

# 'Britishness': English Biographies

## Famous Characters in History- A creative approach (SP/WP)

### Introduction

Inspiration for this project has been found in the BBC-series 'The Top Ten Great Britons'. Viewers were invited to take part in an inquiry: who is the most popular Briton? The top 100 was reduced to ten and the ten nominees were presented in a 50 minutes' programme to the public. The final vote led to the next result:

### Sir Winston Churchill: The Greatest of Them All

In November 2002, the British public voted Sir Winston Churchill the Greatest Briton of all time following a nationwide poll that attracted over a million votes.



The campaign began earlier in the year when over 30,000 people nominated their Greatest Briton. The **Top 100**

(<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/entertainment/2208671.stm>) were revealed in August, followed by a vote for the greatest of the Top Ten in October.

A selection of well-known faces championed the Greatest Britons in a series of documentaries.

The Top Ten Great Britons (and their champions) were:

- Winston Churchill - 456,498 votes (28.1%) - Mo Mowlam
- Isambard Kingdom Brunel - 398,526 votes (24.6%) - Jeremy Clarkson
- Diana, Princess of Wales - 225,584 votes (13.9%) - Rosie Boycott
- Charles Darwin - 112,496 votes (6.9%) - Andrew Marr
- William Shakespeare - 109,919 votes (6.8%) - Fiona Shaw
- Isaac Newton - 84,628 votes (5.2%) - Tristram Hunt
- Queen Elizabeth I - 71,928 votes (4.4%) - Michael Portillo
- John Lennon - 68,445 votes (4.2%) - Alan Davies
- Horatio Nelson - 49,171 votes (3%) - Lucy Moore
- Oliver Cromwell - 45,053 (2.8%) votes - Richard Holmes

We suggest the following celebrities. However, you can select other celebrities, provided you inform the teacher.

### Thirty Famous Britons

- |                             |               |
|-----------------------------|---------------|
| 1. William Turner           | painting      |
| 2. Sir Winston Churchill    | politician    |
| 3. Oliver Cromwell          | statesman     |
| 4. Charles Darwin           | scientist     |
| 5. Diana, Princess of Wales | royalty       |
| 6. Elizabeth I              | royalty       |
| 7. John Lennon              | popular music |
| 8. Admiral Horatio Nelson   | admiral       |
| 9. Sir Isaac Newton         | scientist     |
| 10. William Shakespeare     | literature    |
| 11. Charles Dickens         | literature    |
| 12. Sir Christopher Wren    | architecture  |
| 13. Tony Blair              | politician    |
| 14. Guy Fawkes              | anti-hero     |
| 15. Alexander Fleming       | scientist     |
| 16. King Henry VIII         | royalty       |
| 17. Florence Nightingale    | nurse         |
| 18. George Stephenson       | inventor      |
| 19. JRR Tolkien             | literature    |
| 20. Queen Victoria          | royalty       |

21. Cliff Richard	popular music
22. Constable	painting
23. Margaret Thatcher	politician
24. Rowan Atkinson	comedian
25. David Attenborough	tv presenter/ film director
26. Lord Baden Powell	youth movement
27. David Beckham	football player
28. Charlie Chaplin	comedian
29. Geoffrey Chaucer	literature
30. The Unknown Soldier	hero
Etc.	

Introduction <http://britannia.com/bios/azlist.htm>

You are about to work individually most of the time. For the next four lessons you will be working **independently**. You will work on **celebrities** as a topic.

You will be asked to work on computers, look up information in encyclopaedias, make choices about how you are going to divide up the work, how you will do your tasks and how you will pass on the information to the other students.

#### Assignment:

- **Work individually and select 2 celebrities**, from a list of 30 celebrities or of your own choice, from the English language field, do research on them, process the information into a worksheet like the example that will be given to you.
- Prepare an **oral presentation of one celebrity**. **Find arguments to prove that your first celebrity deserves to be elected 'the greatest Briton'**. Prepare a written task on the other celebrity that you have chosen. Make use of one of the three models given.

#### Materials:

- List of 30 famous Britons
- the world wide web
- an example sheet given by the teacher: Great Britons: Isambard Kingdom Brunel
- use an on-line dictionary <http://www.m-w.com> (Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary)
- look for additional materials (articles, video and audio tapes) on this topic
- photographs/paintings of the celebrities: National Portrait Gallery London ([www.npg.org.uk](http://www.npg.org.uk))

## 'Britishness': English Biographies: famous characters in history- A creative approach (SP)


Your first speaking assignment of this year will be presenting a contender for the competition 'The Greatest Briton' of all times.

### Requirements

- This assignment is to be performed alone.
- Every Brit can only be a contender once.
- Presentations will start from **11 november 2013** onwards.

→ **What I expect you to hand in** by the start of your speech is a **FACT FILE**

Please, see the model about **ISAMBARD KINGDOM BRUNEL**

<b>Year of birth – year of death</b>	1806 – 1859
<b>Biography</b>	The son of a French engineer, Brunel was born in Portsmouth and educated at Hove and the Collège Henri Quatre, Paris. He returned to England in 1823.
<b>Achievements</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. His first major achievement was to take part in planning (with his father) the Thames Tunnel from Rotherhithe to Wapping; the tunnel was finally completed in 1843.</li><li>2. Then he planned the Clifton Suspension Bridge, over the river Avon, which was completed after his death in 1864, using chains from his own Hungerford Suspension Bridge.</li><li>3. He built 3 extraordinary steam-powered ships, a revolution for maritime travel. One of his ships, the <i>SS Great Britain</i>, the first iron ship with screw-propellers to cross the Atlantic, survives today and can still be visited in Bristol.</li><li>4. He is best remembered for his construction of a network of tunnels, bridges and viaducts for the Great Western Railway.</li></ol>
<b>Why I have selected him/her</b>	Brunel built modern Britain in a century when Britain built the world.
<b>Photograph</b>	<p>The Internet – Google</p> 
<b>Did you know?</b>	He smoked 40 cigars a day, kept in a purpose-built bag, which he carried with him at all times.

→ **What I expect you to discuss:**

- The **biographical** information: an overview of their life, their career, their deeds, their achievements.
- A minimum of **five arguments** why he or she is a worthy winner. Additionally: possible or typical criticisms and their refutation.

- The two points mentioned above are a guideline about the content, not about the order in which it must be presented; do feel free to mix up and change the order of the information you want to convey.
- I have tried to help you by providing you a grid in which you can select and sort (a first series of) relevant biographical information. Now it is up to you to consult several sources and fill in the grid, checking and double-checking the information. Afterwards you can start writing your speech from that document.
- It can include a power point presentation, but make sure it is functional. Pay more attention to content than to slide transitions and colour schemes. Do not include/insert too much YouTube footage, because we are on a tight time schedule.

I will judge you on:

- The completeness of all the information mentioned above. Five minutes should suffice.
- The way you speak: volume, intonation, intonation, articulation, pace & pause, your accent and pronunciation (the words themselves, final sounds, th, word stress).
- Your grammar and vocabulary. Choose the right word, use the correct tense in the context , put phrases in their right place,...
- It is a SPEAKING ASSIGNMENT, so I will be strict on how you present your content: do you address an audience or do you read a text without any eye contact with your audience? However, you are allowed to take a slip of paper with you with some key phrases.

Good Luck!

Who? (Biographical data)	
What? (Achievement, famous for what reason)	
Where? (Place of achievements)	
When? Period (lifetime and possibly beyond)	
How? (Way success was achieved)	
Why? (Reasons for them to be remembered)	
Sure? Yes (doubts, criticisms)	
Trivia:... (Did you know that...)	
Other: (Anything not in the categories above)	

## Peer-evaluation:

Indicate the number from the following scale that reflects your assessment of the student's or group's work.

1 = Weak 2 = Moderately Weak 3 = Average 4 = Moderately Strong 5 = Strong

<b>Statement</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
1. The presentation appears to be well researched.					
2. The presentation indicates an ability to synthesize information and understand cause and effect relationships.					
3. The student introduces the topic in a clear, lively, and interesting fashion.					
4. The student expresses a firm opinion, along with supporting reasons, in a single sentence.					
5. The student establishes criteria or standards upon which his/her opinion is based.					
6. The student supports the opinion with identifiable reasons and concrete evidence.					
7. The student acknowledges opposing viewpoints and addresses contradictory evidence.					
8. The student concludes with a restatement of the expressed opinion that encourages either agreement or action from the audience.					
9. Presentation aids improved the presentation or reinforced main points.					
10. Overall, the presentation represents the individual's full potential.					
<b>Additional Comments:</b>					

Please turn over!

**Oral presentation rubric** <http://rubistar.4teachers.org/index.php>

	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Vocabulary</b>	Uses a varied vocabulary appropriate for the audience, and also successfully tries to enlarge the audience's vocabulary.	Uses a varied vocabulary that is appropriate for the audience.	Uses a varied vocabulary that is occasionally a little too simple or a little too hard for the audience.	Vocabulary was not varied or was routinely inappropriate for the intended audience.
<b>Content</b>	Shows a full understanding of the topic.	Shows a good understanding of the topic.	Shows a sufficient understanding of parts of the topic.	Does not seem to understand the topic very well.
<b>Rebuttal /defence</b>	All counter-arguments were accurate, relevant and strong.	Most counter-arguments were accurate, relevant, and strong.	Most counter-arguments were accurate and relevant, but several were weak.	Counter-arguments were not accurate and/or relevant
<b>Voice</b>	Always speaks loudly, slowly and clearly. Is easily understood by all audience members all the time	Usually speaks loudly, slowly and clearly. Is easily understood by all audience members almost all the time.	Usually speaks loudly and clearly. Speaks so fast sometimes that audience has trouble understanding.	Speaks too softly or mumbles. The audience often has trouble understanding.
<b>posture &amp; eye-contact</b>	Stands up straight, looks relaxed and confident. Establishes eye contact with everyone in the room during the presentation	Stands up straight and establishes eye contact with everyone in the room during the presentation.	Sometimes stands up straight and establishes eye contact.	Slouches and/or does not look at people during the presentation.
<b>GRAND TOTAL /20</b>				

## English Biographies: famous characters in history- A creative approach

After your first speaking assignment, in which you presented a Greatest Briton contender, your writing assignment will be about your second choice of celebrity.

Now all collected material about your second celebrity should be processed into a creative piece of writing, which you have to hand in on **November 2013**. Some suggestions:

1. Write a newspaper article ( for instance King Henry VIII)
2. A personal diary
3. My life in a box

### 1. WRITING A NEWSPAPER ARTICLE ( 2 examples)

Write a newspaper covering an event that is linked with your celebrity.  
Make up an original headline.

Example : From The Sun, Tuesday, June 12, 1543

#### THE JOY OF SIX King Henry to wed AGAIN



Six maniac ... Henry has already executed two wives, but now he's found another

ROYAL EXCLUSIVE

By BEA HEADER Royal Reporter

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King Henry is to marry for the sixth time, The Sun can reveal.

His bride will be 31-year-old Catherine Parr, a twice-widowed country squire's daughter. Last night sources close the King at Hampton Court were calling Catherine "the bravest woman in Britain".

Her marriage, on July 12, will come only 18 months after Henry had fifth wife Catherine Howard beheaded at the Tower of London. She was the second wife executed on orders of the roly-poly Royal. He has divorced two others.

Catherine is said to be "bright, sensitive and caring".

And that might be just the tonic for 52-year-old Henry, who has been ill for some time.

One source said: "Maybe he's finally found the right woman. If she's lucky she might even survive him!

In next week's edition: Cath ... is she the Miss Parr-fect?

## **Neville Chamberlain and Adolf Hitler sign treaty October 1st 1938**

*Berlin - Prime Minister Chamberlain has announced after returning from the Munich Conference, that the German Führer has accepted a proposal to conserve peace on the Continent in exchange for part of the annexed territories.*

Mr. Chamberlain's efforts of appeasement of the German war for hunger seems to be working. Despite warnings from within and without Mr. Chamberlain's Conservative Party that Mr. Hitler's pledge is never to be trusted, he was proud to announce yesterday that Mr. Hitler has agreed not declare war or invade other countries in exchange for Austria and Sudetenland.

Austria was absorbed into the Reich by popular consent in March. Sudetenland, a part of Czechoslovakia along the German border, was annexed with brute force in September.

Prague has announced not to be pleased with the outcome of the Conference, since with Sudetenland, the country loses a large part of its industry and natural resources.

What is even worse, no Czech delegation was invited to the conference, organized by the Italian leader Benito Mussolini. Prague therefore has every right to feel betrayed. None the participating countries will support Prague if it resist the annexation with military force.

Whether this will still German hunger for war and more annexations, remains to be seen. Mr. Hitler has promised not to annex the remaining part of Czechoslovakia since the part with the largest German community now belongs to the German Reich.

Chamberlain is hopeful that with this treaty, a new World War had been avoided, calling it 'peace in our time'. The world lets out a sigh of relief, but is now living on hope that Mr. Hitler will keep his promise.



## 2: A PERSONAL DIARY - The year is ..... and today I .....

### Moment 1:

The year is .....

The occasion: .....

Today .... (complete the diary entry)

### Moment 2:

The year is .....

The occasion: .....

Today .... (complete the diary entry)

### Moment 3

The year is .....

The occasion: .....

Today .... (complete the diary entry)

### Moment 4

The year is .....

The occasion: .....

Today .... (complete the diary entry)

### 3. MY LIFE IN A BOX: THIS IS HIS/HER LIFE: .....

## MY LIFE IN A BOX

### Imagine...

Some time after the death of the character you want to pay tribute to, his wife/her husband and children searched the attic and found a box in which they discovered five objects which were of special importance to their owner, because they reminded him/her of five most important moments in his/her life.

### Now...

Having studied the man's/woman's biography you should be able to fill a box (cigar box, shoe box, ...) with five seemingly small, trivial objects. Each object however must be accompanied by some comment(ary) highlighting the importance of the moment the object "commemorates".

## WORKSHEET

<b><u>Object 1:</u></b>	
<b><u>Object 2:</u></b>	
<b><u>Object 3:</u></b>	
<b><u>Object 4:</u></b>	
<b><u>Object 5:</u></b>	

Pay attention to the following:

- Mind the use of tenses, since you are 'in the present' of the moment these things happened.
- You have the advantage of hindsight; since you know what happened afterwards, you can go two ways: either predict what you know happened next, or the complete opposite.

I will judge you on:

- The completeness of all the information mentioned above.
- Your grammar and spelling.
- The logical structure of your article: one piece of information per paragraph, the chronology (and its reflection in the tenses).
- Is this your own writing or a (partial) copy-paste from other sources? To avoid this issue, adopt the following technique: first consult several unrelated sources, then shut down your browser and start writing down what you remember in your own words. You can perform step two even in Dutch if that works more easily at that stage, but bear in mind you will have to compensate by translating afterwards.

Good luck!