



# Bio-Poem

Grades: 4-6

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 of 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 4:1a** Identify the defining characteristics of a variety of literary genres and forms (e.g., contemporary realistic fiction, historical fiction, nonfiction, modern fantasy, poetry, drama, legends, myths, biography, autobiographies, and traditional stories such as fairy tales and fables). (Grades 4 and 5)
- **Language Arts, Reading/Literature 4:1b** Analyze characteristics of subgenres, including autobiography, biography, fable, folk tale, mystery, and myth. (Grade 6)
- **Language Arts, Reading/Literature 5:2a** Record, organize, and display relevant information from multiple sources in systemic ways (e.g., outlines, graphic organizers, or note cards). (Grade 6)
- **Language Arts, Reading/Literature 5:2c** Locate, organize, and synthesize information from a variety of print, nonprint and technological resources (e.g., dictionaries, reference books, atlases, magazines, informational texts, thesauruses, and technology/Internet). (Grades 4 and 5)
- **Language Arts, Writing 1:4** Use precise word choices, including figurative language, that convey specific meaning and tone. (Grade 6)
- **Language Arts, Writing 1:5** Share writing with peers and adults. (Grade 4)
- **Language Arts, Writing 1:6** Publish and share writing with peers and adults. (Grade 5)
- **Social Studies 1:1** Demonstrate the ability to utilize research materials, such as encyclopedias, almanacs, atlases, newspapers, photographs, visual images, and computer-based technologies. (Grade 4)
- **Social Studies 1:1** Locate, gather, analyze, and apply information from primary and secondary sources using examples of different perspectives and points of view. (Grade 5)
- **Social Studies 1:1** Locate, gather, and analyze information from primary and secondary sources, such as artifacts, diaries, letters, art, music, literature, newspapers, and contemporary media. (Grade 6)

## Lesson Objective

The students will be able to create a bio-poem about the life of one of the women who **has served** or **is serving** in our Oklahoma House of Representatives and Oklahoma Senate.

## Lesson

What is a BIOGRAPHY? Who has read a good biography lately? Who was your biography about? What is included in a biography?

What is a poem? Who is your favorite poet? [*Many students love poems by Shel Silverstein. You might have one available to read aloud to them.*]

Today you are going to learn how to combine biographical information into a poem format. It's called a BIO-POEM.

Today we will begin a project to learn more about women who have served or are currently serving in our Oklahoma House of Representatives and Oklahoma Senate. After completing your research, you will be able to write a bio-poem about your person.

[NOTE TO TEACHER: You can use your school mascot or district-wide mascot for this activity. If you don't have one, create a bio-poem about YOU.]

Here is the basic template for a Bio-Poem. Generally it has NINE lines. Because we may not find the exact information to fit into each group, you can substitute information that we do know for those areas that do not match.

**Have the template ready to show on the Smart Board or as an overhead transparency.**

Here is the basic template:

**FIRST NAME**\_\_\_\_\_

**Four adjectives that describe the person**

**Son or Daughter of ... or Wife of ... or Mother of ...**

**Lover of** (list three different things that the person loves or you think they may enjoy)

**Who feels** (three different things that the person feels or you think they might feel)

**Who gives** (three different things the person gives)

**Who fears** (three different fears the person has)

**Who would like to see** (three different things the person would like to see)

**Who lives** (a brief description of where the person lives or lived)

**LAST NAME**\_\_\_\_\_

Take time to discuss areas in which they may not find information. What could they substitute for that section? Take time to list possibilities. Take time to discuss what they MIGHT use instead. Possible answers might include: **time, talents, wisdom, service.**

As a class activity, use the bio-poem template to create a bio-poem of the school mascot or of the classroom teacher. Individual students can come to the Smart Board or overhead transparency and write their answers in the blanks. You may wish to use the same color for the first and last lines—which are the first and last names. Because this was a group created bio-poem, ask all the authors to read it aloud together.

The teacher will have the names of the women who will be studied written on individual slips of paper. Each student will randomly draw one name. This name will be the topic for their bio-poem. They will use the bio-poem template to write out their information. The finished product will be a typed and printed bio-poem.

We will now go to the computer lab or the computer area to complete research on our special individuals. Your finished product will be a completed bio-poem about your special individual. (Let the students know if the computers will be “bookmarked” with the URL site or if they are to use a PDF form and not be on-line.)

Today we completed research about a woman who has served or is currently serving in the Oklahoma Senate or Oklahoma House of Representatives. You used that information to create a bio-poem about that woman.

## Evaluation

There are basically 23 parts for the student to add to the bio-poem template. The point value is listed in parentheses before each part:

- (1) **FIRST NAME**\_\_\_\_\_
- (4) **Four adjectives** that describe the person
- (1) **Son or Daughter of ... or Wife of ... Mother of ...**
- (3) **Lover of** (list three different things that the person loves or you think they may enjoy)
- (3) **Who feels** (three different things that the person feels or you think they might feel)
- (3) **Who gives** (three different things the person gives)
- (3) **Who fears** (three different fears the person has)
- (3) **Who would like to see** (three different things the person would like to see)
- (1) **Who lives** (a brief description of where the person lives or lived)
- (1) **LAST NAME**\_\_\_\_\_

A rubric can be designed to assess this assignment. You can set up a point value of 23, 46, 69, or 92 points for the total value of the assignment.

## Materials

### Teacher Resources

- Source for biographical information about the women who served or are currently serving in the Oklahoma Legislature:  
<http://www.library.okstate.edu/oralhistory/wotol/legislators.htm>
- \*\*\* Please use names from this website that have live links, which indicates that they have accompanying biographies. Give the students an opportunity to randomly draw the name of the person whom they will research and then use as the source of a bio-poem. To find brief biographies, the student can go to the site and click on one of the women with an active link. They will click on the link to her transcript, then click on "Brief Biography" in the column on the left side of the screen.
- Teacher resource of the bio-poem activity comes from the following URL information:  
<http://community.scholastic.com/scholastic/blog/article?blog.id=bloggrade6&message.id=41>  
<http://cuip.net/~adarice/cwsite/poems/poembio.htm>  
<http://oldfashionedliving.com/biopoems.html>
- Book of poems by Shel Silverstein.
- The teacher may either use Internet accessible computers OR download the interview transcripts in PDF format. If using the latter choice, the students will not be on-line for this lesson. If using Internet accessible computers, please bookmark the following website:  
<http://www.library.okstate.edu/oralhistory/wotol/>

**Student Resources**

- Student access to printer to print out bio-poems
- Template of the bio-poem

**Enrichment****Technology**

- Create a podcast of the class's set of bio-poems. Go to [www.mypodcast.com](http://www.mypodcast.com) and follow the steps to create a free account. You will need Internet access and a microphone along with your computer. The students can read their bio-poems into the microphone. This can be saved to a class podcast site, which is accessible for all parents to hear. You will need administrative and parental permission before beginning this project.
- Create a class CD of the bio-poems. You will need Microsoft Movie Maker and a microphone. You can record the stories and save them to a CD, which can be played at any time. Because this recording will not be placed on the Internet, you will not need parental or administrative permission.
- Create a class DVD. Using a camcorder, the teacher will record each student reading their bio-poem. This recording can be transformed onto a DVD to be shown in the class and for school functions (such as Back to School Night). You can also donate a copy of the DVD to the school library. Speak with your administrator about permission forms required to video record the students.

**Language Arts**

- The students will complete a bio-poem about themselves.
- The students will select their favorite persons from history and write bio-poems about those people.
- Students will select their favorite characters from books or their favorite recording artists or actors/actresses and write bio-poems about those individuals or characters.
- The class will include their bio-poems in a class book.

**Visual Arts**

- Give the students a printed copy of a photo of the woman they selected. Ask them to turn the photo upside down. Show them the steps involved in drawing a face. They can use pencils and plain photocopy paper to draw their portraits. Because they are viewing this photo from a different perspective, they will look more closely at the features and composition of the portrait than if it was right side up.

## Resource Addendum

### BIO-POEM TEMPLATE

FIRST NAME \_\_\_\_\_

Four adjectives that describe the person

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

Son or Daughter of ... or Wife of ... Mother of ...

Lover of (list three different things that the person loves or you think they may enjoy)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Who feels (three different things that the person feels or you think they might feel)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Who gives (three different things the person gives)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Who fears (three different fears the person has)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Who would like to see (three different things the person would like to see)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Who lives (a brief description of where the person lives or lived)

LAST NAME \_\_\_\_\_



## Resource Addendum

List of women interviewed for project, with photographs:



1. Arnold, Helen



8. Chiles, Dorothy Conaghan



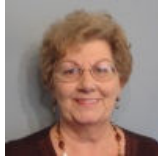
2. Askins, Jari



9. Coleman, Carolyn



3. Atkins, Hannah



10. Collins, Jan



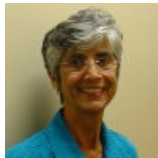
4. Billy, Lisa Johnson



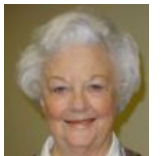
11. Coody, Ann



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



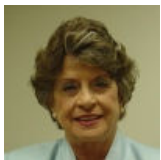
26. Lewis, Nancy Virtue



18. Hamilton, Rebecca



27. McDaniel, Jeannie



19. Hastings, Joan



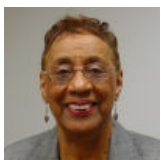
28. McIntyre, Judy Eason



20. Hibdon, Mina



29. McNiel, Skye



21. Horner, Maxine



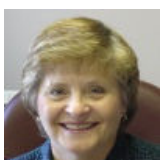
30. Miles-LaGrange, Vicki



22. Johnson, Constance



31. Mitchell, Cleta Deatherage



23. Kern, Sally



32. Monson, Angela





33. Paddock, Susan



42. Wiedemann, Anna Belle



34. Peltier, Wanda Jo



43. Wilcoxson, Kathleen



35. Peterson, Pam



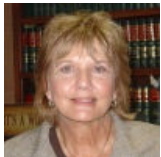
44. Winchester, Susan



36. Pittman, Anastasia



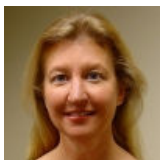
37. Riley, Nancy



38. Shedrick, Bernice



39. Staggs, Barbara



40. Taylor, Carolyn Thompson



41. Weedn, Trish