Who's Who in Arkansas

Arkansas has connections to people who are making a difference in many areas. Students will get a chance to learn about a notable Arkansas figure and explore their life and accomplishments.

GRADES:	DURATION:	CONTENT AREAS:
5-12	Two to four class periods	U.S. History, Arkansas History, English Language Arts

Objective(s)

Students will apply research techniques in order to develop a biography of a famous Arkansan, assembling research into a creative visual format for presentation.

Key Vocabulary

1. Primary Sources: first-hand information from those who experienced a time or event. Includes memoirs, interviews, letters, and public documents.
2. Secondary Sources: second-hand information; works that have been collected, interpreted, or published by someone other than the original source.
3. Notable Arkansans: people who have called Arkansas home and also have claimed recognition for their talents, accomplishments, or deeds.
4. Culture: learned behavior of people (e.g., belief systems and languages, social relations, institutions, organizations) and their material goods (e.g., food, clothing, buildings, and technology)
5. Entrepreneur: a person who organizes, operates, and assumes the risk for a business hoping to make a profit
6. Ethnic: characteristics of a specific group or culture

Necessary Materials

Pen or pencil; lined paper; Internet access or relevant printouts

Historical Background

Arkansas has produced a plethora of notable people, from musicians to poets, athletes to politicians, and there has been no shortage of worthwhile individuals from the state. In this activity, students will research one such individual with the help of the CALS Encyclopedia of Arkansas in order to not only appreciate those worthwhile locals but also learn how to navigate an online encyclopedia.

Activities

BELLRINGER

Challenge students to describe exactly what it takes for a person to become famous. Leave it open and encourage silence while students write their thoughts on paper. After three minutes, ask students what they came up with. Possible answers may be money, political power, talent in the arts or other areas, or family connections. List student answers on the board, screen, or projector.

Ask if students know anybody like this who comes from Arkansas. Give students ample time to answer before revealing that they will be researching a famous Arkansan. A slideshow presentation with examples of famous Arkansans and their work (e.g., Maya Angelou, Bill Clinton, Daisy Bates, etc.) is suggested to pair with this bellringer to scaffold students' expectations for their own research project.

Engaging Secondary Sources

The teacher may assign individuals for students to research, choose them randomly, or have students choose for themselves. Below is a list of famous Arkansans with an entry on the EOA website for students to use as a source in their research. Keep in mind that this list is not exhaustive and merely represents examples of famous Arkansans for students to research.

- Maya Angelou
- Daisy Lee Gatson Bates
- Earl Holmes Bell
- Frank Bonner
- Joe Bob Briggs
- "Footsie" Britt
- Lou Brock
- Dee Brown
- Helen Marie Gurley Brown
- Jim Ed Brown
- "Bear" Bryant
- Frank Broyles
- Betty Bumpers
- Dale Leon Bumpers
- Glen Campbell
- Johnny Cash
- Leroy Eldridge Cleaver
- Bill Clinton
- Hillary Clinton
- Floyd Cramer
- John Patrick Daly
- Herman Davis
- "Dizzy" Dean
- Bill Dickey
- William Thomas Dillard
- David Owen Dodd
- Crescent Dragonwagon
- Jimmy Driftwood
- Joycelyn Elders
- Dale Evans
- Orval Eugene Faubus
- George Edward Fisher
- John Gould Fletcher
- Bill Fulbright
- Elizabeth Ward Gracen
- Al Green
- Ernest Green
- John Grisham
- Tess Harper
- Levon Helm
- Alpha Rex Emmanuel Humbard

- Johnnie Bryan "J.B." Hunt
- John H. Johnson
- Fay Jones
- Jerry Jones
- Scott Joplin
- George Clyde Kell
- Chet Lauck
- Sonny Liston
- Douglas MacArthur
- John Little McClellan
- Kevin McReynolds
- Wilbur Daigh Mills
- Martha Mitchell
- Sidney Moncrief
- Patsy Montana
- Charles H. Murphy Jr.
- Isaac Charles Parker
- Albert Pike
- Scottie Maurice Pippen
- Charles McColl Portis
- Dick Powell
- David Hampton Pryor
- Vance Randolph
- Charlie Rich
- Brooks Calbert Robinson Jr.
- Joseph Taylor Robinson
- Winthrop Rockefeller
- Charlie May Simon
- Rodney Earl Slater
- Mary Nell Steenburgen
- Jackson Thomas Stephens
- Witt Stephens
- William Grant Still
- Edward Durell Stone
- Reece "Goose" Tatum
- Richard Jay Thalheimer
- Harry Z. Thomason
- Billy Bob Thornton
- Don Tyson
- Sam Walton
- Miller Williams

Rubric

The teacher may want to construct their own rubric for students' research project. Below are some possible details students should uncover during their research:

- Birth date
- Birthplace
- Relevant background (parents, education, etc.)
- Accomplishments (awards, recognition, creations or products, etc.)
- Current status
- Memorable quotes
- Pictures
- Examples of their works
- A works cited page (bibliography)

Evaluation

Students will create a visual biography based on their research, including a bibliography. Students will design a slideshow presentation, video, or poster and will present for at least ten minutes on their findings. These presentations demonstrate their ability to apply research methods, present to an audience, write for an audience, discover and compile relevant information from secondary sources, and demonstrate creativity in their presentation.

Extensions

As this lesson offers an open, student-led activity, possible extensions are endless. Consider any of the following ideas:

1. Students dress as the person they are presenting about
2. Students draw a map of Arkansas and mark relevant locations in this person's life
3. Students research multiple people and/or work in groups
4. Students write a newspaper article or obituary about their person

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