

# The Biographical Body Biography

For your chosen person, you will be creating a body biography – a visual and written portrait illustrating several aspects of the person’s life and importance.

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 biography you read, 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 life work and accomplishments of your person.
- Communicate to us the full character of your person by emphasizing the traits that make the person unique
- Promote discussion of your person

## Body Biography Requirements

Although we expect your body biography to contain additional dimensions, your portrait *must* contain:

- A review of the person’s life events (birth, education, family, work, etc.)
- Visual symbols
- An original text
- Five important quotes from your person (or, possibly *about* your person).
- Bibliography entry – MLA style

## 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 in life. What is the most important goal for your person? 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 person’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 person? Why? How can you effectively weave these colors into your presentation?

**Symbols** -- What objects can you associate with your person that illustrate his/her essence? Are there objects mentioned that are significant for your person? If not, choose objects that represent your person’s accomplishments/disappointments, etc.

**Mirror, Mirror** -- Consider both how your person appears to others on the surface and what you know about the person’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 person changed within their life? Trace these changes with your text and/or artwork.

## Original Text Suggestions

**Analytical Paragraph:** An original detailed paragraph which discusses the impact of your person on the world in which that person lived. It should take a stand and support that stand with specific evidence.

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

**Name Poem** (or, Acrostic Poem): Write the letters of the person’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 person. 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>

**I Am:** This formula poem uses repetition to make its points. You may use the exact form below or adapt it as necessary to fit your person.

**I Am** (as if the character were speaking)\*

1<sup>st</sup> Stanza

I am (two special characteristics the person had).  
I wonder (something the person was curious about).  
I hear (something the person wanted to hear).  
I see (something the person wanted to see)  
I want (an actual desire).  
I am (the first line of the poem repeated).

2<sup>nd</sup> Stanza

I want (something the person wanted to accomplish).  
I feel (a feeling about the person’s accomplishments).  
I touch (a symbolic touch).  
I worry (something that really bothers the person)  
I cry (something that makes the person very sad).  
I am (the first line of the poem repeated).

3<sup>rd</sup> Stanza

I understand (something the person learned is true).  
I say (something the person believed in).  
I dream (something the person dreamed about).  
I try (something the person really made an effort about).  
I hope (something the person hoped for).  
I am (the first line of the poem repeated).

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

## Biographical Body Biography Rubric

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

Person: \_\_\_\_\_

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

- A review of the person's life events (birth, education, family, work, etc.)
- Visual symbols
- An original text in one of the approved formats
- The five most important quotes from the person (or, possibly *about* the person).
- Bibliography entry – MLA style

	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D / F</b>
<b>Basics</b>	Contains all 5 body biography requirements	Contains all 5 body biography requirements.	Contains only 4 body biography requirements.	Contains less than 4 body biography requirements.
<b>Content</b>	Is an accurate depiction of the person (based on evidence from the biography).	Is an accurate depiction of person.	Does not accurately depict the person, or is limited and superficial.	Does not depict the person beyond Wikipedia or other such sources.
<b>Original Writing</b>	Creatively represents personal traits and actions.	Personal traits and actions are represented, but not very creatively.	Personal traits and actions seem thrown together and not thought out.	Personal traits and actions are cliché.
<b>Visuals</b>	The body, as well as the symbolic images, were well done, colorful, and added to meaning.	The visuals were somewhat completed, colorful, and added to meaning.	The visuals were incomplete, not colored, or did not make sense based on the person chosen.	The visuals overall did not meet the requirements.
<b>Quotes</b>	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.
<b>Showing</b>	Showing expands and enhances poster choices, going beyond simple facts.	Showing explains poster choices, but does not go beyond simple facts.	Showing does not adequately explain poster choices.	Showing does not demonstrate knowledge of the poster choices.
<b>?????</b>	Prepared to explain and answer questions during showing.	Somewhat prepared to explain and answer questions during showing.	Not prepared to explain or answer questions during showing.	Unable to explain or answer questions during showing.
<b>Neatness</b>	Neat, well-organized and easy to read.	Somewhat neat, organization is sufficient, and it is easy to read.	Lacking in neatness and organization, or handwriting is too sloppy or small.	Not neat, not organized, not clearly written.

**Serendipity** - savoir faire, that certain something we all recognize when we see it. -

Grade = \_\_\_\_\_