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GED 2002 Lesson Plan Interview and Write a Biography

Area/Skill: Language Arts

Cognitive Skill: Gathering information, Written Expression, Application

Correlation to Framework: Written Language and EAE

(This lesson may take more than one regular class period to complete)

Activity Title - Interview and Write a Biography

Goal/Objective

Students will learn to identify the genre of biography and write a short biography about another class member. They will also learn to take information they receive orally and organize it in a written format. Their writing may be done with pencil and paper or on computers if they are available. Another goal of this lesson is to encourage the students to get to know each other and to work cooperatively.

Materials/Texts/Realia/Handouts

- Copies of a short biography about Edgar Allan Poe from any text or other resource -- even the Internet
- Handouts of interview questions for each student
- Paper, Pencils or Computer
- Picture of Edgar Allan Poe

Lesson Outline

Introduction

Prior to reading a short story written by Edgar Allan Poe (or any other author) the teacher will introduce the genre of biography by having the students read his biography. The class will discuss the kinds of information that was included in the biography and how it was written. The teacher may want to read the biography of an author whose literature was read previously if the students are having difficulty understanding the genre.)

Activity

The teacher will give each student a sheet of paper which contains interview questions. (See the sample attached.) The class will then be divided into pairs at random. Each pair will interview the other and write brief answers to each question which the partner provides about his or her own life.*

The students will then go to their own seats and write an outline of the information they want to use when writing about their partner. They will write a rough draft and show it to their partner to allow him or her to see if the information is correct. (The partner may also do some peer editing at this point and provide any suggestions.) The students will then write a final version of the biography of their partner. They will then read the biography they have written about their partner to the other class members. * (NOTE: Because we work mostly with students who are married or who are adults, the FERPA laws may not apply. The questions can be posed so as not to infringe on a student's right to privacy.)

Extension Activities

1. After the biographies are written, the students will receive the biography which was written about them. The teacher could have them evaluate them for accurateness of information, and EAE. They could write the sentences which contain errors and write them on the board and have the class correct the grammar, punctuation, spelling, syntax, etc.
2. The same activity may be repeated again using autobiography as the genre. The teacher could have the students read a short autobiography about a famous person from literature or history. The students would then be asked to answer the interview questions about themselves and write their own autobiography. The class could still be divided into dyads or triads for peer editing.
3. The students could write a Bio-Poem using the following formula. This could be used to point out the parts of speech for review.

Write about someone's life in 11 lines. Make your biography come alive by using descriptive words:

Line 1, First name; Line 2, One key adjective; Line 3, Son or daughter of _____; Line 4, Enjoys (name 3 things); Line 5, Who reads (three things); Line 6, Who needs (three things) Line 7, Who gives (three things), Line 8, Who fears (three things), Line 9, Who would like to do (three things); Line 10, Resident of what city?; Line 11, Last name.

ESL/ESOL Accommodations

Cooperative learning pairs

Interview questions are written down for them on the hand out.

Allow for peer editing

Allow for sharing of own culture through their biography

Closure/Conclusions

Have a class discussion about the differences and similarities in their life experiences and backgrounds. Emphasize the importance of working well with a partner and how that ties in to the world of work.

Follow-Up Lessons/Activities

In future language arts/literature activities discuss and point out the use of biography and autobiography as a genre. Introduce each literary selection with a brief biography or autobiography of the author.

Real Life Connection

The students can learn through the biographies and autobiographies of famous people as well as those written about their classmates that people from all cultures and backgrounds have struggles and obstacles to overcome in order to reach their goals.

Biography Interview Worksheet

1. What is your name?
2. Where were you born?
3. Do you have any famous ancestors you are proud of? Who were they?
4. What is a happy memory you have from your childhood?
5. Who was your favorite teacher in school? Why?
6. What is the funniest or most unusual thing that has ever happened to you?
7. What do you consider to be your greatest achievement?
8. What have been your favorite hobbies and interests?
9. When you were a child which foods did you like the most? Which foods did you dislike?
10. What are the first names of your brothers and sisters?
11. What are three things that have made you happy?
12. What are three things that have made you sad?
13. Name three places you have visited. Which place was your favorite?
14. What were some things that you feared when you were a child.
15. What jobs have you had? Which did you like the most? Which did you like the least?