



Ordinary People in Extraordinary Circumstances



When asked about their heroes, most people name a comic book hero, like Superman or Wonder Woman, or they name a person that has done something exceptional, like finding a cure for rabies, winning a Nobel Prize, or being an excellent athlete. But we need to remember that each of us may have the opportunity to be a hero to someone else. It may be as simple as spending time with a young child, or as complex as saving a life. How does a person become a hero? By making difficult choices and standing up for what is right and good in the world – and that can be you!

Objectives of this unit

- To read a biography of an ordinary person placed in extraordinary circumstances
- To create a booklet which:
 - Summarizes the person's story
 - Relates the story to its historical context
 - Evaluates the character traits (personality) of the person
 - Reviews the content and writing of the book

Due Dates

- Finish reading the book and your double entry journal by _____
- Finish booklet by _____

You will have some class time to read, but it will not be enough to finish the book. You will need to *spend time outside of class* to read and respond. The reading and double-entry journal will be due the first day back from break. When we return from break, you will have several classes to work on the booklet. It is very important that you follow this time line.

Choice of Book

The title of this unit is "Ordinary People in Extraordinary Circumstances." The book you read is considered non-fiction, which means it is based on fact, and specifically, a biography or autobiography. However, it will not just be a famous person, in many cases, you might not have even heard of the person. The person should be someone who has endured/withstood a difficult experience or event.

In addition, the book should be at your reading level – as Goldilocks would say, "Not too hard, but not too easy." Therefore, you should use the five-finger technique. Open the book to a random page and begin reading. Count off your fingers, if there are more than 5 words that you can not figure out, then the book is might be too hard. Try it on a few more pages. If most of them are too hard, choose a different book. However, don't pick a book just because it is short or too easy. I will ask you to choose a harder one. Challenge yourself!

Double-Entry Journal

- Write a Reading Response Log entry for every 2 chapters. I will check them each class, but will not collect it until January 10, 2007 However, it is important that you don't get behind in the reading.
- Keep track of new, unusual, unfamiliar, or slightly unknown words (these are words that you can't give a specific definition for). Use a page in the back of your RRL for this. You should have about 5 words for every 2 chapters.

Example of what should be in an entry.

Chapters x-x The Title of Your Book Date

Summary: In 3-5 sentences, summarize the main events of the reading. Use specific names for characters – not just pronouns (he, him).

Observations – this comes directly from the text. Make observations about the reading while you read. You should have SEVERAL observations. Some examples are:

- Copy a quote from the story
- Paraphrase a section of the reading
- Describe a character
- Describe the setting
- Draw the scene

Reactions – this is your thoughts, feelings, connections etc and it needs to relate to the observation you made in the first column. Do NOT summarize the story. Some examples are:

- Connect the reading to other books, movies, TV shows, or experiences you’ve had
- Describe your feelings about what you read and explain why you feel that way
- Explain why the observation made is important
- Comment on the author’s style of writing. How did he create the mood? Evaluate the effectiveness of the writing.
- Reflect on your reading process. Was this section easy/difficult and why?
- Can you relate to this part? Why or why not?
- Analyze if this part is realistic. Explain why.

Conclusion: Make a specific predication and explain why you think that may happen. Or, you could ask a question about the chapter – and give possible answer. Or, project how the events in this section will impact on the rest of the story.

A completed page like this is called an “entry.” You should make an entry every two chapters of the book. There should be several observations with corresponding reactions. The double entry part (observation/reaction) is the “meat” of the entry. This shows me your thinking while reading.

On a separate page (in back of your notebook) you need to keep track of new vocabulary words. Each time you encounter a word that is unfamiliar to you, write it down. Create a table like this:

Page Number	Word	Best Guess	Definition

The Booklet

You will need to create a neat and attractive booklet. It will need to include the following items.

- **Title page**

- Include the title and author of the book
- Include your name

- **Summary of the story**

- There are several ways you can complete this:
 - Paragraph summary
 - Time line
 - Pictures with captions
 - Other?

- **Explanation of the historical context of the story**

- What was going on historically that affected the main character? Narrow the topic – World War II is too broad. You will need to look at the specific region or issue that affected the person.
- You will need to complete further research in this area – use the library and Internet for information. However, it CAN NOT be copy and paste. You will need to read and understand the information and relate it to what happen in your book.
- Again, you could present this in several ways:
 - Bullet point summary
 - Timeline
 - Pictures with captions
 - Other?

- **Report Card**

- You will need to examine the personality or character traits of your person.
 - Here are some possible categories: leadership skills, organization and planning, community relations, perseverance, ethical conduct, intelligence, fulfillment of

expectations, decision-making skills, treatment of others, professionalism, responsiveness to suggestions, contributions to history.

- Others?
- How would you rate the person in at least 5 categories using an A, B, C, D, and F scale?
- Then you will need to explain your reasoning for each grade. Give specific examples for each.
- **Review of the Book**
 - Beyond the story itself, you need to consider how well the book was written. In your review, consider the author's style, use of description, word choice, fluency, etc.
 - We will talk about this more in class, as you are closer to finishing your books.
- **Concluding Slide**
 - Create an acrostic poem to conclude your presentation.
 - The first letter of each line begins with a letter of the person's name.
 - Each line consists of words or phrases that describe the person's characteristics.
- **Bibliography of Sources**
 - Use the WriteSource for MLA format
 - Make sure you credit any pictures you use.