a minimum:
 - Name of your subject
 - At least one picture of your subject
 - Important dates about your subject (definitely birth and death, other dates at your discretion)
 - What the person is most famous for
 - The top 5 most interesting pieces of information about this person

The tri-fold should be neat, colorful, and creative. You may want to purchase two when you're buying your supplies, so that one can be your draft and one can be your final project.

- A biography of the person you have researched (1-2 pages for 3rd and 4th graders, 3-5 pages for 5th and 6th graders, and 5-7 pages for 7th and 8th graders). Please find a way to “bind” this into a book, that can be part of your display.
- A costume you can wear. You are strongly encouraged create your own costume. This is your project, not your parents’. Draw a sketch of what you would like to look at, and see if you or anyone in your family has anything that would work. Megan will be happy to help you sew any additional parts of your costume, after-school, the week before the 18th. You will need to supply a pattern, fabric, and thread.¹
- A pose to stand in during the Wax Museum Exhibit. It should represent your character in some way. You will have to stand like this for a few minutes at a time, while the audience is walking through, so practice it at home to make sure that it’s comfortable.
- A one-minute monologue, in the character of your subject. It should include a few facts about their childhood, a few facts about their later life, and what they are famous for. If the person is famous for something they said, you might want to incorporate their own words into your monologue. You’ll want to practice this monologue at home to make sure it’s about 60 seconds long.
- A bibliography that lists all of the sources you used to research your subject.²
- A button for your visitors to press. It can make noise, but please be respectful of the other exhibits, and it should not be unnecessarily loud, long, or otherwise annoying.

Grading

This will be a the final project for Middle School Civics, and the grading rubric is included in your syllabus. This project will be incorporated into the Fall progress reports and skills assessments for our full-time Upper Elementary students. Homeschooled students will not be graded.

¹ Makeup is okay, if your subject was someone who wore makeup. However, you may not try to change your skin tone with any sort of face paint or makeup if your subject is a different race from you. This is called *blackface* if your subject is black (or *redface*, if they are American Indian, or *yellowface* if they are of Asian descent), and there is a long history of actors and performers doing this in order to mock or make fun of people with different skin tones. I know that you would be doing it for the opposite reason: because you respect your subject and want to look like them, but it’s still not okay. The history of people doing it in a mean-spirited way is so great that it’s not something that you should ever, under any circumstances, do.

² Wikipedia is not a source... but it can sometimes be a good place to *start* research. Every fact you read on Wikipedia should be double-checked against an edited resource, and those resources should be the ones listed in your bibliography.

Project Timeline

This page is designed to help you keep track of the many different parts of this project. Remember that you may be working on multiple steps at once! For example, you should be preparing your costume as you finish your biography.

- ☐ October 1st: You should have selected your topic. You should also have found 3 sources. Please bring at least 1 source book to school, so that we can talk about taking notes.
- ☐ October 10th: Your notes should be completed
Your outline should be completed
You should have a sketch of your costume
Please show these to Anna
- ☐ October 12th: The first draft of your biography should be completed.
Make sure that it is double-spaced, and your name and the date are at the top. You'll also want to add a title. Print out a copy and hand it in to Anna.
- ☐ October 15th: Your speech should be completed
Your final draft should be completed.
Please show these to Anna
- ☐ October 17th: Your author's note should be completed.
Your bibliography should be completed.
Your cover, title page, dedication page, and table of contents should be completed.
Make a list of everything you'll need to bring tomorrow night.
Please show these to Anna
- ☐ October 17th: Check your list to see if you have everything you need, and come prepared to be on display! You will turn in one copy of your published book this evening.

Step 1: Select Your subject

Your subject should be a historical figure who is no longer living. They can have lived at any time in the history of the world, in any area of the world. They must have been a real person. Here are some ideas to help you brainstorm ideas for people to portray:

- Look through history books and textbooks and see if any old photographs interest you.
- Go to a library that has a biography section, and skim through several to see if anyone interests you.
- Do you have any favorite sports or hobbies? Are there any famous people who contributed to those sports or hobbies?
- Look around you. Almost everything you see was invented, designed, or developed by someone. Who was that person?
- What do you want to be when you grow up? What famous people pioneered that field?

Everyone in our museum should be unique, so if you pick a very popular or famous person (George Washington, Martin Luther King Jr), you might want to consider having a second choice. This is an opportunity to learn all about someone you might not know much about... while you want to pick someone that you can find enough sources to research from, see if you can surprise people by picking someone a bit more obscure!

While you're brainstorming your subject I highly recommend you go to a library and see what sources are available about the subject. There are some very interesting, but very obscure, people in history. You want to be able to find at least two books and an encyclopedia entry about this person. Skim the sources to make sure that the person is as interesting as you thought they were.

Step 2: Research your subject

You may know a little bit about your subject already. That's great! But how do you make sure that what you know is correct, and how do you learn more? You need to find sources written by people who know a lot about your subject, read them, and take notes.

Find Sources

You will need to go to a library for this. You should find about 2-3 books about your subject, and at least 1 encyclopedia. World Book and Britannica are both good encyclopedias, but sometimes there are encyclopedias that are all about a single topic. For example, there are encyclopedias about space, and if you are studying a famous astronaut, one might be helpful.

Look for books, encyclopedias, and websites that might help you find information about your subject. You should use at least 1 encyclopedia and 2 books to research your subject... but you can always use more!

Take Notes

As you research, you will need to take notes. Taking notes means to take all of the information your source provides, and to only write down the important part. We will talk about this in class!

What Information Are You Looking For?

So what are you looking for? This list won't work for everyone: your subject might have additional topics that you want to write about. But here's a pretty good list of information that you'll probably want to include in your biography:

- Childhood
 - When and where were they born?
 - What was their family like?
 - Where did they grow up?
 - What did they like as a child?
 - Other important information about their childhood
- Education
 - Grade school, high school, college, graduate school. Maybe they had no formal education. Apprenticeship counts as education.
- Adulthood
 - What jobs did they have?
 - Were they married? Did they have a family?
 - Where did they live?
 - What are the highlights of their career?
 - Did they win any awards or recognitions?
 - When, where, how did this person die?

☐ You should have your subject selected, and at least three sources identified by October 1st.

☐ Your notes should be completed by October 10th
Be prepared to show Anna your notes and the draft bibliography you've been keeping.

Step 3: Write your biography outline

A biography is a non-fiction story about someone's life. Your job is to take the notes that you wrote down in Step 2, and turn them into a story that is interesting and easy to read.

The first thing you'll need to do is to write an outline. An outline is a way to organize your notes, to make your essay easier to write. When you use an outline, it's easier to make sure that you've included all of the important information, and it's easier to make sure that your essay is in a logical order.

Outlines are written in a special kind of list form. Your outline should look something like this:

- I. Introduction
 - a. Name and basic information
 - i. List the basic information (such as their date of birth and death, place of birth and death, and what they were most known for under a list of lower-case Roman numerals)
 - b. Early childhood
 - i. List information about their parents, their early childhood.
 - c. Educational background/early training
 - i. List information about how they were educated, and how they trained for the job or accomplishments they ended up doing.
- II. Personal Life
 - a. Using lower-case letters, list important events in this person's life, including information about their career, their family, where they went and what they did, and whatever other information you think is important to share with your reader.
 - i. Under each item in your list of personal life events, you can add more information. For example, dates, places, why this was important, and important details.
- III. Accomplishments
 - a. Using lower-case letters, list important accomplishments that this person completed. This might include jobs, events, specific things they did or made, awards, and recognitions. It really depends on who you are studying. If your person is an artist, you may want to include some of their most famous pieces. If your person is a politician, you may want to include a list of their jobs or accomplishments that made people want to vote for them, the list of elected positions they held, and a list of things they did after they were no longer in office.
 - i. Again, under each item in your list of accomplishments, add more information.
- IV. Conclusion
 - a. Summarize the information you've already given.
 - b. Give your personal opinion about this person, and why they are important.

Your outline does not need to be written in your fanciest, best writing. The important thing is that all of the information is accurate and complete. If you want to include quotes from your person, they should be complete and exactly what the person said: do not summarize quotes that you will want to use.

After you have written your outline, you will flesh it out by turning it into your essay!



The outline of your biography should be completed by October 10th

Step 4: Write your biography

You will want to start with an introduction paragraph. This paragraph will introduce your subject, and say why this person is important.

You will want to end with a conclusion paragraph. This sums up your subject's life and their importance, and again explains why this person is important.

Everything in between is up to you! It's probably simplest to start with their childhood, and go forward throughout their life. Remember that you are now an expert on this person, but the person reading your biography isn't yet. In addition, you probably picked your subject because they related to a field or a topic that you're interested in, and that you already knew some things about. Your reader might not know anything about the topic, so you might need to explain words, ideas, or topics that aren't general knowledge. For example, if you are writing about Marie Curie, you might want to tell your readers what the Nobel Prize is, what radiation is, and that it was very unusual for a woman to work as a scientist back then.

This is important: what you write **MUST** be in your own words. You can not, under any circumstances, just copy your sources. This is called "plagiarism," and when you get a bit older, it is very serious. (But what about when you were taking notes, and you wrote down the original quotes that people said? Are you supposed to change "Will the Liberal Party Give Votes for Women?" into your own words? NO!!! THAT is the original history, and it stays the same! If your subject said or wrote something, that stays exactly the same, and you put it in quote marks. It's only secondary sources that you can't copy from.)

As you write it, your biography should be typed, and single spaced. Students in 3rd-5th grade should write *at least* 2 pages of text. Students in 6th-8th grade should write *at least* 5 pages of text. There is no maximum number of pages, and if you want to write more, do so!

When you have finished your first draft, double-space it, print it, and turn it in to Megan.

Megan will make some comments and suggestions on your first draft. When your paper is returned to you, you will work on your final draft. After you've finished your final draft, you may add a little bit of fancy formatting. For example, you might want to break it into chapters and add a Table of Contents. You might also want to add some illustrations. **Do not add anything fancy until you are satisfied with your final draft.**

You will need to "publish" two copies of your biography. One will be turned into Megan for grading, and the other will be part of your Wax Museum exhibit. Your biography should be "bound" in some way. Office supply stores sell plastic report covers.



The first draft of your biography should be completed by October 12th

Make sure that it is double-spaced, and your name and the date are at the top. You'll also want to add a title. Print out a copy and hand it in to Anna.



The final draft of your biography should be completed by October 15th

Print out a copy and hand it in to Anna..

Step 5: Write your speech

You now know quite a bit about your subject, and so it should be fairly easy to write your speech. Write it out, and then practice it in front of a mirror.

A basic template is:

"Hello, my name is _____. I was born on ___, in _____. As a child, I _____. I am important (or "I am famous") because _____. An interesting fact about my life is _____. Thank you for stopping by!"

This exact template will not work for everyone. For example, we know very little about the childhoods of some people who died very long ago. Some people are famous for a number of achievements, and you'll want to describe them, and why they are important.

People usually don't speak exactly the way they write, so it's very likely that some of your speech will sound awkward or not-quite-right. You also want to make sure that it's about 45-60 seconds long. Edit your speech so that it's easier to say, and then try again. Once you feel comfortable saying your speech, start to memorize it.



Your speech should be completed by October 15th

Please turn in a typed copy to Anna.

Step 6: Design your costume

Do any of the books you've read have photographs or paintings of what the person looked like? What sort of clothing are they wearing? Did they have a uniform, or did they wear the fashions of the time? What they wore probably depended on their job, their social status, where they lived, and how much money they had.

Maybe you don't know exactly what this person wore, but you can make guesses based on the fashions of their time. What people wear depends on a number of things:

- 1) The time period they lived in: fashions change with time.
- 2) Whether they were a man or a woman, and how old they were. Sometimes, especially for women, whether they were married or unmarried meant that they wore different styles.
- 3) What sort of job did they have? Did they wear a uniform?

- 4) Where did they live? Was it a hot or cold climate? What were the fashions of their region?
- 5) Their religious beliefs.
- 6) Their social status, and how wealthy they were.

Try researching what people like your subject would have worn. Make sure to write down your sources, as they'll be part of your bibliography.

Draw a sketch of what you'd like your costume to look like. Then start looking around your house for clothes that you might already have.

It's possible that you won't have everything you need, and you'll need to make part of your costume. If so, talk to Megan about what you'll need for your costume. She will be happy to work with students after school on October 10-12 to teach students to sew costumes. Students will be responsible for purchasing the pattern and materials, but Megan can help offer guidance.

☐ Your costume should be designed by October 10th
Anna will check in with you to see what you have planned.

☐ Your costume should be completed by October 15th

Step 7: Complete your bibliography

A bibliography tells people where you learned what you've used to create this project. Different types of sources should be listed in different ways. Your bibliography should be typed, and sources should be categorized by the source type. Within each type, the list should be alphabetical. You should follow a template that looks like this:

Books

Last-name-of-author, First-name-of-author. Book Name: Include The Subtitle. City-of-publication: Publisher's name; Year-published.

Example: Smith, John. The Greatest Queen: The Story of Queen Elizabeth I. London: Queenie Publishing; 2015.

Encyclopedias

Last-name-of-author, First-name-of-author. "Article Title." *Encyclopedia Name*. City-of-publication: Publisher's name; Year-published. Print.

Example: Doe, Jane. "Amelia Earhart." *Encyclopedia of Aviators*. New York: Educational Encyclopedias, Ink; 2007. Print.

OR

Last-name-of-author, First-name-of-author. "Article Title." *Encyclopedia Name*. City-of-publication: Publisher's name; Year-published. Website-title. Web. Date-month-year-accessed. (in other words, the date that you read the online encyclopedia entry)

Example: Doe, Jane. "Amelia Earhart." *Encyclopedia of Aviators Online*. New York: Educational Encyclopedias, Ink. October 1, 2018.

Magazines and Journals

Last-name-of-author, First-name-of-author. "Article Title." *Name-of-Magazine*. Month-and-year-published: page. Print.

Example: . "Benazir Bhutto: First Female Prime Minister of Pakistan." *Famous People Monthly*. Jun. 2016: 35-37. Print.

OR

Last-name-of-author, First-name-of-author. "Article Title." *Name-of-Magazine*. Month-and-year-published: page. *Website Title*. Web. Day-month-year-accessed. (in other words, the date that you read the web article)

Example: "Benazir Bhutto: First Female Prime Minister of Pakistan." *Famous People Monthly*. Web. October 1, 2018.

Websites

Last-name-of-author, First-name-of-author. "Article Title." *Website-Title*. Day-month-year-article-was-published. Day-month-year-accessed. (in other words, the date that you read the web article) <url>

Example: "Did Marie Antoinette Really Say 'Let Them Eat Cake?'" *Web Rumors Revealed*. 29 February 2009. Web. October 1, 2018.


<<http://www.webrumorsrevealed.org/marie-antoinette.html>>

If you are being graded, you should have at least 1 encyclopedia, 2 books, and 1 website. Some great articles can be found in magazines such as Cobblestone or Smithsonian, but it's not a requirement that you find these. If you don't have any magazines, just leave that category off.

If you're not sure what source type you have, or if you think you have a source that isn't a book, encyclopedia, magazine, or website, talk to Anna. There are many different source types, and only a few are listed here.

Remember that it is important to evaluate your sources. Who wrote it? Why? Is there a bibliography? Does it seem like the author might be biased? What are their credentials, and what else have they written? Do you really want to trust someone writing about Christopher Columbus on a website that claims the world is flat? This goes for everything, but particularly for websites. It takes a lot of time and energy to write a book or an encyclopedia, and there

are *usually* people in charge of checking facts. Literally anyone can put anything they want on a website, whether it's true or not.

 Your bibliography should be completed by October 17th
Please turn in a copy to Anna.

Step 8: Compile Your Book

Have you ever looked at a book? (This is a rhetorical question: I'm pretty sure you have.) What are the parts of a book? Most books have a:

- Cover
- Publisher's Information
- Dedication
- Title Page
- Text

Some books also have a:

- Preface and/or afterwards
- Table of contents
- Appendix
- Bibliography
- Index

Your book should have all of the above except for the index. (You may do an index if you'd like!). Your publisher should read: Pembroke, MA: Athenaeum Learning Press

Author's Note

You are going to add a preface to your book. A preface is an introduction to a book, but it's nearly always written last. Your preface is going to be called an "Author's Note." Just like the name suggest, it's a note that you (the author) are writing to your readers. While you usually don't write a lot of "I statements" in a biography, the preface is all about you! If it's hard to write, picture a friend that you think would really like learning about your subject. Or maybe your mom or an aunt that you haven't seen in a long time. Pretend that you're writing a letter just to them about your project. Why did you pick your subject? What do you want the reader to know about them? Why do you like (or not like) your subject? Were there parts of this project that were hard? Were there things that you wish you knew more about your subject, but your sources didn't say? The Author's Note is not formal and fancy! Don't be stressed about it. Just sit down and start writing about your experiences on this project.

Appendix

You are also going to add two appendices (the plural of appendix is appendices) to your book. One will be a nicely typed copy of your speech, and the other will be a drawing of you in your

costume. Make sure both are labeled: at the top, write a heading such as “Presentation given by [your subject’s name] at the Wax Museum,” and “Sketch of costume worn by [your subject’s name] at the Wax Museum.”

Table of Contents

Now it’s time to write your Table of Contents. Take a look at a few books that have Table of Contents, and see what kinds of things are included. The cover, the title page, and the dedication page never are. Your table of contents will probably look like this:

Author’s Note.....	Page 1
Chapter 1: Childhood.....	Page 2
.	
.	
.	
Chapter 57: Death and Legacy.....	Page 475
Appendix 1: Costume.....	Page 476
Appendix 2: Speech.....	Page 477
Bibliography.....	Page 478

(Okay, maybe it won’t look *exactly* like this, if you don’t have 57 chapters and 475 pages of things to say about your subject. But you get the idea.)

The easiest way to do that is by using “Styles” in your word processing program. Ask an adult for help with this, if you’re unfamiliar.

Title and Publisher’s Page

You’ll need to write a Title Page. Title pages are very simple: title, and author. Sometimes, at the bottom of the page, is the publisher’s information. It’s also repeated on the next page, but to simplify things, I would put the publisher’s information at the bottom of your title page. What if someone wants to use YOUR biography as a source! They will need to know everything you had to find out about other books for your bibliography. Your publisher’s page should include the city, state, and the name of the publisher. That will be Pembroke, MA: Athenaeum Learning Press. Don’t forget the date!

Dedication Page

You’ll want a dedication page. Is there someone special in your life that you’d like to dedicate this book to? You can write them a little note, too. Remember that this will be published... it needs to be something you’re okay with everyone reading.

Cover

Finally, you’ve saved the best for last: you need a cover! You’ll want your title, and your name, but otherwise it’s up to you. Do you want a fancy decorative font? A picture? A drawing? Colors? Make it as simple or fancy as you’d like!

- ☐ Your Author's Note should be completed by October 17th.
Please turn in a copy to Anna

- ☐ Your cover, title page, dedication page, and table of contents should be completed by October 17th

Step 9: Publish Your Book

Time to go to press! There are a few easy ways to do this:

- Get a report cover at any office supply store. These usually have a clear plastic page for the front, a black or clear plastic page for the back, and a brightly colored piece of paper for the spine. You can slide your report into the spine.
- Use a thin binder: if it has a clear plastic sleeve on the front, you can slide your cover in.
- Be fancy and sew the binding yourself.

The order of your book should go:

- 1) Cover
- 2) Title/Publisher's Page
- 3) Dedication Page
- 4) Table of Contents
- 5) Author's Note
- 6) Your actual biography
- 7) Appendix
- 8) Bibliography

- ☐ Publish your book by October 17th

Step 10: Finalize your demonstration

Are you ready to go? Set up your display at home, and practice for a family member. Does everything work? Make a list of what you'll need to bring to school the evening of October 18th. The list should include your trifold, your biography, your costume, your button, and your bibliography. It may also include other props, or books that you'd like to display. Make sure that your list is written down, and includes every single thing you'll need.

- ☐ You should finalize your demonstration by October 17th

On the evening of October 18th, check your list as you gather everything you need to bring to school. You don't want to forget anything! Plan to get to school at about 6:15. You'll be assigned a space, and can set up. Then... it's showtime!

Some Examples

All of these photographs are of Wax Museum exhibits done at other schools. They are good inspiration for what we're looking for.

