

# **Supplemental Materials**

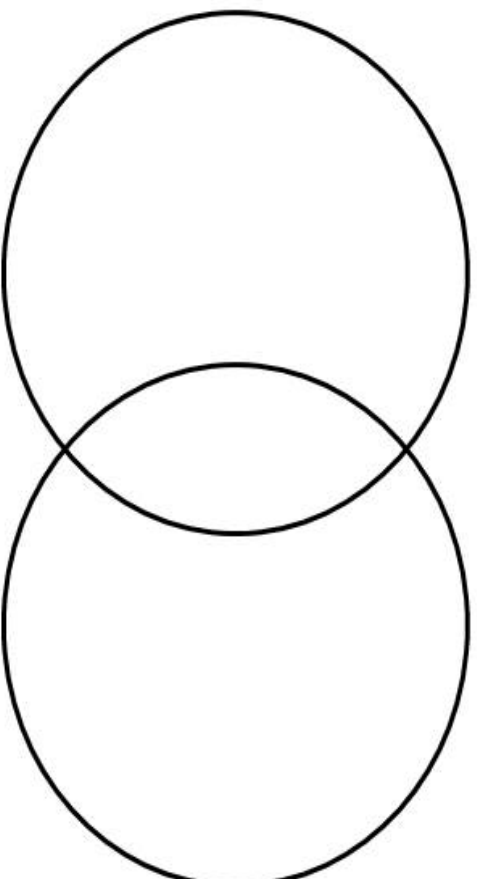
**for**

## **Creative Learning with Creative Lives: Biography in the Classroom**

**Dr. Ann Robinson**

## Comparisons via the Venn

- **Characters/people**
- **Events**
- **Information**
- **Illustration**



Name: \_\_\_\_\_



## PRIMARY-SOURCE ANALYSIS

<b>Step 1. Observation</b>			
A	Study the photograph for 2 minutes. Form an overall impression of the photograph and then examine individual items. Next, divide the photo into quadrants and study each section to see what new details become visible.		
B	Use the chart below to list people, objects, and activities in the photograph.		
	<u>People</u>	<u>Objects</u>	<u>Activities</u>
<b>Step 2. Inference</b>			
	Based on what you have observed, list three things you might infer from this photograph.		
	_____		
	_____		
	_____		
<b>Step 3. Questions</b>			
A	What questions does this photograph raise in your mind?		
	_____		
	_____		
B	Where could you find answers to them?		
	_____		
	_____		

Photograph Analysis presented by the Center for Gifted Education University of Arkansas at Little Rock;  
designed and developed by the Education Branch, National Archives, Washington, D.C.  
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Name: \_\_\_\_\_



## PORTRAIT STUDY

<b>Step 1: Observation</b>	
A.	Study the portrait for 2 minutes. Form an overall impression of the portrait and then examine individual items. Next, divide the portrait into quadrants and study each section to see what new details become visible. List any objects or interesting elements in the portrait.
B.	What is the sitter's name?
C.	What is the artist's name and date?
D.	What do you know about the sitter?
<b>Step 2: Inference</b>	
A.	Describe the sitter's clothes. Why do you think the sitter is wearing these clothes?
B.	Describe the sitter's facial expression. What is the sitter's mood?
C.	Describe the sitter's pose or gesture. What direction is the sitter gazing? What does this tell you about the sitter?
D.	Describe any backdrop and accessories. If applicable, why do you think that this backdrop and these accessories were chosen?
E.	Answer the following about the sitter's position: How much space does the sitter take up in the portrait? _____ Do you think the artist has shown the body's proportions well? _____ Is the sitter shown in full figure or only partial figure? _____ Does the sitter fill the frame or seem part of a larger scene? _____ What angle has the artist used to depict the sitter? _____ Why do you think that the artist depicted the sitter this way?
<b>Step 3: Biographical Extension</b>	
A.	In your opinion, how does the portrait compare to the biography?
B.	Do you think an important detail, thought, or feeling about the sitter is captured in the portrait? How?

Portrait Study is designed by the Center for Gifted Education University of Arkansas at Little Rock,  
adapted from Morris, S., *Teacher's Guide to Using Portraits*, English Heritage, 1989.  
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# Blueprints for Biography: Differentiating the Curriculum for Talented Readers

Ann Robinson, Ph.D., University of Arkansas at Little Rock

Biography combines “the solid satisfaction of facts with the shaping pleasures of the imagination” (Parke, 1996, p. xiii). It is the writing of a life, as its Greek roots reveal—*bio* for life and *graph* for writing. Because biography combines imaginative literary elements with historical methods, life writing is emotionally rich, intellectually challenging, and multidisciplinary. Examining a life, students learn about a real person in a historical time and place, and about themselves. Because biographies often focus on challenges faced and overcome by individuals, this genre can help students recognize and solve problems of their own. Biography can teach “life lessons,” and well-written biographies teach these lessons in exciting and compelling ways. Biographies are a favorite choice of adult readers; biographies written for children can ignite interests in younger readers, too.

## Incorporating Biography in the Curriculum

There are several ways to include reading and analysis of biography in the curriculum. Some avenues are tailor-made for this kind of nonfiction reading; social studies and history lessons and units often involve the study of famous figures. Numerous biographies of public figures and political leaders are available at different reading levels from primary grades to the middle school. For example, teachers will find multiple biographies of familiar figures such as Martin Luther King, Abraham Lincoln, Sitting Bull, and Eleanor Roosevelt. Children’s biographies of artists, musicians, and scientists are also widely available for use in the classroom. In other words, biographies related to thematic or topical units across all content areas of the curriculum and at all levels of challenge are available as resource materials to differentiate the curriculum (Robinson & Schatz, 2002).

In the case of talented learners, biographies of lesser-known but fascinating people hold promise as supplementary reading choices for individual students or as shared

trade book readings with small groups of advanced readers who have the time and inclination to read beyond the standard fare. For example, in a unit on exploration, students generally encounter Christopher Columbus or Vasco de Gama on whom several biographies exist, but there are also children’s biographies of the intrepid travelers and explorers, Mary Kingsley and Alexandra David-Neel. Neither Kingsley nor David-Neel are household names, but their life stories provide rich opportunities for talented readers to explore how to cultivate passionate interests from early childhood and how to take big risks and be happy with the consequences.

## What is a Blueprint for Biography?

A Blueprint for Biography is a guide for teachers and students engaged in the study of a specific biography. Blueprints include three types or clusters of questions that may be used for teacher-led discussion or provided as a reading guide to individual students. They also include extension activities focused on student writing, higher-order thinking, and primary source analysis. A series of Blueprints for Biography are being developed at the Center for Gifted Education at the University of Arkansas at

Little Rock, but educators can also create a Blueprint themselves for any biography they wish.

## Developing Your Own Blueprint for Biography

Creating a Blueprint is a three-step process that includes the selection of a compelling biography, the development of discussion questions, and the development of extension activities.

First, the selection of the biography is crucial. Robinson and Cotabish (2005) recommend five criteria for selecting biographies to differentiate the curriculum for talented learners. The biography should: tell an engaging story, provide factually accurate information, incorporate insights about talent develop-

### Blueprint Questions for *Walt Whitman: Words for America* (Author: Barbara Kerley, Publisher: Scholastic Press)

#### Before the Book

1. What is a poem? Do you have a favorite poem? What do you like about it?
2. During the history of the United States, this country had a civil war. What do you think a civil war means?
3. Do you think a poet can write a poem about something as sad as a war? Why? Or why not?

#### By the Book

1. As a boy, Walt Whitman worked as a printer’s apprentice. What is an apprentice?
2. On the page of Walt’s biography that begins, “Walt Whitman loved words,” the biographer tells us that Walt is a compositor’s stick. Look at the picture of Walt in the print shop. What is the purpose of a compositor’s stick? How do you think a compositor’s stick works? What evidence from the biography supports your explanation?
3. What inferences can you make about Walt’s reasons for writing “Leaves of Grass?” What reasons does the biographer suggest for Walt? What are some other reasons you can think of?
4. Walt Whitman lived at the same time as President Abraham Lincoln. What were the important events Walt experienced and remembered about President Lincoln? How did Walt feel about the President? What does the biographer tell you about Walt’s feelings? What does Walt’s poem, “Oh Captain, My Captain” tell you about Walt’s feelings about President Lincoln?

#### Beyond the Book

Walt was very young when he became interested in words, books, printing, and poems. He had a talent for writing. What interests do you have? How long have you had some of your interests? What will you do next to develop your interests into your talents?

ment, be sensitive to multicultural concerns, and be easily identified as biography rather than historical fiction. While there is no substitute for browsing the shelves of libraries and bookstores, websites of book vendors are also helpful. For example, [www.powells.com](http://www.powells.com) includes a specific section on children's biography, provides reviews, and sometimes includes example pages from the biography. Biographies are often among the medal winners and honorable mentions for nonfiction literary awards. These include the Orbis Pictus Award presented by The National Council of Teachers of English and the Robert F. Sibert Informational Book Medal from the American Library Association. Finally, the Center for Gifted Education at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock posts a list of biographies for primary, elementary, and middle school talented readers on its website at <http://gift-edctr.uarl.edu>.

Second, develop questions which focus on prediction and higher order thinking, require textual analysis from the reader, and focus on the development of talent. Specifically, Blueprints include three general categories of questions: *Before the Book*, *By the Book*, and *Beyond the Book*. *Before the Book* questions focus student attention on the biography to be read, build student interest, and check for prior student knowledge of vocabulary and key concepts. *By the Book* questions focus on analysis of the text, inferences a reader can make from the text, and the readers' affective or aesthetic responses to the text. *Beyond the Book* questions focus on talent development or on extending student inquiry beyond the pages of the biography. Example questions for a children's biography of American poet Walt Whitman are found on the previous page.

Third, to complete a Blueprint develop at least one extension activity for each biography. At our Center, Blueprints extension activities focus on four different kinds of tasks: writing, point of view analysis, primary source analysis, and portrait study. The activities focus on developing skills important to understanding and appreciating nonfiction texts such as biography. Blueprint writing prompts generally focus on persuasive or explanatory writing because both encourage students to synthesize new information from nonfiction

reading in a unique or imaginative way. Because the plot of an engaging biography often involves controversy, conflict, and complex situations, point-of-view analysis also broadens students' understanding. Through these activities, talented readers examine multiple perspectives, think critically about facts and opinions, and develop greater empathy for individuals different from themselves. An analysis of primary sources, documents or other kinds of evidence written or created at the time of an event, develops students' historical thinking and habits of mind while also helping them accurately visualize the book as they read. Finally, some biographies lend themselves to portrait study as an extension. Whether the portrait is painted, engraved, or photographic, rich comparisons can be made between a biography and a portrait of the same individual. Fortunately, there is a wealth of primary source material and portraits available free online through library and museum websites.

### Laying a Cornerstone

The subjects of biographies can inspire curiosity and empathy while at the same time providing role models for young readers. When teachers use a blueprint to explore the life lessons and historical insights within the pages of a biography, they are also helping talented readers lay a cornerstone for future learning and exploration. Indeed Mark Twain was right:

"There was never yet an uninteresting life. Such a thing is an impossibility. Inside of the dullest exterior there is a drama, a comedy, and a tragedy."

### References

- Parke, C. (1996). *Biography: Writing lives*. New York: Twayne.
- Robinson, A. & Cotabish, A. (2005). Biography and young gifted learners: Connecting to commercially available curriculum. *Understanding Our Gifted*, 17(2), 3-6.
- Robinson, A. & Schatz, A. (2002). Biography for talented learners: Enriching the curriculum across the disciplines. *Gifted Education Communicator*, 33(3), 12-15, 38-39.



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# Biographies for Talented Readers, A Bibliography

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 University of Arkansas at Little Rock  
<http://giftedctr.ualr.edu>

Person	Title	Author	Publisher	AR Level
Louisa May Alcott	Louisa May & Mr. Thoreau's Flute	Julie Dunlap & Marybeth Lorbiecki	Dial Books	3.9
Marian Anderson	The Voice That Challenged a Nation: Marian Anderson and the Struggle for Equal Rights	Russell Freedman	Clarion Books	8.2
Marian Anderson	When Marian Sang	Pam Ryan & Brian Selznick	Scholastic Press	5.2
Mary Anning	Stone Girl, Bone Girl	Laurence Anholt & Sheila Moxley	Orchard Books	4.5
Mary Anning	Rare Treasure: Mary Anning and Her Remarkable Discoveries	Don Brown	Houghton Mifflin	5.4
Mary Anning	Mary Anning and the Sea Dragon	Jeannine Atkins	Farrar Straus Giroux	4.6
Fred and Adele Astaire	Footwork: The Story of Fred and Adele Astaire	Roxane Orgill	Candlewick Press	(ages 4 to 8)
John James Audubon	The Boy Who Drew Birds	Jacqueline Davies	Houghton Mifflin	4.4
John James Audubon	Into the Woods: John James Audubon Lives His Dream	Robert Burleigh	Simon & Schuster	4.7
Ann Bancroft & Liv Arnesen	Ann and Liv Cross Antarctica: A Dream Come True!	Zoe Alderfer Ryan & Nicholas Reti	Da Capo Press	(ages 7 to 12)
Benjamin Banneker	Benjamin Banneker	Kevin Conley	Chelsea House	(grades 6 to 12)
John Bardsley	Sparrow Jack	Mordicai Gerstein	Farrar Straus Giroux	3.7
Ibn Battuta	Traveling Man: The Journey of Ibn Battuta 1325-1354	James Rumford	Houghton Mifflin	4.0
Wilson A. Bentley	My Brother Loved Snowflakes	Mary Bahr & Laura Jacobsen	Boyd Mills Press	3.4
Wilson A. Bentley	Snowflake Bentley	Jacqueline Briggs Martin & Mary Azarian	Houghton Mifflin	4.1
Stephen Bishop	Journey to the Bottomless Pit	Elizabeth Mitchell	Viking	5.3
Charlotte, Branwell, Emily, and Anne Bronte	The Brontes: Scenes from the Childhood of Charlotte, Branwell, Emily, and Anne	Catherine Brighton	Frances Lincoln	(ages 4 to 8)

Clara Brown	One More Valley, One More Hill	Linda Lowery	Landmark	7.2
George Washington Carver	Carver: A Life in Poems	Marilyn Nelson	Front Street	5.9
George Washington Carver	George Washington Carver	Tanya Bolden	Abrams Books for Young Readers	(ages 9 to 12)
Calamity Jane	Calamity Jane: Her Life and Legend	Doris Faber	Houghton Mifflin	(ages 9 to 12)
Willa Cather	Writer of the Plains: A Story about Willa Cather	Tom Streissguth & Karen Ritz	Carolrhoda	5.4
Jean-Francois Chompollion	Seeker of Knowledge: The Man Who Deciphered Egyptian Hieroglyphs	James Rumford	Houghton Mifflin	4.1
Columcille	Across a Dark and Wild Sea	Don Brown	Roaring Brook Press	5.1
Confucius	Confucius: The Gold Rule	Russell Freedman & Frederick Clement	Arthur A. Levine: Scholastic Books	7.6
Marie Curie	Marie Curie: A Brilliant Life	Elizabeth MacLeod	Kids Can	6.8
Alexandra David-Neel	Far Beyond the Garden Gate: Journey to Lhasa	Don Brown	Houghton Mifflin	5.4
Charles Dickens	Mr. Dickens Hits Town	Jan Mark & Regolo Ricci	Tundra Books	5.4
George Elliot	Toward a High Attic: The Early Life of George Elliot	Elfrida Vipont	Holt, Rinehart & Winston	(level not available)
James Earle Fraser	The Buffalo Nickel	Taylor Morrison	Houghton Mifflin	6.0
Galileo	Starry Messenger	Peter Sis	Sunburst	4.8
Woody Guthrie	Woody Guthrie: Poet of the People	Bonnie Christensen	Alfred A. Knopf	5.5
George Handel	Handel and the Famous Sword Swallower of Halle	Bryna Stevens	Philomel	(level not available)
George Handel	Handel Who Knew What He Liked	M.T. Anderson and Kevin Hawkes	Candlewick Press	4.8
John Harrison	The Man Who Made Time Travel	Kathryn Lasky	Melanie Kroupa Books	6.4
John Harrison	Sea Clocks: The Story of Longitude	Louise Borden and Erik Blegvad	McElderry Books	5.5
Hatshepsut	Hatshepsut, His Majesty, Herself	Catherine Andronik & Joseph Daniel Fiedler	Atheneum Books	7.7
Mamie "Peanut" Johnson	A Strong Right Arm	Michelle Y. Green	Puffin	5.1
Waterhouse Hawkins	The Dinosaurs of Waterhouse Hawkins	Barbara Kerley & Brian Selznick	Scholastic Books	5.0
Mary Kingsley	Uncommon Traveler: Mary Kingsley in Africa	Don Brown	Houghton Mifflin	4.6

Antoine Laurent Lavoisier	The Chemist Who Lost His Head: The Story of Antoine Laurent Lavoisier	Vivian Grey	Coward-McCann	(ages 9 to 12)
Jacob Lawrence	I See You: I See Myself: The Young Life of Jacob Lawrence	Debra Foxley Leach	Phillips Collection	(ages 9 to 12)
Jacob Lawrence	Story Painter: The Life of Jacob Lawrence	John Dugglesby	Chronicle Books	(ages 9 to 12)
Ada Lovelace	Ada Lovelace: The Computer Wizard of Victorian England	Lucy Lethbridge	Short Books	(level not available)
Gregor Mendel	Gregor Mendel: The Friar Who Grew Peas	Cheryl Bardoe	Abrams Books for Young Readers	(ages 4 to 8)
Moondyne Joe	The Legend of Moondyne Joe	Mark Greenwood & Frane Lessac	Cygnets Books	5.3
Esther Morris	When Esther Morris Headed West: Women, Wyoming and the Right to Vote	Connie Nordhielm Wooldridge & Jacqueline Rogers	Holiday House	5.1
Nat Love	The Story of Nat Love	Robert Miller	Silver Press	3.2
Florence Nightingale	Who was . . . ? Florence Nightingale, the Lady with the Lamp	Charlotte Moore	Short Books	(level not available)
Florence Nightingale	Heart and Soul: The Story of Florence Nightingale	Gena K. Gorrell	Tundra Books	8.4
Annie Oakley	Bull's-Eye: A Photobiography of Annie Oakley	Sue Macy	National Geographic Society	6.9
Marco Polo	The Adventures of Marco Polo	Russell Freedman	Arthur A. Levine Books	(ages 9 to 12)
Beatrix Potter	Beatrix	Jeanette Winter	Frances Foster Books	(ages 4 to 8)
John Wesley Powell	In Search of the Grand Canyon: Down the Colorado River with John Wesley Powell	Mary Ann Fraser	Redfeather Books	(ages 7 to 10)
Elvis Presley	Shake Rag: From the Life of Elvis Presley	Amy Little Sugar	Philomel	4.3
Wilma Rudolph	Wilma Unlimited: How Wilma Rudolph Became the World's Fastest Woman	Kathleen Krull & David Diaz	Voyager Books	5.1
Charlie Russell	Charlie's Trail: The Life and Art of C.M. Russell	Gayle C. Shirley	TwoDot Books	(ages 9 to 12)
Saladin	Saladin: Noble Prince of Islam	Diane Stanley	HarperCollins Publishers	7.0
Clara Schumann	Clara Schumann: Piano Virtuoso	Susanna Reich	Clarion Books	7.6
Mary Seacole	Mary Seacole: The Charismatic Black Nurse	Jane Robinson	Constable & Robinson Ltd.	(level not available)

	Who Became a Heroine of the Crimea			
Alexander Selkirk	Alexander Selkirk: The Real Robinson Crusoe	Amanda Mitchison	Short Books	6.6
Sequoyah	Sequoyah: The Cherokee Man Who Gave His People Writing	James Rumford	Houghton Mifflin	3.7
Ernest Shackleton	Ice Trap! Shackleton's Incredible Expedition	Meredith Hooper & M.P. Robertson	Frances Lincoln	(level not available)
Alexis Soyer	The Adventurous Chef: Alexis Soyer	Ann Arnold	Farrar Straus Giroux	5.6
John Stetson	Boss of the Plains: The Hat that Won the West	Laurie Carolson & Gregory Christie	Dell Dragonfly Books	4.9
Henry David Thoreau	Walking with Henry: Based on the Life and Works of Henry David Thoreau	Thomas Locker	Fulcrum Publishing	4.3
Sojourner Truth	Only Passing Through: The Story of Sojourner Truth	Ann Rockwell	Dell Dragonfly Books	5.2
Vincent van Gogh & Paul Gauguin	The Yellow House: Vincent van Gogh & Paul Gauguin Side by Side	Susan Goldman Rubin & Jos. A. Smith	Harry N. Abrams	(grades 2 to 5)
Vincent van Gogh	Vincent van Gogh: Portrait of an Artist	Jan Greenberg and Sandra Jordan	Dell Yearling	7.6
George Washington	George Washington, Spymaster: How the Americans Outspied the British and Won the Revolutionary War	Thomas B. Allen	National Geographic	(ages 9 to 12)
Phillis Wheatley	A Voice of Her Own: The Story of Phillis Wheatley, Slave Poet	Paul Lee	Candlewick Press	5.9
Walt Whitman	Words for America	Barbara Kerley	Scholastic Press	5.4
Grant Wood	Artist in Overalls: The Life of Grant Wood	John Duggleby	Chronicle Books	4.5
Orville, Wilbur, & Katharine Wright	My Brothers' Flying Machine	Jane Yolen	Little, Brown Young Readers	4.5

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