

# Lesson Plan: English Life Writing - Biography (8-10 weeks)

## Overview

1. **Individual:** Students use the FamilyBookform.com online dashboard to create an original biography on one or many people. Students conduct interviews, following the online template with question prompts, speech-to-text (any language) and contributions from invited others, to collect primary source, original content into a printable digital book.
2. **Class:** Students have agency and the emotional connection to content motivates an interest in learning. Their content enriches classes & explicit lessons, develops collaboration, engagement and SEL.
3. **Public:** Student's digital books can be shared online for 1 year and the PDF printed to gift or sell to families and communities.



## Learning Objectives

By the end of these lessons, students should be able to:

- Conduct face-to-face & online interviews - choose questions, actively listen, develop empathy & understanding of other people's lives, experiences and perspectives.
- Use technology as a tool to capture spoken stories in any language, edit & format into their book.
- Critically analyse & present their collected content, including text, audio files & photos in class for explicit lessons, discussion & collaborative editing.
- Develop their literacy, collaboration, communication, critical thinking & presentation skills.
- Use technology to collate primary source content into a book of value for an authentic audience.

## Common Core State Standards - ELA-Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science & Tech - Grades 7-12

- **RL.7-8.4** Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning & tone.
- **RI.7-8.7** Compare and contrast a text to an audio, video or multimedia version of the text, analyzing each medium's portrayal of the subject.
- **W.7-8.2** Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey ideas, concepts and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content.
- **W.7-8.5** With guidance & support from peers & adults, develop & strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on how well purpose and audience have been addressed.
- **W.7-8.6** Use technology to produce and publish writing and present the relationships between information and ideas efficiently as well as to interact and collaborate with others.
- **W.7-8.7** Conduct short research projects to answer a question, drawing on several sources and generating additional related, focused questions for further research and investigation.
- **SL.7-8.1** Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions with diverse partners and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.
- **SL.7-8.5** Include multimedia components and visual displays in presentations to clarify claims and findings.
- **L.7-8.6** Acquire and use accurately grade-appropriate general academic and domain specific words and phrases; gather vocabulary knowledge when considering a word or phrase important to comprehension.

🕒 Total Duration	📦 Materials
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 10-30 hours</li> <li>• Book-creating dashboard online for 1 year</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Computer with internet access (per student)</li> <li>• Teacher buys the book-licences at \$10 per student &amp; sends the project url link to students to sign up. <a href="#">Explainer video</a></li> </ul>

### Outline

Week	Lesson	Duration	Description
1	<a href="#">FamilyBookform dashboard introduction.</a> <b>Asynchronous or synchronous</b>	30-45 min	Students click on the project url link received from the teacher & sign up. Students access the introduction videos under 'how it works' in their book-creating dashboard for an overview of the technology. Students discuss who they will interview and why.
2-6	Collecting content <b>Asynchronous - outside class</b>	45-90 min	Students interview one or many people following the template prompts & using the speech-to-text. Students send an automated link to invite others to contribute content to their book.
2-9	Explicit lessons Class presentations & discussions <b>Synchronous - in class</b>	45-60 min	Explicit lesson aligned to curriculum. Students split into groups to share a specific story relating to the lesson - they share audio files, text or photos for informal presentations, feedback & collaborative editing.
10	Book Presentations <b>Synchronous - in class</b>	70-95 min	Celebration ceremony: Students give a 1 minute speech and present their book to their audience.

🔧 Prep
--------

Before introducing the project to students:

- Teacher signs up free at: <https://familybookform.com/> Create a project and buy the book-creating licences for each student at \$10 each. This generates a unique project url for students to sign up & redeem their book-creating licence.
- Distribute that project url to the students, either through Google Classroom, your LMS or email.
- As students click on that link & sign up they will redeem a licence.
- You can monitor students' books in your FamilyBookform project dashboard or in Google Classroom.

## Assessments

- **At the beginning of each lesson** students submit in the Classroom chat (or you collect into a Sheets doc) a summary of their book-creating progress, eg: number of pages, number of people interviewed, how much speech-to-text used, how many contributions from others, any feedback or reflections.
- **At the end of each lesson** document the level of engagement for each student in class discussions & their helpful collaboration/feedback with peers.
- **At the end of the project** students present their finished digital book (printed book optional) for grading. They can include in their portfolios, gift or sell to families.
- **At the end of the project** students complete a 'Reflection survey'.

**Tip: Students access 'how to' use the technology videos and writing help in their FamilyBookform dashboard.** Students work asynchronously to collect content and share & polish that content in synchronous lessons - online or in person.

**Tip: Advanced students.** Can interview more people, using more question & topic prompts or create their own questions. Or interview people speaking different languages, using the speech-to-text.

**Tip: Less academic students.** Can rely more on the speech-to-text, photos and the contributions from others to fill their books with valuable content.

# Lesson 1: Introduction to the FamilyBookform dashboard

## Overview

Students click on the unique project link from the teacher & sign up to redeem their book-creating licence. They watch the explainer videos under 'how it works' to understand the book-creating dashboard. [1 min explainer video](#)

### Learning Objectives

By the end of this lesson, students should be able to:

- Describe the purpose of the project: who their biography will be on and who they need to interview & why.
- Be able to navigate the book-creating dashboard.
- Complete the Pre-Survey - teachers provide a link to a survey if required.

### Terms and Concepts

By the end of the lesson, students should be familiar with the following:

- Life writing, Biography, Memoir
- Collaboration
- Technology as a tool

### Skills Covered

- The importance of primary source interviews & content generation.
- Importance of asking the right questions at the right time.
- Technology as a tool.

### Resources

- Pre-Survey if required
- [Speech-to-text explainer video](#)

### Outcomes

- Students watch explainer videos, navigate the book-creating dashboard, then complete a short pre-survey.
- In groups, Students discuss who they will interview & why.
- In groups, Students practice using the speech-to-text by interviewing each other.

### Procedures

**10-20 min:** The teacher demonstrates their demo book-creating dashboard on the class smartboard or online screen-share. Students follow along to see the template pages of:

#### **Left side navigation buttons:**

Top left: A summary of the number of words in their book, speech-to-text recording & pages used in the book.  
Book cover: follow the prompts to name the book, author & upload photo.

Introduction: Write, paste or speak an introduction.

**NOTE: Create the introduction at the end of the project. This will be an analysis or summation of all the content collected throughout the project.**

Person 1: Click on this tab to drop down the 4 automated chapters with question prompts. The 4 chapters are: General, Early Years, Adolescence & Adulthood. A 5th chapter is blank & students can add blank chapters as they require or follow the template chapters.

Chapters: Each of the chapter prompt headings can be edited & they drop down topics with various question prompts attached. Question prompts can be turned off at the top of the dashboard. Question prompts DO NOT appear in the book, only the answers entered into the answer boxes appear in the book.

Photos: Each template page has a photo page option at the bottom of the page. Students can upload 1, 2, 3 or 4 portrait or landscape photo pages.

### Top navigation buttons:

My Book Tab: Arrange Chapters, view updated digital book, download PDF version of the book, download the audio files recorded, request a book printing quote.

Collaborations Tab: Add/view contributors, arrange contributors, my collaborations are other books you have been invited to contribute to.

Hints & Help Tab: Writing hints, memory exercises for older people they are interviewing, contact us for any technical help.

How it works Button: explainer videos for speech-to-text and inviting contributors.

Help Button: Log technical problems.

### 10-20 mins: In group discussions:

In groups or pairs, students discuss who they will interview and why.

### 10-20 mins: Interview practice using the speech-to-text tool:

In groups or pairs, students role play an interview scenario. They each navigate to the Introduction page of their book-creating dashboard, one student asks another any question and the student answers and records using the speech-to-text tool (any language) in their book-creating dashboard.

Students press 'record' and start speaking their response. When finished, press 'stop recording'. Press 'end session & return to dashboard'. There is now a blue button with 'import transcription' next to the red 'record' button. Import the transcription into your book. (Unwanted text can be edited or deleted at any time).

**Tip: Speech-to-text.** Make sure you are speaking into the microphone of your device and there is no background noise. Speak clearly and keep the response short. The longer the recorded response, the longer it takes to process the transcription.

Discuss the accuracy of the transcription and techniques for making interview recording sessions more accurate, eg; where is the microphone on your device?

## Lesson 2: Explicit lesson - Interviews - *asynchronous/synchronous*

### Overview

Students start interviewing people, either face-to-face or online, to collect content into their digital book.

#### Learning Objectives

##### Simple

By the end of this lesson, students should be able to:

- Name their book & upload a photo to the front cover.
- Send invitation to contributors.
- Use the speech-to-text for interviews.

##### Advanced

By the end of this lesson, students should be able to:

- Interview more people or ask more questions from different topic prompts.
- Invite more people to contribute content.
- Use the speech-to-text functionality to interview people speaking different languages and use free online translate software to transcribe into English.

#### Terms and Concepts

By the end of the lesson, students should be familiar with the following:

- Interview skills
- Difference between spoken & written story
- Editing & Formatting
- Primary source content

#### Skills Covered

Digital collaboration, content generation, presentations

- Decision making
- Audio & text Presentations
- Speech-to-text technology
- Writing skills
- Communication skills

#### Resources

- [Example Project](#)
- [Project Evaluation Rubric](#)
- [Invite a contributor explainer video](#)

#### Outcomes

- Students select who's biography they will create and start interviews.
- Students invite others to contribute content.
- In groups, students discuss interview skills, techniques and experiences.

#### Procedure

**10-20 mins:** The teacher gives an explicit lesson on interviewing skills, open & closed questions, primary source information and spoken v written text.

**20-40 mins: Invite contributors:** *Teacher's discretion on minimum number of people students should invite.*

Students log into their account on the familybookform.com website's 'sign in' button.

**Tip:** If students did not 'sign out' of their last session then a button 'dashboard' will be at the top right instead of the 'sign in' button. They click 'dashboard' to access their book-creating dashboard.

Students each work in their own book-creating dashboard and navigate to the 'contributions' button at the top, 'add contributors' and follow the prompts to invite people to contribute to their book. This generates an automated link that is emailed to the invited person. Invited people follow the prompts to sign up and access a template page to see the student's instructions for what they want them to contribute to the book, eg; their favorite recipe & stories, or their Covid-19 experience etc, with photos.

**Tip:** Students need to **give specific instructions** to their invited contributors on what they want them to contribute, depending on what the book is about. Contributors have a maximum of 2500 words (approximately 10 pages & 10 photo pages).

**15-30 mins: Group discussion.**

In groups, students discuss who they invited to contribute, what they asked for and why.

**HOMEWORK or REMOTE LESSON:** Students start interviews, inviting contributors & editing their text.

## Lesson 3: Explicit lesson & Students share content - *synchronous*

### Overview

Students present their collected content and demonstrate examples of 'voice' perspective & bias.

#### Learning Objectives

##### Simple

By the end of this lesson, students understand:

- Difference between spoken & written story
- 'Voice' in writing
- Perspectives or bias

##### Advanced

By the end of this lesson, students should be able to:

- Play audio file of an interview they collected, or show text, as an example of perspective or bias.

#### Terms and Concepts

By the end of the lesson, students should be familiar with the following:

- Voice in writing
- Perspective or bias

#### Skills Covered

- Present primary source research data.
- Discuss & give critical analysis of their own & other's collected content relating to this week's lesson.

#### Resources

- [Project Evaluation Rubric](#)

#### Outcomes

- Students present an example of their interviews.
- As a group or in pairs, students discuss examples of keeping or presenting 'voice' in their writing.
- As a group or in pairs, students discuss examples of how their primary sourced content conveys a perspective or bias.

#### Procedure

**10-20 mins:** The teacher gives an explicit lesson on 'voice' in writing and Perspectives or bias in writing.

**30-40 mins: As a group or in pairs.**

Students present an example of their interviews (sharing on the smartboard or screen share), they go to the 'My Book' tab / View digital book, to see all of their content formatted into their digital book. They share an audio file, a particular text or photos, or all of those in combination.

Students discuss examples of keeping or presenting 'voice' in their writing. And or:

Students discuss examples of how their primary sourced content conveys a perspective or bias.

**HOMEWORK or REMOTE LESSON:** Students continue interviews, inviting contributors & editing their text.

## Lesson 4: Explicit lesson & Students share content - *synchronous*

### Overview

Students present their collected content and demonstrate examples of theme or central ideas in their text and analyse how particular elements interact.

#### Learning Objectives

##### Simple

By the end of this lesson, students understand:

- A theme or central idea in their text
- Elements of time, place, setting & the effects on the characters in their book

##### Advanced

By the end of this lesson, students should be able to:

- Analyse similarities &/or differences between the past & present.

#### Terms and Concepts

By the end of the lesson, students should be familiar with the following:

- Theme & central ideas
- Settings, time place shaping characters

#### Skills Covered

- Present primary source content & discuss a theme or central idea of that time or place.
- Discuss & give critical analysis of their own & other's collected content relating to this week's lesson.

#### Resources

- [Project Evaluation Rubric](#)

#### Outcomes

- Students present an example of their interviews.
- As a group or in pairs, students discuss examples of their book's main theme or central ideas.
- As a group or in pairs, students discuss examples of how their primary sourced content conveys a sense of emotion; drama, horror or humor.

#### Procedure

**10-20 mins:** The teacher gives an explicit lesson on theme and/or central ideas in text and how particular elements interact in writing.

**30-40 mins: As a group or in pairs.**

Students present an example of their interviews (sharing on the smartboard or screen share).

Students discuss the main theme or central idea of their text and present examples in their writing. And or:

Students discuss examples of how their content conveys emotion of drama, horror or humor.

**HOMEWORK or REMOTE LESSON:** Students continue interviews, inviting contributors & editing their text.

# Lesson 5: Explicit lesson & Students share content - *synchronous*

## Overview

Students present their collected content and discuss 'turning points' in people's lives & the effects/results.

### Learning Objectives

#### Simple

By the end of this lesson, students understand:

- Turning points, crisis, conflict, adaption, resilience

#### Advanced

By the end of this lesson, students should be able to:

- Analyse how turning points, crisis or conflict change/affect the direction/character of a person.

### Terms and Concepts

By the end of the lesson, students should be familiar with the following:

- Turning points in the context of different settings & times
- Strategies for adaptation & resilience

### Skills Covered

- Present primary source content & discuss how turning points affect characters & situations.
- Discuss & give critical analysis of their own & other's collected content relating to this week's lesson

### Resources

- [Project Evaluation Rubric](#)

### Outcomes

- Students present an example of their interviews.
- As a group or in pairs, students discuss examples of how turning points affected characters.
- As a group or in pairs, students discuss examples of how characters in their book adapted/changed or developed resilience.

### Procedure

**10-20 mins:** The teacher gives an explicit lesson on turning points and strategies for adaptation & resilience.

**30-40 mins: As a group or in pairs.**

Students present an example of their interviews (sharing on the smartboard or screen share).

Students discuss turning points in developing characters resilience and present examples in their text.

Students analyse the similarities or differences in these past turning points to their life experiences.

**HOMEWORK or REMOTE LESSON:** Students continue interviews, inviting contributors & editing their text.

## Lesson 6: Explicit lesson & Students share content - *synchronous*

### Overview

Students present their collected content and discuss vocabulary, punctuation & dialogue.

#### Learning Objectives

##### Simple

By the end of this lesson, students understand:

- Use of vocabulary, punctuation & dialogue

##### Advanced

By the end of this lesson, students should be able to:

- Analyse how vocabulary, punctuation & dialogue contribute to their writing

#### Terms and Concepts

By the end of the lesson, students should be familiar with the following:

- The importance of vocabulary, punctuation & dialogue for improving writing

#### Skills Covered

- Present primary source content & discuss how vocabulary, punctuation & dialogue affect writing.
- Discuss & give critical analysis of their own & other's collected content relating to this week's lesson

#### Resources

- [Project Evaluation Rubric](#)

#### Outcomes

- Students present an example of their interviews.
- As a group or in pairs, students discuss examples of how vocabulary, punctuation & dialogue affect their writing.

#### Procedure

**10-20 mins:** The teacher gives an explicit lesson on vocabulary, punctuation & dialogue effects on writing.

**30-40 mins: As a group or in pairs.**

Students present an example of their interviews (sharing on the smartboard or screen share).

Students discuss new vocabulary they've learnt and present examples in their text.

Students analyse how punctuation & adding character dialogue improves their writing.

**HOMEWORK or REMOTE LESSON:** Students continue interviews, inviting contributors & editing their text.

# Lesson 7: Explicit lesson & Students share content - *synchronous*

## Overview

Students present their collected content and discuss using the 5 senses and surprise in writing.

### Learning Objectives

#### Simple

By the end of this lesson, students understand:

- Use of the 5 senses in writing
- Use of surprise to keep interest & develop depth in their writing

#### Advanced

By the end of this lesson, students should be able to:

- Analyse how the 5 senses & surprise contribute to their writing and show examples.

### Terms and Concepts

By the end of the lesson, students should be familiar with the following:

- The use of adding 'senses' to improve writing
- The use of surprise to keep interest & develop depth in their writing

### Skills Covered

- Present primary source content & discuss how incorporating senses & surprise elements affects their writing
- Discuss & give critical analysis of their own & other's collected content relating to this week's lesson

### Resources

- [Project Evaluation Rubric](#)

### Outcomes

- Students present an example of their interviews.
- As a group or in pairs, students discuss examples of how incorporating senses & surprise affects their writing.

### Procedure

**10-20 mins:** The teacher gives an explicit lesson on how incorporating the 5 senses & surprise effects writing.

**30-40 mins: As a group or in pairs.**

Students present an example of their interviews (sharing on the smartboard or screen share).

Students discuss how incorporating senses effects writing and present examples in their text.

Students discuss how incorporating surprise adds to their writing and present examples in their text of when they were surprised by a story or experience and why.

**HOMEWORK or REMOTE LESSON:** Students continue interviews, inviting contributors & editing their text.

## Lesson 8: Creating the Introduction - *synchronous*

### Overview

Students start creating their Introduction to the book by reflecting on all the content they have collected and each week's lessons.

#### Learning Objectives

##### Simple

By the end of this lesson, students understand:

- What is an Introduction

##### Advanced

By the end of this lesson, students should be able to:

- Start their book's Introduction.

#### Terms and Concepts

By the end of the lesson, students should be familiar with the following:

- What is an Introduction
- Critical analysis or summary of ideas

#### Skills Covered

- Revise the primary source content & discuss how they will construct their introduction.
- Discuss & give critical analysis of their own & other's Introduction ideas.

#### Resources

- [Project Evaluation Rubric](#)

#### Outcomes

- Students present an example of their interviews.
- As a group or in pairs, students discuss their Introduction ideas.

#### Procedure

**10-20 mins:** The teacher gives an explicit lesson on revising all the content they have collected and the lessons learnt & how to apply it when creating an Introduction.

**30-40 mins: As a group or in pairs.**

Students present an example of their interviews (sharing on the smartboard or screen share).  
Students discuss how they will format their Introduction & why.

**HOMEWORK or REMOTE LESSON:** Students finalize interviews & edit their text.

**HOMEWORK or REMOTE LESSON:** Send final reminders to those contributors who have not submitted their content.

## Lesson 9: Finalize Introduction - *synchronous*

### Overview

Students finalize their Introductions and do final edits & proofreading. Deadline for sending to print.

#### Learning Objectives

##### Simple

By the end of this lesson, students understand:

- Finalize Introductions
- Final proofread, edit & format
- Finalize PDF for print

##### Advanced

By the end of this lesson, students should be able to:

- Add a reflection or analysis of the book to their introduction.

#### Terms and Concepts

By the end of the lesson, students should be familiar with the following:

- Finalizing a publication for print
- Proofread & edit
- Download & save audio files & PDF of their book

#### Skills Covered

- Present their introduction, analysis of the book and/or their writing/research experience.
- Discuss & give critical analysis of their own & other's content.

#### Resources

- [Project Evaluation Rubric](#)

#### Outcomes

- Finalizing format of books
- Download audio files & save
- Send book PDF links to your chosen printer

#### Procedure

**10-20 mins:** The teacher discusses the book presentation event details. Will you have a 'best book' winner or prize giving?

**30-40 mins: As a group or in pairs.**

Students discuss the whole book-creating experience. Start creating their 1 min presentation speech for the book presentation ceremony.

**HOMEWORK or REMOTE LESSON:** Students write a 1 minute presentation speech for the book-presentation ceremony.

## Lesson 10: Book Presentation - *synchronous*

### Overview

Students present their books at a presentation ceremony with their families or authentic audience.

#### Learning Objectives

##### Simple

By the end of this lesson, students understand:

- Public speaking
- Being a published author

##### Advanced

By the end of this lesson, students should be able to:

- Articulate a favorite moment during the book-creating experience.

#### Terms and Concepts

By the end of the lesson, students should be familiar with the following:

- Public speaking
- Published author

#### Skills Covered

- Present a major project to an authentic audience.
- Celebrate being a published author.

#### Resources

- [Project Evaluation Rubric](#)

#### Outcomes

- Students present their books to their families.
- Students celebrate a milestone in their life.
- Students gift or sell their finished book.

#### Procedure

**5-10 mins:** The teacher gives a speech to the students and families about the whole project, their reflection and the results.

**30-40 mins: Book presentation.**

One by one Students deliver their speech on their book-creating experience and present their digital or printed books to their families or audience.

**HOMEWORK or REMOTE LESSON:** Students complete the exit survey if required.