



Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute
2012 Volume II: The Art of Biography

A Timeline of Memories and Past Reflections

Guide for Curriculum Unit 12.02.06
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As a fifth-grade Language Arts and Social Studies teacher, I encounter difficulties teaching my students to (1) write with elaboration, (2) apply mechanical and grammatical skills beyond their own essay, and (3) engage student-centered discourse more often in the classroom. This unit on the principles of biography will help my students compose a piece of writing that stimulates imagination and creativity through conversations, texts, and visual stimuli. This unit uses visual stimuli as the main tool to connect principles to textual information. Information is presented using graphic organizers like Cornell Notes and the Venn diagram to help the students organize the material introduced at the start of every lesson. The culminating project will ask students to write a biography of a person that they know such as another student in the room, a teacher, or a family member, or to write their own autobiography. Students will work cooperatively to produce original work that encompasses the principles of biography taught throughout the unit. The unit is designed for grades five through eight but can be adapted to fit higher grades.

(Recommended for English Language Arts and Social Studies, grades 5-8)

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