



TEXAS PERFORMANCE STANDARDS PROJECT

Grade 2 English Language Arts/Social Studies Unit

Who's Who: A Study of Biography

This guide links the *Who's Who: A Study of Biography* unit to the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) for second graders. *Who's Who* is an English Language Arts and Social Studies unit that allows students to explore and gain knowledge about famous people and how they use their gifts and talents. *Who's Who* also has interdisciplinary connections to mathematics and science. For example, students will discuss attributes of famous people by category, allowing them to use patterns to describe relationships and make predictions, as described in the Mathematics TEKS. They will also use information and critical thinking to make decisions, as described in the Science TEKS. The following document includes the applicable TEKS and the details of the *Who's Who* unit.

Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills

This unit may address the following TEKS:

English Language Arts:

- 2.1 Listens attentively and engages actively in a variety of oral language experiences
- 2.3 Speaks appropriately to different audiences for different purposes and occasions
- 2.4 Communicates clearly by putting thoughts and feelings into spoken words
- 2.7 Reads widely for different purposes in varied sources
- 2.9 Uses a variety of strategies to comprehend selections read aloud and selections read independently
- 2.10 Responds to various texts
- 2.12 Generates questions and conducts research using information from various sources
- 2.14 Writes for a variety of audiences and purposes, and in various forms
- 2.18 Selects and uses writing processes for self-initiated and assigned writing
- 2.20 Uses writing as a tool for learning and research

Mathematics:

- 2.6 Uses patterns to describe relationships and make predictions
- 2.11 Organizes data to make it useful for interpreting information
- 2.14 Uses logical reasoning

Science:

- 2.3 Knows that information and critical thinking are used in making decisions
- 2.5 Knows that organisms, objects and events have properties and patterns
- 2.7 Knows that many types of change occur

Social Studies:

- 2.3 Understands how various sources provide information about the past
- 2.4 Understands how historical figures and ordinary people helped to shape our community, state, and nation
- 2.17 Applies critical-thinking skills to organize and use information acquired from a variety of sources including electronic technology
- 2.18 Communicates in written, oral, and visual forms
- 2.19 Uses problem-solving and decision-making skills, working independently and with others, in a variety of settings

Description of Unit

In this interdisciplinary/language arts unit, students explore and gain knowledge of famous people and how they used their gifts and talents to overcome challenges and become successful. Students will first read and compare/contrast biographies of several people. In their research, they will choose a figure to study and create a timeline of that person's life.

Goals

Students will meet these goals in their explorations:

- Develop the essential skills of logical thinking, creative problem solving, intellectual risk taking, and communicating
- Ask questions and explore theories
- Have opportunities to generate new ideas
- Become familiar with famous people and characteristics of their lives
- Learn about different kinds of giftedness

Phase I. Learning Experiences

1. Brainstorm famous people from different areas, such as entertainment, sports, or literature. You can use examples from Attachment #1, Famous People. Students may continue to add to the list throughout this unit.
2. Categorize the famous people from the brainstorming session. Use categories such as athlete, artist, musician, politician, inventor, or entertainer.
3. Discuss attributes of the famous people by category. What attributes do they have in common? How are they different?
4. Discuss definitions of giftedness and how people have different talents. Helpful websites include:
<http://www.riage.org/gifteddef.html>
<http://www.ericdigests.org/pre-923/defining.htm>
<http://giftedkids.about.com/od/gifted101/p/gifteddef.htm>
http://www.nwrel.org/msec/just_good/9/ch1.html
5. Gather biographical information about one person from each of the categories. For each person, talk about these questions:
 - What were the person's attributes and areas of strength?
 - What challenges did the person overcome?
 - How did he/she use strengths to overcome those challenges?
 - What were the person's gifts and talents? How did he/she use them?
 - What episode or story from the person's life best characterizes him or her?

- What did the person contribute to others?
6. Have students compare and contrast the people they discussed.

Phase II. Independent Research

A. Research Process

1. Selecting a topic. Each student chooses a famous person to investigate.
2. Asking guiding questions. Once students have selected a topic, each student should think of three to five guiding questions, **such as**:
 - When did this person live?
 - How did the person reflect the time period in which he/she lived?
 - What are the person's attributes?
 - What are the person's gifts and/or talents?
 - What challenges did the person face?
 - How did the person use his gifts and/or talents to overcome those challenges?
 - What did the person contribute to others?

While these examples are general, the student's questions should be specific to the person they study. The questions should lead the student to form individual research-based findings. The student should develop a hypothesis or some possible answers to the questions.

3. Conducting the research. After you have approved student proposals, each student will begin to use the resources he/she has identified and others he/she may encounter. During this stage, the student will need to keep a log, note cards, and/or resource process sheets for all the sources he/she uses and what he/she learns from each one.
4. Summarizing. Each student should create a timeline of key events in the person's life.

B. The Product

Each student will create an original form of biography—the student will tell about the person in a genre that is appropriate for that person (e.g., a student who studied an artist may create a piece of art that reflects the artist's life). Have the student explain why he/she chose the form of biography and why it is appropriate for the person.

C. Communication

Students present their biography to the class. The presentation should be long enough for classmates to understand the person's gifts and/or talents and should end with a question-and-answer session.

D. A completed project includes:

1. Description of reasons student chose the form of biography and why it is appropriate for the person
2. Research log, note cards, and/or research process sheets
3. Biography, including references or works cited
4. Timeline of person's life
5. Videotape or audiotape of the class presentation, including the Q&A session

Attachment #1
Famous People

Eric Carle
Chris Van Allsburg
Dr. Seuss
Tomas di Paola
Jim Henson
Sherri Lewis
Frank Oz
Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
Ray Charles
Elvis Presley
Dolly Parton
Lucille Ball
Oprah Winfrey
Aaron Spelling
Albert Einstein
Rachel Carson
Marie Curie
Bill Gates
Mary Kay
Hilary Rodham Clinton
Walt Disney
Pablo Picasso
Edith Head
Mark Spitz
Nadia Comaneci
Wilma Rudolph
Connie Chung
Edwin Abbott
Hans Christian Andersen
Louisa May Alcott
Roald Dahl
J.R.R. Tolkien
Eugene Debs
Ang Lee
Scott Joplin
Sammy Davis Jr.
Sammy Sosa
Cesar Chavez
Vladimir Horowitz
Yo Yo Ma
Luciano Pavarotti
Robin Williams
Tia Carrere
Stephen Hawking
Ansel Adams