



Famous People Lesson Plan

Introduction

Students often read about famous people without considering the relevance of life stages. Attitudes, events and decisions early in life shape options and achievements later in life. This activity encourages students to apply information about famous adults to their own lives. It will take several class periods to complete.

Objectives

Students will:

- list achievements of older persons;
- identify events and decisions that shape options and achievements later in life;
- discuss values and personal traits that help in overcoming obstacles; and
- write an essay applying information gained about famous persons.

Materials

Handout: Famous People

Procedures

1. Distribute the "Famous People" handout. Ask students what they already know about persons on the list.
2. Each student can choose a different person from the list. Students will use the library card catalog and Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature as sources of information on their research subjects. Several sources should be used, including biographies, magazine articles and an encyclopedia.
3. Distribute the **"Life Stages" and "Life Factors"** handouts, on which students will take notes.
4. After they have researched their subjects and taken notes on the handouts, organize students into small discussion groups of four or five in which they share the results of their work. An appointed recorder for each group should complete blank "Life Stages" and "Life Factors" handouts based on the reports from the group. Each group should seek a consensus on the question, "Is there one single factor that helped all of your famous people?"
5. After all groups reach consensus, each group member should briefly highlight the factors which influenced the accomplishments of his or her person, followed by the group spokespersons, who report on commonalities observed among the famous persons researched.
6. Have students write a summary of the factors that made their subjects famous.

Adapted with permission from Pratt, Fran. "Research: Famous Person's Achievements," Teaching and Learning about Aging. Framingham, MA: Framingham State College, 1982.

Extension Activities

Have students prepare a silhouette symbol, collage or drawing that represents the field of achievement of the person researched. These can be used for group presentations or bulletin board displays.

Individuals can be successful in their own lives whether or not history records them among the few who became famous. Ask students to write an essay on their personal goals, applying the insights they learned from their class research on famous people. What kind of person do you (students) want to become? How have the values and goals of the person you researched changed from when he or she was younger? As you grow older and continue to mature, how do you think your own goals might change?

Famous People

How many of the names below do you recognize? What do you know about these people? Each person is famous for his or her accomplishments in life. Choose one person below, perhaps someone you do not recognize, and find out what helped make her or him become creative, influential, productive or successful.

Artists/Performers	Writers/Scientists	Business People/Politicians
Marian Anderson Ludwig van Beethoven George Burns Mary Cassatt Marc Chagall Charles Chaplin Bette Davis Agnes de Mille Duke Ellington Martha Graham Helen Hayes Katharine Hepburn Bob Hope Franz Liszt Michelangelo Claude Monet Grandma (Anna Maria) Moses Pablo Picasso Artur Rubinstein John Wayne Frank Lloyd Wright	Jane Austen George Washington Carver Thomas A. Edison Sigmund Freud Robert Frost Victor Hugo Henrik Ibsen Helen Keller Margaret Mead Jean Piaget Bertrand Russell Albert Schweitzer George Bernard Shaw Booker T. Washington	Coco Chanel Winston Churchill Charles de Gaulle Justice William O. Douglas Frederick Douglass Benjamin Franklin Mahatma Gandhi Thomas Jefferson Jomo Kenyatta Mao Tse-tung Golda Meir Ronald Reagan Helena Rubenstein Margaret Chase Smith Harry S. Truman