Wikipedia-style historical biography assessment and feedback – Final Submission (PDF)
First Year Seminar: Well-behaved women rarely make (scientific) history
Fall 2015

Name:

A note about this page: The purpose of this grading sheet is to provide you with informative feedback that will allow you to develop the skills to be evaluative and critical of your own writing. It is important to learn this key skill. One drawback with such a sheet is that it gives a sense that grades are more precisely analytical than they really can be. Please use the information in this sheet as it is intended to help you understand the skills that you should work to develop and practice.

What is the final writing assignment? An understanding of the work, life and biography of a female scientist/engineer (broadly defined, living or dead) is something that you will develop over the course of much of the semester, through both oral presentations and written work. The work will be developed from topic selection, through two drafts (with peer review), to a final submission. The format will be in the style of a Wikipedia article. You may not choose a woman whose story is already well-developed in Wikipedia; you may choose a woman whose story is only a "stub end" in Wikipedia. (Consider the well-developed Wikipedia articles for Isaac Asimov and Rosalind Franklin and the "stub end" article for Ellen Stofan.)

What is the purpose of final writing assignment? Public scholarship is a way of communicating academic, scholarly work to the world beyond academics. The most effective public scholarship will be written for the general audience and will often engage or impact the general public. Examples of public scholarship include: working in and with museums and other cultural organizations and institutions (magazines, theaters, public libraries, book festivals); writing and compiling institutional and other histories (such as oral histories); establishing a media presence; engaging in activism and political/cultural advocacy; making documentaries; consulting and providing expert testimony on public policy and cultural matters; undertaking cultural and historic preservation and resource management, and archival administration and creation of bibliographies and databases. This kind of public engagement is important.

The purpose of this final paper is for you to begin to understand how academic work can be and is translated into something relevant to the public. By completing this assignment, you will:

- Perform extensive research on the life and work of a female scientist;
- Learn what it takes to research, write and publish a well-developed Wikipedia article;
- Write a Wikipedia-style article on that scientist's life and work.

What are you required to do for the final writing assignment? The final writing assignment (a biography of a female scientist/engineer) will involve student selection of a female scientist/engineer of interest. You will perform core research on her life and work. We will tackle this assignment through most of the semester: you will identify a female scientist/engineer of choice early in the semester and explore her life and work through research, course discussions, oral presentations, and writing.

Comments:

Evaluation (for essays submitted as a pdf file to the instructor):

Criteria	Unsatisfactory	Underdeveloped	Satisfactory	Proficient	Exceptional
Points	1	2	3	4	5
Content and theme – evidence of thorough research	Essay limited in communicating research and multiple sources; lacks appropriate referencing	Essay shows evidence of using small number of sources or sources lack diversity; some references are appropriately referenced, other details may not be appropriately referenced	Essay shows evidence of synthesis of material from multiple and diverse sources which are mostly adequately referenced	Essay is a synthesis from a variety of sources, which are appropriately referenced	Essay is a synthesis from wide diversity of sources, all of which are appropriately referenced
Content and theme – historical biography	Essay does not communicate understanding of person; details of person's life and work are limited or vague	Essay contributes to understanding of the person described; some detail is provided, other detail is vague; reader gains some perspective on the person and her significant contributions	Essay accurately portrays the person, with a concise treatment of details, essay places person in context of women in STEM fields in a limited or surface-level way	Essay paints a portrait of the person that holds the reader's attention, skillfully incorporates learnings from class on larger issue of women in STEM fields	Essay is confident and well-thought out; paints a vivid portrait of person; uses information gained in class and develops a novel or creative theme that holds the essay together
Content and theme – historical context	Essay is limited in the way it places the person into the historical context of women in STEM fields	Essay begins to place the person in the historical context of women in STEM fields, but context is limited	Essay accurately places the person in the historical context of women in STEM fields	Essay shows a comprehensive understanding of how person fits into the historical context	Essay confidently places person in historical context and develops a novel or creative theme around this context
Organization	Writing is disorganized and underdeveloped, with weak or no transitions or closure	Writing is confused and loosely organized; transitions are weak; closure is weak or effective	Uses correct writing format; appropriate transitions; coherent closure	Writing includes strong beginning, middle and end, with transitions and good closure	Writing includes strong beginning, middle and end, with clear transitions, and a strong and effective closure
Voice, perspective	Writing is flat; writer's voice does not come through	Sometimes the writer's voice and personality comes, though writing does not engage the reader	Most of the time the writer's voice & personality show up in the writing; writing is appropriate to life and work of the scientist	Writer's voice is lively & confident; writing sounds real and has personality	Writer's personality comes through in a creative way
Attention to audience	Writing suggests no or little sense of audience	Writing shows vague sense of audience, and what audience will understand	Writer writes with an understanding of the specific audience; reader understands what he/she is reading	Writer actively engages the audience	Writing is skillfully adapted to the audience and the audience's perspective
Vocabulary/ Word choice	Language is vague; careless or inaccurate word choice which obscures meaning	Language is trite or flat or shows limited use of varied word choice	Language and a variety of word choices make the writing interesting	Purposeful use of language and word choice, that is occasionally engaging	Word choice is consistently effective and engaging
Sentence fluency	Some run-ons or fragments; little variety in sentence structure	Occasional run-ons or fragments; limited variety of sentence structure, or uses sentence structures inappropriately	Writer uses simple, compound, and complex sentences appropriately	Frequently varied sentence structure is appropriate to the moment	Consistent variety of sentence structure throughout that helps capture reader attention

Conventions, grammar, syntax	Inconsistent agreement between parts of speech; many errors in mechanics; issues with spelling	Occasional errors in agreement between parts of speech; some mechanics and/or spelling errors	Maintains agreement between parts of speech; few errors in mechanics, punctuation, capitalization, spelling	Consistent agreement between parts of speech; correct punctuation, capitalization, spelling	Uses consistent agreement between parts of speech; no errors in spelling or mechanics

Rubric expanded from that developed from that provided by ReadWriteThink.org, a Thinkfinity website developed by the International Reading Association, National Council of Teachers of English.