



# Biography Poster

Grades: 7-9

This lesson is based on the Women of the Oklahoma Legislature Oral History Project. It is provided courtesy of the Oklahoma Oral History Research Program (OOHRP) at the Oklahoma State University Library with generous support from the Women's Archives at OSU and the Oklahoma Commission on the Status of Women.

Formally established in 2007, the OOHRP has collected and preserved firsthand accounts from individuals who have witnessed historic moments. The Program explores the lives and contributions of Oklahomans from all walks of life.

The Women of the Oklahoma Legislature is one of many projects undertaken by the OOHRP. This oral history project captures and records information about female Oklahoma legislators in their own voices and provides an opportunity to reflect on their individual paths to the Capitol. It also documents more completely the presence of these women in state government.

The OOHRP invites you to explore the website ([www.library.okstate.edu/oralhistory/wotol/](http://www.library.okstate.edu/oralhistory/wotol/)) and meet the women who have played an important role in Oklahoma politics.



## Oklahoma PASS Objectives

- **Language Arts, Reading/Literature 5:1a** Access information from a variety of primary and secondary sources, including electronic text, experts, and prime resources, to locate information relevant to research questioning. (Grade 8)
- **Language Arts, Reading/Literature 5:1b** Access a variety of primary and secondary sources to locate information relevant to research questions. (Grade 7)
- **Language Arts, Writing 1:4** Use precise word choices, including figurative language, that convey specific meaning and tone. (Grades 7, 8, and 9)
- **Language Arts, Writing 1:5** Use a variety of sentence structures, types, and lengths to contribute to fluency and interest. (Grades 7, 8, and 9)
- **Language Arts, Writing 3:1** Select, organize, or produce visuals such as maps, charts, graphics, video segments, or technology presentations to complement and extend meaning for a selected topic. (Grade 7)
- **Language Arts, Writing 3:1** Produce visual images, messages, and meanings that communicate with others. (Grade 8)
- **Language Arts, Writing 3:1** Create media products to include a billboard, cereal box, short editorials, and a three- minute documentary or print ad to engage specific audiences. (Grade 9)

## Lesson Objective

The students will be able to create a Biography Poster based on the life of one of the women who has served in the Oklahoma Legislature.

## Lesson

We have been learning about the women who have served in our Oklahoma Legislature. Today you are going to focus on just one woman. We are going to draw a photo, and that individual will be the person you use for your research. Today you will create a biography poster based on the life of the person's photo you draw.

Today we are going to write a biography. What is a biography?

How many of you enjoy reading biographies? What is your favorite biography? (Allow time for students to share information.)

Biographies allow us to look into another person's life. They also allow us to step back, in a way, to a different time or era in history. Today we are going to create something called a BIOGRAPHY POSTER. This has biographical information, but it is arranged in a poster format. (Show the teacher example included in the Resource Addendum. If you have a Smart Board or computer and projector, you can show the PDF file. If not, you will need to create an overhead transparency of this image to show on an overhead projector.)

Look at how the information is divided on the page. You will look for answers to the questions Why? What? When? and How Many? The sample information is about Susan Jones. This name was created for the example. You see the answers to her questions are written in the corresponding spaces. You can use colored markers to write your questions and answers. Notice where the biography is placed. While reading the information about your legislator, you will write your notes

on the Biography Poster Student Sheet. You will use this sheet as the basis to write your biography. This will be written on your notebook paper. Please use only one side of the paper. If you use more than one page, we can staple your pages together at the top of the section.

Have two sheets of photocopy paper or one sheet of ledger-sized paper ready to show as an example. Please use paper like the students will use for their posters. If you use two plain sheets of photocopy paper, fold each in half lengthwise and make a slight crease, then draw lines in those creases. Fold in half crosswise and make a slight crease. Then draw the lines for the two side panels. Lay the pages side by side and tape together—do not overlap. If you have ledger sized paper, you can create this template using a single sheet per student. You may wish for the students to use colored construction paper rather than the plain white paper. If so, have it ready to show as an example. Please encourage your students to use colored markers or colored paper with this assignment. Research shows that when students use color in assignments, they attain the information faster and retain that information longer.

The BIOGRAPHY portion is to be written on student notebook paper. It can be stapled in that portion of the page. If they use multiple pages for the biography, they can still staple the pages *in order* in that section. (Demonstrate how the notebook pages fit in that section of the page. Show them how you would staple multiple sheets of paper in that section.)

Pass out the paper and work together as a whole group to divide the paper into sections to look like the Biography Poster Diagram (found in the Resource Addendum). They may wish to make their lines first with pencil and then go over that mark with markers.

It is now time to draw to see who your topic will be. (Take time to pass around a bag with the photos of the women and corresponding information inside. Explain to the students that this woman will be their topic for this project.)

Today we have discussed the various components of our Biography Poster. We have laid out each section on our paper. We know who our topic will be. (Pass out Biography Poster Student Sheet. Take time to go over the directions and seven areas they will be searching for when they read the interview transcripts on the computers. Be sure that each student understands these pages. Explain that they will be reading the interview transcripts to find the answers to the questions. Here is where you will tell them if the computers have the PDF file saved for them. You may have planned for them to use an on-line computer. If so, tell them how to find the site. Has it been bookmarked for them in advance? Please give them specific details before sending them to work independently on the computers.)

We will now go to our computers and begin researching our information. You will need your pencils and your Biography Poster Student Sheet. Let us begin.

(NOTE: Depending on the time and the abilities of your students, you may wish to break this lesson into two or three lessons. You could have the first lesson stop when their paper is ready. The next day would be researching on the computers. The third day would be to write the biography and staple it to their Biography Posters. A final day would be to share their finished posters with the class. Discuss as a class where they could display these posters with the rest of the school. Possible answers would be the library, the hall outside your classroom, etc.)

Include in your closure what your class finished today. If you decide to break this project into multiple class sessions, tell them the timeline you have for each day until the completion. Also discuss with the class various locations in which they can share their Biography Projects with others in the school.

## Evaluation

This project can be graded with a rubric. If you take multiple days to complete it, please take that into consideration when assigning the total number of points for the project. You can assign a set number of points for each outside section. You can assign a different point value for each of the components they researched and included in their written biographies. In order to best assess authentic student work, please do not require a set number of pages for the biography. The goal is to assess the content of the completed student product rather than the length of writing on a page.

## Materials

### Students

- Pages of plain photocopy paper or colored construction paper, pencils, markers, crayons, scissors, tape if using smaller photocopy paper, glue stick or glue to paste down the photo of the legislator
- Rulers—if students do not have rulers, ask them to take a sheet of notebook paper and fold it lengthwise. Fold again lengthwise. Pinch the crease well. They can use the folded side of this paper as a straight edge.
- Copy of a photo of the legislator whom they will research. This comes from <http://www.library.okstate.edu/oralhistory/wotol/legislators.htm>. The photos and names are also laid out in the Resource Addendum. The teacher will print the pages and cut the photos apart. The students will draw this information from a bag to determine the topic for their Biography Project.
- Copy of Biography Poster Student Sheet for each student.

### Teacher:

- Print the pages from the Women in the Oklahoma Legislature site (<http://www.library.okstate.edu/oralhistory/wotol/legislators.htm>) that has each woman's name and photo, or use the photos in the Resource Addendum. \*If you go to the Web site rather than using the information in the Resource Addendum, please note that only the names in ORANGE have completed interview transcripts. Please use those women for this assignment. Cut the photos apart so that each student has the photo and name of their topic. They can use the photo in the Who? section of their Biography Poster. When the students draw their topic for this project, they will draw that photo. Have it ready in a bag for them to randomly draw.
- Bookmark the student computers with the website to find the information: <http://www.library.okstate.edu/oralhistory/wotol/legislators.htm> OR you can save each woman's story as a PDF file on the computer. The students will then use the computer with the information that coordinates with their topic. (To find each woman's transcript, click on her picture at the above URL, then click on the link to her transcript.)

## Enrichment

### Language Arts

- Take time to just share one component of their biographies—such as Early Life or Campaign Stories. The students will be able to see common threads in the information.
- Take class time to discuss the biography information in chronological order. They will be able to see how society has changed over time. Example: The difference from having an army of volunteers to the computerized age in which you need more money than volunteers.
- After each student has shared his/her Biography Project, ask the students to write a summary of the project. They could write about specific things they learned within the categories on the biography. They could write and compare their early life with the early lives of the women researched. By doing this follow-up writing assignment, it helps to further make this assignment relevant to the students. This helps the learning to “gel”.
- Some classes have an “author’s chair”. Students sit in this chair when they read their writings. You could designate a “presenter’s chair” in your classroom. Students would sit in that chair when they give their presentations to the class.
- Take an empty box about the size of a microwave oven. Cut a large opening in the front. Cut the back side off completely. You are creating a “television set” for your class. The students can sit so that their face shows through the hole in the box that is the “television screen”. It will appear to the class that they are giving a news broadcast.

### Technology

- Set up a free account at [www.mypodcast.com](http://www.mypodcast.com). Create a “radio show” by recording the students’ reports. You will need live access to the Internet and a microphone. (Microphones cost between \$8.00 and \$12.00.) You can send the URL home with the students, and their parents and family and friends can listen to the presentations. Please check with your administrator. You will need to have parental/guardian approval before undertaking this project.
- Using Windows Movie Maker and a microphone, record the students’ presentations. This can be made into an audio CD. You can play this to the class during transition times, at the beginning or ending of class, etc. Because this will not be posted on the Internet, you will not need parental/guardian permission.
- Using a digital camcorder, record the students’ presentations. Turn the recording into a DVD. This can be shown at a special open house at school or to other classes at your school. Check with your principal before recording the children to be sure you are in compliance with school policies.

### Social Studies

- Categorize: Find out how many Democrats and Republicans were the topics of the Biography Project.
- Categorize: Find out how many women served in the Senate and how many served in the House of Representatives.

- Locate on an Oklahoma map where the women lived as the students are sharing their Biography Projects. This helps establish relevance for the entire class. Also point out if any of the women live close to your location.
- Locate the county in Oklahoma in which each woman lived. What town is the county seat?
- When interviewed about their campaigns, many women did not take large amounts of money from campaign supporters. They took \$10.00 or perhaps \$25.00. Why didn't they take more money from people or groups such as corporations? Teachable Moment: The great educator John Dewey always wrote and spoke about teachable moments. These times open opportunities for the students to learn more information or new things about the topic. Introduce the word ETHICS to the students. ETHICS is a noun that means principles (not the principal in the office—this word is spelled with an E rather than an A), morals, beliefs, moral values, or moral code. A great question to ask the class is, "What other professions or occupations stress ethics?" Allow them to come to the conclusion that in America ethics are required in any and all professions and occupations. New question, "How can we use ethics in our classroom?"

**Mathematics**

- Compare the costs of a political campaign, if that information was shared in the interview. Keep in mind the year of the campaign.

## Resource Addendum

### Diagram of the Biography Poster

You can use two plain sheets of photocopy paper. Fold each in half lengthwise and make a slight crease. Then draw lines in those creases. Fold in half crosswise and make a slight crease. Then draw the lines for the two side panels. Lay the pages side by side and tape together—do not overlap. If you have ledger sized paper, you can create this template using a single sheet per student. You may wish to use colored construction paper for this project.

The BIOGRAPHY portion is to be written on student notebook paper. It can be stapled in that portion of the page. If they use multiple pages for the biography, they can still staple the pages in order in that section.

|       |           |           |
|-------|-----------|-----------|
| WHO?  | BIOGRAPHY | WHAT?     |
| WHEN? |           | HOW MANY? |

## Teacher Sample to Show Students

|                            |           |                                                     |
|----------------------------|-----------|-----------------------------------------------------|
| WHO?<br><br>Susan<br>Jones | BIOGRAPHY | WHAT?<br><br>Oklahoma<br>Senate                     |
| WHEN?<br><br>1942-<br>1950 |           | HOW MANY?<br><br>How many<br>terms served?<br><br>2 |

\*Note: If the students completed the “How Far Did They Travel?” assignment, they can use that information in the HOW MANY section. You might want to have it represent how many children each woman had, if they had any. This section has flexibility.

## Biography Poster Student Sheet

Today you will do research using the transcript from an interview of one of the women who has served in the Oklahoma Senate or in the Oklahoma House of Representatives. When reading the information about the woman you are researching, please locate the following specific information. You will write your information gathered on these pages.

Specifically you are looking for:

- **When** they served
- **What** branch of the Legislature were they in? House of Representatives or Senate
- **How many** years they served, or how many children they had—look for an answer to How many?
- **Name:** You will have the name of the woman when you draw it randomly

Your biography is going to include the following information. Please write your notes on this page. If you need extra space, you can use the back of the page.

Feel free to add other information that you learn about your legislator. For example, some women discuss the cost of their campaigns. You might add that to the section about campaign stories.

### Title of Biography:

1. Early life

2. School experiences

3. Life before the legislature

4. Campaign stories—Include specifically if they were running for the Senate or the House of Representatives. Also specify if they are a Democrat or a Republican. \*NOTE: Some women have campaigned for both and some women have been elected to both.

5. Life as a legislator



6. Life after the legislature

7. They may have included what they are doing NOW. This is optional because it is not included in all the stories.



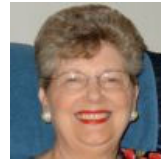
## Resource Addendum

### WOMEN OF THE OKLAHOMA LEGISLATURE

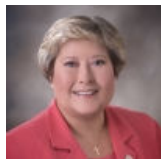
Between the years of 1907 and 2008 only 77 women have been elected to the Oklahoma Legislature. As of February 2009, 46 of these remarkable women have shared their stories as part of the Women of the Oklahoma Legislature Oral History Project. Gathering oral histories provides opportunity to pursue answers to questions left silent in what little archival materials exist for these women. Taken individually, these interviews reflect the careers and interests of the legislators; taken collectively they constitute a narrative of the role of women in the Oklahoma Legislature over time.



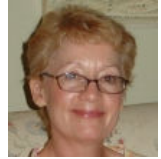
1. Arnold, Helen



8. Chiles, Dorothy Conaghan



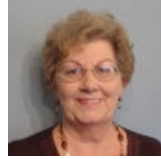
2. Askins, Jari



9. Coleman, Carolyn



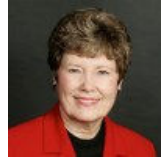
3. Atkins, Hannah



10. Collins, Jan



4. Billy, Lisa Johnson



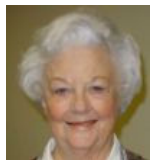
11. Coody, Ann



5. Blackburn, Debbie



12. Dank, Odilia



6. Boyd, Betty



13. Denney, Lee



7. Boyd, Laura



14. Looney, Lamar



15. Fallin, Mary



24. Lawler, Daisy



16. Floyd, Billie Jean



25. Leftwich, Debbie



17. Gray, Twyla Mason



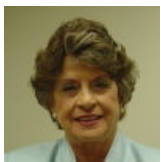
26. Lewis, Nancy Virtue



18. Hamilton, Rebecca



27. McDaniel, Jeannie



19. Hastings, Joan



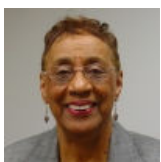
28. McIntyre, Judy Eason



20. Hibdon, Mina



29. McNiel, Skye



21. Horner, Maxine



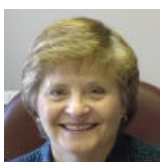
30. Miles-LaGrange, Vicki



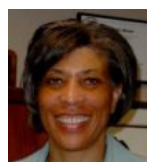
22. Johnson, Constance



31. Mitchell, Cleta Deatherage



23. Kern, Sally



32. Monson, Angela



33. Paddack, Susan



42. Wiedemann, Anna Belle



34. Peltier, Wanda Jo



43. Wilcoxson, Kathleen



35. Peterson, Pam



44. Winchester, Susan



36. Pittman, Anastasia



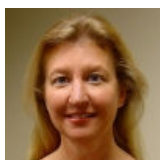
37. Riley, Nancy



38. Shedrick, Bernice



39. Staggs, Barbara



40. Taylor, Carolyn Thompson



41. Weedn, Trish