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

**Biographical Essay (HON)**

Introduction:

In this essay, you will practice focused, persuasive 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.** However, please keep in mind that your essay’s thesis must contain a persuasive element of some kind. 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, focused, and persuasive thesis**. Present your biography subject and their significance in American history from a **particular persuasive perspective**. *Do not simply tell your reader the story of their life and the reasons why they are significant in American history.*

**Your essay should meet the following criteria:**

* 750 – 1000 words (3 – 5 pages, or 6 - 12 well-organized paragraphs including introduction and conclusion)
* Biographical information and details are organized around a CLEAR, focused, persuasive thesis
* The essay is written using formal, academic language
* The essay is informed by at least **FIVE** 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 Dates:**

Biography Subject Selection: Wed Oct 24

Research Question: Mon Oct 29

Thesis Statement: Mon Nov 5

Outline & Annotated Bibliography: Thurs Nov 8

First Draft: Mon Nov 12

**Point Value:** 60 points

Grading Rubric: Biographical Essay

Category/Descriptor Points

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| --- | --- |
| Content, Structure and Organization: 3 points each* Clear, confident, persuasive and well-supported thesis statement
* Body paragraphs provide thorough support and flow smoothly from one to the next
* Evidence has clear connections to points it supports
* Organization of essay follows logical pattern and adds to readability
* Essay is argument-driven, rather than overwhelmed by quotes paraphrases, and remains focused (does not wander off)
 |  Excellent Good Needs workExcellent Good Needs workExcellent Good Needs workExcellent Good Needs workExcellent Good Needs work  |
| Style: 3 points each* Essay is interesting and thought-provoking
* Author establishes a reliable, professional tone
* Sentences are easily read and writing flows smoothly
* Avoids repetition and maintains reader’s interest using varied vocabulary and sentence structure
* Conclusion provides interesting and focused ending to the essay (doesn’t trail off or weaken overall essay)
 | Excellent Good Needs workExcellent Good Needs workExcellent Good Needs workExcellent Good Needs workExcellent Good Needs work |
| Research: 3 points each* Direct quotes are introduced properly and kept to a minimum
* Sources are high quality – reliable, scholarly
* Supporting details and quotes are properly cited in the body of the text and a properly-formatted bibliography is included
* Research-based evidence is properly incorporated into argument
* At least 5 sources were used
 | Excellent Good Needs workExcellent Good Needs workExcellent Good Needs workExcellent Good Needs workExcellent Good Needs work |
| Mechanics and Overall Execution: 15 points each* The essay is complete, well-edited and there virtually no grammar, spelling, sentence structure or punctuation issues.
* The essay is artfully written, shows evidence of planning and effort, and exudes reliability.
 | Excellent Good Needs workExcellent Good Needs work |

Total: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_/60