

Focus on Biographies in 3rd Grade

by Natalie Phillips

- Day 1 Immersion**-In small groups, the students will read a biography together and prepare, then present to the class with individual task cards.
- Day 2 Model**-I will show the class my power point presentation about Ployer Pete Hill, the namesake of Hill Air Force Base, and talk (think-aloud) about my process in writing it while revising it as I share.
- Day 3 Shared**-As a class, we will interview the principal then think-aloud/write a biography together about him.
- Day 4 Collaborative Preparation**-Students will think/pair/share and decide on the person they each want to interview and write about, then make a list of questions to ask in an interview.
- Day 5 Independent**-(until they are ready to share) Students will continue working on their biographies with mini-lessons on content, organization, and conventions. Students will share the biographies that they write with the class.

bi·og·ra·phy [bahy-og-ruh-fee, bee-]

–noun, plural **-phies**.

1. a written account of another person's life: *the biography of Byron by Marchand*.

Origin:

1675–85; < Gk *biographía*. See [bio-](#), [-graphy](#)

from dictionary.com

Day 1 Mini-Lesson: Focus on Biography

Grade: 3rd

Time: 45 minutes

Standard: Apply the processes of reading and writing.

Objective:

d. Understand, analyze and respond to narrative and informal grade level text.

c. Write with an audience in mind using details to convey meaning in a variety of genres.

(from new Davis District “Davis Essential Skills & Knowledge” reporting standards)

Language Objective: Students will read a biography with a small group, write down at least three sentences about the person, and orally share their sentences with the class.

Content Objective: Students will become very familiar with one person and present that person to the class with a small group. Students will hear about three more people from the other groups.

Materials:

- At least four biographies with a copy of each biography for each student OR
 - Houghton Mifflin Theme Five *Focus on Biography* teacher materials
 - Houghton Mifflin student textbooks with biographies about **Babe Didrikson, Bill Melendez, Bessie Coleman, and Hank Greenberg.**
- A way to seat students in four groups.
- Who?, What?, When?, Where?, Why?, and How? dice to decide task card assignments
- Task Cards to be written on

Procedure:

- Begin by introducing to the class what biography means, writing it on the board and explaining that it is a story about a person’s life.
- Explain that each group will become experts on one person and share about that person with the class.
- Assign each group to a person’s biography and make sure they find the correct pages in their books. Explain that the groups will read the biography together. Each student will use the task card as they read to write at least three sentences that answer questions about the person. Groups can help each other so that everyone is ready when it is time.
- Have groups roll their dice to choose task cards.
- Make sure each student understands his/her responsibility.
- Have students read and prepare to present.
- Each group will take a turn presenting about the person their group has read about.

Attached: Biography Report Individual Task Cards: Students should write as much as they can to answer their questions about the person.

Who?

Who is this person?

What?

What are some interesting things about this person?

When?

**When was this person born?
When did this person die? Tell what happened.**

Where?

Where is this person from?

Where else has this person lived?

Why?

Why is this person well known?

How?

How has this person made a difference?

Day 2 Mini-Lesson: Revising a Biography Together

Grade: 3rd

Time: 45 minutes

Standard: Apply the processes of reading and writing.

Objective:

d. Understand, analyze and respond to narrative and informal grade level text.

b. Demonstrate understanding of and apply the writing process.

(from new Davis District "Davis Essential Skills & Knowledge reporting standards)

Language Objective: Students will participate in looking at a biography written by the teacher and give feedback that can improve the content and conventions of the writing.

Content Objective: Students will learn about Ployer Pete Hill (or another person the teacher writes about) and see how the writing process works to improve the writing.

Materials:

- A teacher-written biography to be used as a model
- A way to project the biography to be shared with the class
- (power point or transparency)
- A way to make changes in the biography and share it again

Procedure:

- Begin by explaining to the class that you have written a biography you would like to share with them and see if they can help you make it better.
- Show the class the biography you have prepared, read it aloud with a lot of think-aloud talk.
- Follow classroom procedures (raising hands) and conferencing rules (be respectful) to get feedback that can improve the biography.
- Revise the biography together as a class, then read it again.

Attached:

A biography that can be used to model sharing, revising, and sharing a biography

Hill Air Force Base: Who is it Named After?

by Miss Phillips
April 2009

Hill Air Force Base is located in Northern Utah.
Hill Air Force Base is named for Ployer Major Ployer Peter Hill, Chief of the Flying Branch of the Air Corps Material Division at Wright Field in Dayton, Ohio

Ployer Peter Hill was an excellent man and an extremely capable and meticulous pilot. He helped test and evaluate nearly 60 of the Army Air Corps' newest and best aircraft.

Pete Hill was born in Newburyport, Massachusetts on October 24, 1894. He attended elementary school and high school in Newburyport. In 1916 he graduated from Brown University with a Bachelor of Science degree in Civil Engineering. Ployer Peter Hill signed up for the Aviation Section of the U.S. Army Signal Enlisted Reserve Corps in 1917. In 1918 he received flight instruction at the School of Military Aeronautics at Cornell University, the Aviation Concentration Camp at Camp Dix in Dallas, Texas, and at Chanute Field in Rantoul, Illinois. Hill then accepted a commission as a 2nd Lieutenant in the regular Army and served as a flying instructor before receiving instruction as a bombardment pilot.

1919 Hill served in the Office of the Chief of the Air Corps in Washington, D.C.

1920 Hill was ordered to duty with the American Army of Occupation in Germany, where he served as the Engineer Officer of the Air Service Flying Station in Weissenthurm.

1922 Hill was assigned to duty with the 12th Aero Squadron stationed at Fort Bliss in El Paso, Texas, then transferred back to Chanute Field for instruction in aerial photography. After completing the course he stayed on as a student instructor.

In 1924, Hill returned to duty in Washington, D.C., in the Training and War Plans Division under the Chief of the Air Service.

In 1925, he was ordered to duty at Mitchell Field, New York, where he was appointed Commanding Officer of the 14th Photo Section.

In 1929, Hill served as the Commanding Officer of the 6th Photo Section at Nichols Field in Manila.

In 1932, Pete returned to the United States and was assigned to Wright Field in Dayton, Ohio, where he served as a test pilot and Assistant Chief of Planes and Engines in the Maintenance Unit.

In 1935 he was assigned as the Chief of the Flying Branch of the Material Division at Wright Field, with the temporary rank of Major. His duties involved the flight test and evaluation of numerous new military aircraft designs at various contractors' plants, including the Consolidated P-30, the Martin B-10 and B-12, and many others. Ployer Peter Hill was 41 years old after 18 years of service.

On October 30, 1935 Ployer Peter Hill died as a result of injuries received from the crash of the Boeing experimental aircraft Model 299 at Wright Field. This aircraft was the prototype of what would later become the famous B-17 Flying Fortress of World War II. Major Hill was buried in Newburyport, Massachusetts, on November 3, 1935.

In 1939 the U.S. War Department named the site of the Ogden Air Depot "Hill Field" in honor of Major Ployer Peter Hill. In 1948 Hill Field was renamed Hill Air Force Base.

References:

<http://www.hill.af.mil/library/factsheets/factsheet.asp?fsID=5831&page=2>

Day 3 Mini-Lesson: Writing a Biography Together

Grade: 3rd

Time: 45 minutes

Standard: Apply the processes of writing.

Objective:

b. Demonstrate understanding of and apply the writing process.

c. Write with an audience in mind using details to convey meaning in a variety of genres.

(from new Davis District “Davis Essential Skills & Knowledge reporting standards)

Language Objective: Students will participate in interviewing the principal and writing his biography together as a class.

Content Objective: Students will learn about the principal (or another person at school with time to be interviewed) and contribute to his biography.

Materials:

- Questions written by students to ask the principal with room on the papers to write the answers
- The hot seat for the principal and a plan for the procedure to ask him questions
- Students need a pencil ready to write answers
- A way to write information down together as a class (computer and projector)

Procedure:

- Begin by having students each write down a question to ask the principal about his life.
- Invite the principal in to be interviewed.
- Have all students listen while each student asks the question and writes the answer.
- Thank the principal and excuse him to get back to his busy schedule.
- Sort out the pieces of paper on the board with magnets (or on the floor) to write the biography of the principal together, everyone contributing a part and helping decide the best order for the answers. Then the teacher can easily type up the sentences and the principal’s biography by the class will be written.

Attached:

A sheet that can be copied and cut for the students to write their questions and answers.

Question:

Answer:

Question:

Answer:

Question:

Answer:

Day 4 Mini-Lesson: Beginning to Write a Biography

Grade: 3rd

Time: 45 minutes

Standard: Apply the processes of writing.

Objective:

b. Demonstrate understanding of and apply the writing process.

c. Write with an audience in mind using details to convey meaning in a variety of genres.

(from new Davis District “Davis Essential Skills & Knowledge reporting standards)

Language Objective: Students will discuss ideas for biographies with a partner and write a list of questions to ask the person.

Content Objective: Students will decide on a person to write a biography about and think up questions to ask the person in an interview. Students will interview the person for homework.

Materials:

- Partners
- Papers and pencils

Procedure:

- Begin by talking to the class about people you would like to interview for a biography and why.
- Make a list of people on the board. Have students take some time to think about who they would like to interview for a biography and make a list on their papers of people they would like to interview and things they would like to know about those people.
- Assign students to think/pair/share with a partner to choose a person to interview and prepare a list of questions for the interview.

Attached:

An interview paper that can be used as the beginning of a biography

Name _____

Date _____

Person being interviewed _____

Interview Questions and Answers

When were you born? _____

Where were you born? _____

Where have you lived in your life? _____

What are some major events in your life? Why are they important?

Question: _____

Answer:

Question: _____

Answer:

Question: _____

Answer:

Question: _____

Answer:

Question: _____

Answer:

Question: _____

Answer:

Day 5 (for probably 2-3 days) Mini-Lesson: Writing and Sharing Biographies

Grade: 3rd

Time: 45 minutes per day

Standard: Apply the processes of writing.

Objective:

b. Demonstrate understanding of and apply the writing process.

c. Write with an audience in mind using details to convey meaning in a variety of genres.

(from new Davis District “Davis Essential Skills & Knowledge reporting standards)

Language Objective: Students will use the interviews they have done to write biographies and prepare to share.

Content Objective: Students will write, conference, edit, revise, conference, edit, and revise until they are ready to publish and share a biography.

Materials:

- Interview questions and answers
- Papers and pencils
- room to write, conference, revise and publish

Procedure:

- Remind the students of the biographies we read on day 1.
- Show a good example of a beginning, middle and end of a biography.
- Pass out the rubric and discuss kind of writing gets each score.
- Have students begin drafting their biographies.
- Walk around conferencing and helping students get their drafts written.
- Work for two or three days until everyone is ready to share.
- Celebrate the biographies.

Attached:

Biography Rubric

	4	3	2	1
Content	The biography is interesting to read and tells a lot of important things about the person.	The biography is interesting but leaves some questions.	The biography is not very interesting and leaves a lot of questions.	The biography doesn't tell enough about the person to make sense.
Organization	The biography has a good beginning, middle and ending.	The biography has a clear beginning, middle, and ending.	The biography is not organized enough to see the beginning, middle, and end	The biography is not organized.

Utah State Core Curriculum Standards Third Grade Language Arts

Standard 1 (Oral Language): Students develop language for the purpose of effectively communicating through listening, speaking, viewing, and presenting.

Objective 1: Develop language through listening and speaking.

- a. Identify specific purpose(s) for listening (e.g., to gain information, to be entertained).
- b. Listen and demonstrate understanding by responding appropriately (e.g., follow multiple-step directions, restate, clarify, question, summarize).
- c. Speak clearly and audibly with expression in communicating ideas (i.e., effective rate, volume, pitch, tone, phrasing, tempo).
- d. Speak in complete sentences with appropriate subject-verb agreement.

Objective 2: Develop language through viewing media and presenting.

- a. Identify specific purpose(s) for viewing media (i.e., to identify main idea and details, to gain information, distinguish between fiction/nonfiction, distinguish between fact/opinion, form an opinion).
- b. Use a variety of formats (e.g., drama, sharing of books, personal writings, choral readings, informational reports) in presenting with various forms of media (e.g., pictures, posters, charts, ads, newspapers).

Standard 2 (Concepts of Print): Students develop an understanding of how printed language works. (See kindergarten and first grade.)

Standard 3 (Phonological and Phonemic Awareness): Students develop phonological and phonemic awareness. (See kindergarten and first grade.)

Standard 4 (Phonics and Spelling): Students apply understanding of phonics and other strategies to decode and spell unfamiliar words while reading and writing.

Objective 1: Demonstrate an understanding of the relationship between letters and sounds. (See kindergarten, first, and second grade.)

Objective 2: Use knowledge of structure analysis to decode words. (See kindergarten, first, and second grade.)

Objective 3: Spell words correctly.

- a. Use knowledge of word families, patterns, syllabication, and common letter combinations to spell new words.
- b. Spell correctly grade level compound words, words with plural endings, and common phonograms.
- c. Spell an increasing number of high-frequency and irregular words correctly (e.g., friend, square, special).
- d. Learn the spellings of irregular and difficult words (e.g., electric, planet, trapper, rectangle).

Objective 4: Use spelling strategies to achieve accuracy (e.g., prediction, visualization, association).

- a. Use knowledge about spelling to predict the spelling of new words.
- b. Visualize words while writing.
- c. Associate the spelling of new words with that of known words and word patterns.

d. Use spelling generalities to assist spelling of new words (e.g., doubling of consonants, “le” endings, adding suffixes).

Standard 5 (Fluency): Students develop reading fluency to read aloud grade level text effortlessly without hesitation.

Objective 1: Read aloud grade level text with appropriate speed and accuracy.

- a. Read grade level text at a rate of approximately 100 wpm.
- b. Read aloud grade level text with an accuracy rate of 95-100%.

Objective 2: Read aloud grade level text effortlessly with clarity.

- a. Read grade level text in meaningful phrases using intonation, expression, and punctuation cues.
- b. Read with automaticity 300 third grade high-frequency/sight words.

Standard 6 (Vocabulary): Students learn and use grade level vocabulary to increase understanding and read fluently.

Objective 1: Learn new words through listening and reading widely.

- a. Use new vocabulary learned by listening, reading, and discussing a variety of genres.
- b. Learn the meaning and properly use a variety of grade level words (e.g., words from literature, social studies, science, math).

Objective 2: Use multiple resources to learn new words by relating them to known words and/or concepts.

- a. Use multiple resources to determine the meanings of unknown words (e.g., simple dictionaries, glossaries, beginning thesauruses).
- b. Relate unfamiliar words and concept to prior knowledge to increase vocabulary (e.g., rotation: planets, spinner, taking turns).

Objective 3: Use structural analysis and context clues to determine meanings of words.

- a. Identify meanings of words using prefixes and suffixes.
- b. Use context to determine the meaning of unknown key words (e.g., The ferocious dog growled at the children.).
- c. Use context to determine the meanings of synonyms, antonyms, homonyms (e.g., blue, blew) and multiple-meaning words (e.g., light).

Standard 7 (Comprehension): Students understand, interpret, and analyze narrative and informational grade level text.

Objective 1: Identify purposes of text.

- a. Identify purpose for reading.
- b. Identify author’s purpose.

Objective 2: Apply strategies to comprehend text.

- a. Relate prior knowledge to make connections to text (e.g., text to text, text to self, text to world).
- b. Generate questions about text (e.g., factual, inferential, evaluative).
- c. Form mental pictures to aid understanding of text.
- d. Make and confirm predictions while reading using title, picture clues, text and/or prior

knowledge.

- e. Make inferences and draw conclusions from text.
- f. Identify topic/main idea from text; note details.
- g. Summarize important ideas/events; summarize supporting details in sequence.
- h. Monitor and clarify understanding applying fix-up strategies while interacting with text.
- i. Compile information from text.

Objective 3: Recognize and use features of narrative and informational text.

- a. Identify characters, setting, sequence of events, problem/resolution.
- b. Identify different genres: fairy tales, poems, realistic fiction, fantasy, fables, folk tales, tall tales, biographies, historical fiction.
- c. Identify information from pictures, captions, diagrams, charts, graphs, table of contents, index, and glossary.
- d. Identify different structures in text (e.g., problem/solution, compare/contrast).
- e. Locate facts from a variety of informational texts (e.g. newspapers, magazines, books, other resources).

Standard 8 (Writing): Students write daily to communicate effectively for a variety of purposes and audiences.

Objective 1: Prepare to write by gathering and organizing information and ideas (pre-writing).

- a. Generate ideas for writing by reading, discussing literature and informational text, and reflecting on personal experiences.
- b. Select and narrow a topic from generated ideas.
- c. Identify audience, purpose, and form for writing.
- d. Use a variety of graphic organizers to organize information.

Objective 2: Compose a written draft.

- a. Draft ideas on paper in an organized manner utilizing words and sentences (e.g., beginning, middle, end; main idea; details; characterization; setting; plot).
- b. Use voice to fit the purpose and audience.
- c. Use strong verbs and vivid language.
- d. Identify and use effective leads and strong endings.

Objective 3: Revise by elaborating and clarifying written draft.

- a. Revise draft to add details, strengthen word choice, clarify main idea, and reorder content.
- b. Enhance fluency by using a variety of complete sentences (i.e., varied sentence length, simple and complex sentences).
- c. Revise writing, considering the suggestions of others.

Objective 4: Edit written draft for conventions.

- a. Edit writing for correct capitalization and punctuation (i.e., capitals in holidays, titles, dates, greetings and closings of letters, personal titles, contractions, abbreviations).
- b. Edit for spelling of grade level-appropriate words.
- c. Edit for standard grammar (e.g., subject-verb agreement, verb tense, comparatives, superlatives, pronouns).
- d. Edit for appropriate formatting features (e.g., margins, indentations, titles).

Objective 5: Use fluent and legible handwriting to communicate.

- a. Write using upper- and lower-case cursive letters using proper form, proportions, and spacing.
- b. Develop fluency with cursive handwriting.
- c. Produce legible documents with cursive handwriting.

Objective 6: Write in different forms and genres.

- a. Produce personal writing (e.g., journals, friendly notes and letters, personal experiences, family stories, literature responses).
- b. Produce traditional and imaginative stories, narrative and formula poetry.
- c. Produce informational text (e.g., explanation of a complex process—math/journals, observations, content area reports, summaries).
- d. Produce writing to persuade (e.g., expressing opinions with supporting data).
- e. Produce functional text (e.g., newspaper and newsletter articles).
- f. Share writing with others using illustrations, graphs, and/or charts to add meaning.
- g. Publish 4-6 individual products.