

Writing Sample Project: Admirable People

Project title	“Admirable People” or “Special People”—descriptive word depends on the students’ grade level
Academic content and life skills touched	Reading, researching (Internet, books, magazines), writing skills (6 traits, expository)
Grade levels	3-12 (Adaptable to grade levels)
Hook/product	Group activity: Students brainstorm names of people (fictional or real) whom they admire and discuss reasons why.
Driving question or big idea	“Who is one person you admire very much?” or “Who is one person that you think is very, very special?”
Overview of project	Students engage in a dialogue about people they admire and share some of the reasons for their admiration. Each student selects one person as the focus of a paper, or a small group of 3-4 students may agree on one person to develop a joint report on. The instructor takes the students through the writing process, providing mini-lessons as needed to help students collect information, develop a graphic organizer to prepare for writing, write a draft, edit and rewrite, and finalize the product for sharing.
Resources	Internet, interviews of the person, books, magazines
State and local standards/ curriculum	Varies by district and state. Most states have standards available on their department of education websites.
Project length	Depending upon age/skill levels, five to 10 after-school sessions
Data collection 1. for assessing project 2. for assessing learning	Prepare a checklist grid for the steps of the project, allowing spaces for tracking areas of difficulty and student progress on the steps. 1. The student papers will serve as the assessment products. 2. Student reflection activity (written or verbal).
Supplies	Resources for research (access to Internet, books, magazines); copier access; possibly a camera or other means to provide a picture of each of the subjects of the project; newsprint and markers; tape for posting posters
Games and learning activities for warm-ups and closers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Brainstorming admirable people or other aspects of the tasks involved Sample paragraphs are available from the Oregon Department of Education, which can be used for student lessons. Students benefit when they discuss any of the six traits of writing and then take time to assess and discuss sample paragraphs.
Student reflections	Among possible options: Sharing among peers or with staff member; writing a journal entry in response to “What did I learn from this project?” creating an exhibition for others in the school or invited guests.

Project Sessions

Session Number	Tasks	Materials Needed	Time Needed
1	<p>Open with a brainstorming of people and qualities that students admire, taking notes on chart paper with large markers for easy viewing. (Post chart for later reference.)</p> <p>Give each student a 3x5 card and ask students to write one to three people (living, historical, fictional, etc.) whom they personally admire, and list some of the things they admire about the person(s). Provide time for students to share anything they want about content or process.</p> <p>Model the use of the Internet or written materials for searching for information about admirable people. Check for student questions. Provide students with checklist and outline handouts, walking through them as you model.</p> <p>Provide time for students to begin searches, either individually or helping each other in supportive small groups.</p> <p>Leave 5 minutes at the end of the session to preview what will occur in the next session, invite students to bring their own sources if they like and clear up any questions.</p>	<p>3x5 cards, one to a student</p> <p>Chart paper and markers</p> <p>Internet access, printers</p> <p>Articles, handouts, books, etc., related to topics</p> <p>Handouts with checklist for task steps for students</p> <p>Handouts with outline for student use</p> <p>Supplies for students if you select to make this a creative assignment as well as written</p>	45 minutes
2	<p>Review assignment and check for questions.</p> <p>Students work on collecting information about their admired person and completing the outline.</p> <p>Mini-lessons as needed.</p> <p>Leave 5-10 minutes at the close of the session for students to debrief some of their findings, share successes in their searches, address questions that they generated during the work session.</p> <p>Review the agenda for the third session.</p>	<p>Handouts</p> <p>Internet access and other materials as needed</p>	45 minutes
3	<p>Review assignment and check for questions. Move to mini-lesson as needed.</p> <p>Students write a first draft from their outline.</p> <p>With 5 minutes remaining in the session, debrief the process, check for questions, and review the agenda for the 4th session.</p>	<p>Handouts, mini-lesson supplies as needed</p> <p>Paper and writing utensils as needed</p>	45 minutes

Session Number	Tasks	Materials Needed	Time Needed
4	<p>Review agenda for the session and check for questions.</p> <p>Students use time to review their first draft and make corrections. This could be a good time for students to do guided peer reviews, using one or more of the 6 traits of writing.</p> <p>Based on student need for mini-sessions, a 5th session may be needed for students to refine their papers.</p> <p>If students finish with at least 15 minutes remaining in the session, use the time for debriefing what they learned and for celebration as students turn in their papers.</p>	<p>Handouts, paper and writing utensils as needed</p> <p>Mini-lesson supplies</p>	45 minutes

Sample Outline to Guide Students (see worksheet on next page)

Thesis: I admire _____.

- I. One reason I admire ____ is because _____.
 - a. An example is _____. (Source: __)
- II. Another reason I admire ____ is because _____.
 - a. An example is _____. (Source: __)
- III. Finally, I admire ____ because _____.
 - a. An example is _____. (Source: __)

In conclusion, _____ is a person to admire.

Note for Staff:

Increase or decrease the components of the outline as age- and skill-level appropriate. Seniors, for example, may be able to add three examples for each of their reasons, and make a paragraph out of each reason they provide. Depending on ability level, students can include source material in varying levels of completion and complexity.

The outline is simply a tool to help them organize their expository paragraph or paragraphs. Once they have completed the outline, they can easily convert it into paragraph(s), especially if they have an opportunity to look at sample outlines with their completed paragraphs.

Outline

Thesis: I admire _____.

I. One reason I admire _____ is because

_____.

a. An example is _____.

(Source: _____)

II. Another reason I admire _____ is because

_____.

a. An example is _____.

(Source: _____)

III. Finally, I admire _____ because

_____.

a. An example is _____.

(Source: _____)

In conclusion, _____ is a person to admire.