

Wax Museums are a lively alternative to the traditional researched biography



Albany Elementary (Albany, IN) teachers Ellie Holdren and Lois Nauman do a twist on the traditional biography writing unit. Each second grader researches a famous American from a prepared list of more than 150 possibilities.

After learning about their subjects, the students then prepare a written report to be delivered orally and from a first-person point of view. The students are to create coordinating costumes and related props/visual aide posters to accompany their memorized oral presentations.

On presentation day, every class at Albany Elementary School cycles through the "museum" of famous Americans. Each character wears a red paper star on his shoulder to serve as a "button." The listener presses the button and the student delivers his memorized first-person report. (NOTE: Each student delivers his speech 30-50 times throughout the day, depending on how many classes/students attend the museum. Not only do the presentations get better and better throughout the day with all this experience, but the students' confidence builds, too.)



Famous Male Americans

Hank Aaron	<i>athlete, baseball</i>	Albert Einstein	<i>scientist</i>
Jim Abbott	<i>athlete, baseball</i>	Duke Ellington	<i>musician and composer</i>
Ansel Adams	<i>photographer</i>	Henry Ford	<i>inventor</i>
John Adams	<i>President</i>	Benjamin Franklin	<i>inventor</i>
David A. Adler	<i>author</i>	Robert Fulton	<i>inventor</i>
Louis Armstrong	<i>musician</i>	Bill Gates	<i>computer industry</i>
Neil Armstrong	<i>astronaut</i>	Theodore Seuss Geisel	<i>author and illustrator</i>
John James Audubon	<i>painter and naturalist</i>	Lou Gehrig	<i>athlete, baseball</i>
Andrew Carnegie	<i>businessman, philanthropist</i>	George Gershwin	<i>musician and composer</i>
Benjamin Banneker	<i>astronomer, mathematician</i>	John Glenn	<i>astronaut</i>
Alexander Graham Bell	<i>inventor</i>	John Hancock	<i>founding father</i>
Leonard Berenstain	<i>musician and composer</i>	Daniel Handler	<i>author</i>
Clarence Birdseye	<i>food industry</i>	H.J. Heinz	<i>food industry</i>
William Boeing	<i>aircraft industry</i>	Milton Hershey	<i>candy industry</i>
Daniel Boone	<i>frontiersman</i>	Sam Houston	<i>politician</i>
Marc Brown	<i>author and illustrator</i>	Robert Jarvik	<i>scientist and physician</i>
George Bush	<i>President</i>	Martin Luther King, Jr.	<i>civil rights activist</i>
Richard E. Byrd	<i>explorer</i>	W.K. Kellogg	<i>cereal industry</i>
Alexander Calder	<i>artist</i>	Ray Kroc	<i>food industry</i>
Andrew Carnegie	<i>community leader</i>	Robert E. Lee	<i>General</i>
Kit Carson	<i>frontiersman</i>	Meriwether Lewis	<i>explorer</i>
George Washington Carver	<i>scientist</i>	Abraham Lincoln	<i>President</i>
William Clark	<i>explorer</i>	Charles Lindbergh	<i>pilot</i>
Christopher Columbus	<i>explorer</i>	Wynton Marsalis	<i>musician and composer</i>
James Cook	<i>explorer, navigator</i>	Thurgood Marshall	<i>Supreme Court Justice</i>
Davy Crockett	<i>frontiersman</i>	J.P. Morgan	<i>financier, banker</i>
George Armstrong Custer	<i>soldier</i>	Samuel Morse	<i>inventor</i>
John Deere	<i>inventor</i>	John Muir	<i>naturalist</i>
Tomie DePaola	<i>author and illustrator</i>	Jesse Owens	<i>athlete, track</i>
Melvil Dewey	<i>librarian</i>	Bill Peet	<i>author and illustrator</i>
Walt Disney	<i>cartoonist and animator</i>	Daniel Pinkwater	<i>author and illustrator</i>
Tony Dungy	<i>coach, NFL</i>	Jackson Pollock	<i>artist</i>
George Eastman	<i>inventor</i>	Colin Powell	<i>general</i>
Thomas Edison	<i>inventor and businessman</i>	Paul Revere	<i>patriot</i>

Famous Male Americans, continued

Jackie Robinson	<i>athlete, baseball</i>
Frederick Remington	<i>artist</i>
John D. Rockefeller	<i>oil industry, industrialist</i>
Norman Rockwell	<i>artist</i>
Fred Rogers	<i>(Mister Rogers) educator</i>
Theodore Roosevelt	<i>President</i>
Babe Ruth	<i>Athlete, baseball</i>
Jonas Salk	<i>biologist and physician</i>
Charles Schultz	<i>cartoonist</i>
Arnold Schwarzenegger	<i>bodybuilder, actor, politician</i>
Maurice Sendak	<i>author and illustrator</i>
Sequoyah	<i>Native American</i>
John Smith	<i>established Jamestown</i>
John Phillip Sousa	<i>musician and composer</i>
Levi Strauss	<i>clothes industry</i>
Mark Twain	<i>author</i>
Cornelius Vanderbilt	<i>railroad industry entrepreneur</i>
George Washington	<i>President</i>
Andy Warhol	<i>artist</i>
Eli Whitney	<i>inventor</i>
Grand Wood	<i>artist</i>
Wright brothers	<i>inventors</i>

Famous Female Americans

Verna Aardema	<i>author</i>	Helen Lester	<i>author</i>
Jane Adams	<i>social worker</i>	Julliette Gordon Low	<i>Girl Scouts of America</i>
Priscilla Alden	<i>Pilgrim</i>	Dolly Madison	<i>First Lady</i>
Maya Angelou	<i>author</i>	Christa McAuliffe	<i>astronaut</i>
Susan B. Anthony	<i>suffragist/right to vote</i>	Oseola McCarty	<i>laundress, scholarship benefactor</i>
Lucille Ball	<i>actress</i>	Barbara McClintock	<i>scientist</i>
Clara Barton	<i>American Red Cross</i>	Grandma Moses	<i>artist</i>
Jan Berenstain	<i>author and illustrator</i>	Annie Oakley	<i>sharpshooter</i>
Mary McLeod Bethune	<i>educator</i>	Sandra Day O'Connor	<i>Supreme Court Justice</i>
Elizabeth Blackwell	<i>doctor</i>	Georgia O'Keeffe	<i>artist</i>
Amelia Bloomer	<i>found in Women's Rights</i>	Peggy Parish	<i>author</i>
Judy Blume	<i>author</i>	Rosa Parks	<i>equal rights activist</i>
Nellie Bly	<i>journalist</i>	Molly Pitcher	<i>American Revolutionist</i>
Ruby Bridges	<i>school desegregation</i>	Pocahontas	<i>Native American</i>
Eve Bunting	<i>author</i>	Patricia Polacco	<i>author and illustrator</i>
Barbara Bush	<i>First Lady</i>	Harriet Quimby	<i>first woman pilot</i>
Laura Bush	<i>First Lady</i>	Nancy Regan	<i>First Lady</i>
Rachel Carson	<i>biologist and author</i>	Sally Ride	<i>astronaut</i>
Mary Cassatt	<i>artist</i>	Eleanor Roosevelt	<i>First Lady, political leader</i>
Beverly Cleary	<i>author</i>	Betsy Ross	<i>American Revolutionist</i>
Joanna Cole	<i>author</i>	Wilma Rudolph	<i>athlete, runner</i>
Bessie Coleman	<i>pilot</i>	Cynthia Rylant	<i>author</i>
Katherine Dunham	<i>dancer</i>	Sacagawea	<i>accompanied Lewis & Clark</i>
Amelia Earhart	<i>pilot</i>	Deborah Sampson	<i>American Revolutionist</i>
Gertrude Ederle	<i>athlete, swimmer</i>	Elizabeth Cady Stanton	<i>suffragist/right to vote</i>
Lois Ehlert	<i>author and illustrator</i>	Maria Tallchief	<i>dancer</i>
Ella Fitzgerald	<i>singer</i>	Shirley Temple Black	<i>child actress</i>
Ruth Bader Ginsburg	<i>Supreme Court Justice</i>	Sojourner Truth	<i>abolitionist/anti-slavery</i>
Katherine Graham	<i>journalist</i>	Harriet Tubman	<i>under ground railroad</i>
Mahalia Jackson	<i>singer</i>	Gertrude Warner	<i>author</i>
Mae Jemison	<i>physician and astronaut</i>	Phillis Wheatley	<i>poet</i>
Coretta Scott King	<i>civil rights activist</i>	Laura Ingalls Wilder	<i>author</i>
Ruth Law	<i>pilot</i>		