*U.S. History (CP: Gr. 11) New West Charter Instructor: Ms. Hynes*

**Biographical Essay (CP)**

Introduction:

In this essay, you will practice focused, expository writing. Writing in the history discipline often involves *exposing* the reader to a new topic; in other words, teaching them about something. The “something” you will be teaching your reader about is an **American historical figure (living or deceased) or one that has had a significant impact on America.** Please submit your choice for a biography subject to the teacher for approval before you move forward with your research!

Your thesis:

Your biographical essay should have a **CLEAR and focused thesis**. While many of us tend to associate a “thesis” with persuasive or argumentative-style writing, expository writing should likewise be focused around a thesis. However, the thesis for an expository essay is not emphasized as heavily, because the writer is not pointedly trying to *convince* the reader that the thesis is accurate. The thesis simply provides the FRAMEWORK for the information being taught to the reader. In other words, present your biography subject and their significance in American history from a **particular perspective**, do not simply tell your reader the story of their life and the reasons why they are significant in American history.

Example:

Biography Subject: *Thomas Jefferson*

Thesis: *Thomas Jefferson was a man who lived his life in a way that was entirely contradictory to the intellectual ideas that he publicly supported. The man who wrote the Declaration of Independence was also a slave owner.*

Your essay should meet the following criteria:

* 300-400 words (4 - 6 well-organized paragraphs including introduction and conclusion)
* Biographical information and details are organized around a CLEAR, focused thesis
* The essay is written using formal, academic language
* The essay is informed by at least two RELIABLE, academic research sources
* The essay properly cites information used from research sources in the body of the text using brackets (for APA), or footnotes (for MLA or Chicago Style).
* The essay includes a properly-formatted “bibliography” or “works cited” page.

Due Date: Friday March 17

Point Value: 25 points

Grading Rubric: Biographical Essay

Category/Descriptor Points

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| --- | --- |
| Knowledge/Understanding:  The essay reflects a clear understanding of the biography subject’s significance in American history and their significance and/or contributions to American history. | 5 4 3 2 1 |
| Thesis:  The essay contains a CLEAR and focused thesis which provides an engaging framework for the biographical details. | 5 4 3 2 1 |
| Research/Inquiry:  The essay is informed by at least three reliable academic sources which are properly cited within the body of the text, and a properly-formatted “bibliography” or “works cited” page is included. | 5 4 3 2 1 |
| Communication:  The essay is very informative, with enriching details which engage the reader. The overall structure and individual paragraphs are well-organized for clarity and a smooth flow of ideas. Formal academic language is used throughout. | 5 4 3 2 1 |
| Execution:  The essay is complete and well-edited, and there virtually no grammar, spelling, sentence structure or punctuation issues. The essay meets ALL assignment criteria, and shows evidence of planning and effort. | 5 4 3 2 1 |

Total: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_/25