

The Body Biography

For your chosen character, your group will be creating a body biography – a visual and written portrait illustrating several aspects of the character's life within the literary work.

Obviously, begin by drawing in the outline of the body. I have listed some possibilities for your body biography, but feel free to come up with your own creations. As always, the choices you make should be based on the text, for you will be verbally explaining (and thus, in a sense, defending) them. Above all, your choices should be creative, analytical, and accurate.

After completing this portrait, you will participate in a "showing" in which you will present your "masterpiece" to the class. This "showing" should accomplish the following objectives:

- Review us on the literary work that involves your character
- Communicate to us the full essence of your character by emphasizing the traits that make the character unique
- Promote discussion of your character

Body Biography Requirements

Although I expect your biography to contain additional dimensions, your portrait must contain:

- A review of the work's events (don't take all references from one part of the work)
- Visual symbols
- An original text
- The five most important quotes (either exposition or dialogue) relating to your character (be sure to attribute correctly and annotate)

Body Biography Suggestions

Placement -- Carefully choose the placement of your text and artwork. For example, the area where your character's heart would be might be appropriate for illustrating the important relationships within his/her life. The hands might refer to actions or accomplishments of the character.

Spine -- Actors often discuss a character's "spine." This is his/her objective within the work. What is the most important goal for your character? What drives his/her thoughts and actions? The answers to these questions are his/her "spine." How can you illustrate it?

Virtues and Vices -- What are your character's most admirable qualities? His/her worst? How can you make us visualize them?

Color -- Colors are often symbolic. What color(s) do you most associate with your character? Why? How can you effectively weave these colors into your presentation?

Symbols -- What objects can you associate with your character that illustrate his/her essence? Are there objects mentioned within the work itself that you could use? If not, choose objects that especially seem to correspond with the character.

Formula Poems -- These are fast, but effective "recipes" for producing a text because they are designed to reveal much about a character. (See below for suggestions).

Mirror, Mirror -- Consider both how your character appears to others on the surface and what you know about the character's inner self. Do these images clash or correspond? What does this tell you about the character? How can you illustrate this mirror image?

Changes -- How has your character changed within the work? Trace these changes within your text and/or artwork.

I Am (as if the character were speaking) *

1st Stanza

I am (two special characteristics the character has).
I wonder (something the character is curious about).
I hear (an imaginary sound).
I see (an imaginary sight)
I want (an actual desire).
I am (the first line of the poem repeated).

2nd Stanza

I pretend (something the character pretends to do).
I feel (a feeling about something imaginary).
I touch (an imaginary touch).
I worry (something that really bothers the character)
I cry (something that makes the character very sad).
I am (the first line of the poem repeated).

3rd Stanza

I understand (something the character knows is true).
I say (something the character believes in).
I dream (something the character dreams about).
I try (something the character really make an effort about).
I hope (something the character hopes for).
I am (the first line of the poem repeated).

Name Poem (or, Acrostic Poem): Write the letters of the character's first and last names in a column. Using words that begin with the letters of the name [and even the name itself if you want], write a poem that describes the character. Play with words until the poem looks, sounds, and feels right.

Where I'm From (George Ella Lyon poem as a model): Focus on how your character would write this poem.

Cinquain, Diamante, Tanka, Poem for Two Voices, Persona Poem, even Haiku (if several settings are referenced) . . .

<http://homepage.mac.com/mseffie/handouts/formulapoems.html>

* Samples of all types available in class. Variations encouraged as relevant to the character

Body Biography Rubric

Name(s) _____ Grade _____

Title of Work _____

Character _____

| | Excellent | Satisfactory | Fair | Poor | Score |
|--------------|---|--|--|---|-------|
| CONTENT | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creatively depicts/describes character • Reveals deep understanding of character <p>10 - 9 points</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accurately depicts/describes character • Reveals satisfactory understanding of character <p>8 - 6 points</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accurately depicts/describes character • Reveals some understanding of character <p>5 - 3 points</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accurately depicts/describes character • Reveals limited understanding of character <p>2 - 1 points</p> | |
| ORGANIZATION | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintains a clear, distinctive focus throughout entire writing • Successfully constructs strong, effective paragraphs <p>10 - 9 points</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintains a clear, distinctive focus throughout most of writing • Constructs strong, effective paragraphs <p>8 - 6 points</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus of writing is often unclear • Some paragraphs lack structure <p>5 - 3 points</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus of writing is unclear • Most paragraphs lack structure <p>2 - 1 points</p> | |
| STYLE | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actively engages the audience • Extensively uses precise word choice, sensory details, & active voice <p>5 points</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Often engages the audience • Effectively uses precise word choice, sensory details, & active voice <p>4 points</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Occasionally engages the audience • Uses precise word choice, sensory details, & active voice <p>3 points</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rarely engages the audience • Rarely uses precise word choice, sensory details, & active voice <p>2 - 1 points</p> | |
| CONVENTIONS | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No errors in usage, spelling, capitalization, punctuation, or sentence formation <p>5 points</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Few errors in usage, spelling, capitalization, punctuation, or sentence formation <p>4 points</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many errors in usage, spelling, capitalization, punctuation, and sentence formation <p>3 points</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Numerous errors in usage, spelling, capitalization, punctuation, and sentence formation <p>2 - 1 points</p> | |

Comments: _____

Body Biography Rubric

Group Members _____

Title of Work _____

Character _____

| | 20 | 15 | 10 | 5 |
|--------------------------|--|---|--|--|
| Neatness | Project is neat, well organized, and easy to read | Project is somewhat neat, organization is sufficient, and it is easy to read | Project is either lacking in neatness, organization, or the handwriting is too sloppy or small | Project is not neat, organized, or clearly written |
| Team Work | All team members work well and efficiently; no one was ever off task | Team members work efficiently; at times a group member was off task | Team members worked well at times, were off task at times | Team members did not work efficiently |
| Original Written Piece | Each member wrote a thoughtful and grammatically correct poem, letter, or response to or about the character | Each member wrote an original piece, but one or more was lacking in quality | One or more member did not write an original piece | Original pieces were altogether missing or did not follow directions |
| Visual | The body as well as the symbolic images were well done, colorful, and added to the meaning of the literary work and the character chosen | The body as well as the symbolic images were somewhat completed, colorful, and added to the meaning of the literary work and the character chosen | The body or the symbolic images were either incomplete, not colored, or did not make sense based on the literary work and/ or the character chosen | The visuals overall did not meet the requirements |
| Passages/ quotes | 5 important quotes or passages were written on the poster | 4 important quotes or passages were written on the poster | 3 important quotes or passages were written on the poster | Fewer than 3 important quotes or passages were written on the poster |
| Attention to time period | The character's body, clothing, and symbolic images portray an understanding of the literary work. | The character's body, clothing, and symbolic images are appropriate for the literary work. | The character's body, clothing, and symbolic images are somewhat appropriate for the literary work or are too plain to be distinguishable | The body, clothing, and/or symbolic images are not appropriate for the literary work demonstrates a lack of understanding of the era |

Comments: _____

Grade = _____