

## Black History Project—Part II

Greetings, Historians,

You are now well on your way to becoming an expert on the influential person from Black history you have been researching for the past two-plus months (that is assuming, of course, that you have actually been investing in the work—if not, step to it!). Perhaps you are now thinking about them at unexpected moments, and perhaps when you do you are using their first name...

The investigation and research does not stop here: truly, it continues until you submit your final project. But we are going to outline here what that final project will look like—what the “container” is, so to speak.

You will be given a brand, spanking new comp book (thank you so much, Prof. Ogion—so benevolent and generous!). Your task is to make that comp book the comp book of the person you are exploring. You can take that literally—as if they themselves were using the comp book as a journal or notebook or scrapbook; or you can take that less literally—as a book containing your own celebrations and thoughts about their life and accomplishments.

The guiding questions remain the same:

### Big Ideas

What allows one person to break through impossibly strong barriers that have blocked others?

How does the shifting environment—physical, as well as experiential—of someone’s life shape the person they become?

Are leaders/change-makers born or made?

...but I’d also like to add a guiding statement to the mix:

### Perhaps the Biggest Idea

**Celebrate** this person, in all their complexity. Help us see them in four dimensions, as a full-formed human being, worked upon by Time.

This is where you take all the facts you have collected and the **How** and **Why** you have been generating in your brilliant minds and share with us the things you have found on your journey.

As previously noted, this project will be part of your assessment in Social Studies, Language Arts, Art, Career, and Applied Design, Skills, and Technologies (ADST). I'm also open to hearing arguments about how you are using other skills such as Math, Music, French, Science, or PHE in your work...

There are some required elements that you will need to address; after that, you can do whatever you like in the name of bringing this person to life within the confines of the comp book. Allow your imagination and creative thinking to steer the ship, but also make sure you are meeting the criteria.

### Style

We will be using skills we have practiced throughout the year, as introduced to us by that genius of geniuses, Lynda Barry, as well as other, new-to-you techniques from her books. Think Index Cards, Daily Diary, Mapping, Doodle Collages, etc. I will post her notes on these exercises on our class blog. Please be very active in your exploration of these resources.

Your new comp book will also contain all of your planning, exploration, and practice, so that each section shows your process before exploding into the final version of each element. This includes drafts, sketches, brainstorming, and the testing out of materials and ideas until you feel confident and ready to commit. You are also encouraged to test various techniques if you are exploring things like paint, felts, or other mediums, before you commit to each item in the new book. A large part of your ADST assessment will come from the degree to which you invest in exploration and practice (while still managing your time).

You are unlimited in terms of the types of materials you use (feel free to take things from the Tower o' Stuff), and you may alter the comp book in whatever way you wish.

## Criteria

These are certain areas of **content** and there are certain **techniques or containers** that need to be represented in your work.

Note: you can combine aspects of the criteria; they do not need to be separate entities. You can combine content and containers, and you can also combine content and/or combine containers.

Required Elements	
Containers	Content
Cover	Leaders/Change-makers: <b>born or made?</b>
Timeline	What <b>skills</b> did/does your research figure demonstrate mastery of?
Poem	What are the details of those skills?
Story	How <b>experiences</b> and <b>events</b> shape someone's values, beliefs, views, and actions
At least two (2) Daily Diaries/ Review Frames	How <b>place</b> shapes someone's values, beliefs, views, and actions
At least one Lynda Barry-style "walk" (map)	<b>Legacy:</b> how has your research figure changed things for other people?
At least one Lynda Barry-style collage	How exploring the life of your research figure has <b>changed you</b>
Bibliography	
<i>Optional:</i> other Lynda Barry techniques (ask Prof. Ogion to borrow her books)	

In all aspects, **clarity of communication**—in writing and visually—is key.

## 1. A COVER.

Your cover needs to present a **portrait of the person you have researched**. This portrait can be done in whatever medium you choose (pencil crayon, watercolor, a text drawing [look it up!], pen, etc.) and can take any form, from full-body to a close-up of his or her face.

**Your cover also needs to have a title.** Your title might take this form:

\_\_\_\_\_ : The \_\_\_\_\_ Life of \_\_\_\_\_  
[creative title] [adjective] [name]

Or you can put your own spin on that idea. Regardless, your title needs to contain the name of your research topic and **in some way capture their spirit**. How you print your title is up to you, but it needs to be clearly legible.

**Your cover needs to also have your class name**, as the author (“By \_\_\_\_\_”). The title and your name also need to be printed/painted/made visible on the spine of your book.

Your cover can contain other elements (not required), but the portrait, title, and your name as author need to be the stars of the show.

A successful cover will be **balanced** (demonstrate a thoughtful use of space) and convey **the spirit** of your person.

**Extending:** If you are extending yourself in this area, your work will be done with a strong attempt at precision and attention to detail (without spending all of your time on this and neglecting the rest of the book!)

## 2. A TIME LINE

A successful timeline will mark not just the usual **important events** in a person's life (date of birth, death, graduation, etc.), it will also mark the **interesting events**, and, most importantly, the **events that shaped the person they became**.

A successful timeline will also communicate ideas **visually**, as well as textually—and it will be formed in such a way that it is interesting to spend time with and look at.

Other things to keep in mind:

- A timeline is sequential (done in chronological order, from earliest to latest date).
- The dates in the timeline are written with consistency (i.e., either all January 1, 2017; or all 01/01/17; or all January 2017).
- Benchmark dates can help your reader follow the information (i.e. 1800, 1850, 1900, 1950, etc.).
- Your timeline might begin with the date of birth of your influential figure, or you might choose to focus in on the details of a specific important period of time in their life.
- Ideally, your information is neatly presented and easy to read. Think about how color, labels, and/or a legend could help with clarity or to categorize the types of events that you are placing on your timeline.

**Extending:** if you wish to extend your abilities in this area, you might also note national and world events that were occurring that your person might have been aware of and/or that might have shaped their values, beliefs, and world views. We will look at a chronology Philip Pullman created of his own life as a potential model for this aspect.

Extending your abilities in this area might also look like finding ways to share your ideas of **How** and **Why** within or around your timeline.

### 3. A POEM

Your poem needs to be inspired by the life of the person you have researched. **It can be written in any form** – rhyming couplets, free verse, haiku, diamante, concrete/shape, sonnet (“gasp!”) etc. The choice is yours.

You might also wish to explore techniques such as blackout poems or cut-and-paste with found text.

Regardless of form, your poem will ideally clearly reflect the person you have researched and the effect their life and work has had on you and/or others. **A successful poem will use structure for effect, have careful thought put into the last word of each line, and be written from your heart.**

**Consider:** how does the page the poem is presented on help reflect, amplify, or highlight the poem?

**Extending:** in terms of the **written aspect** of this element, if you wish to extend yourself in this area you will be working to bring insight and depth and complexity of thinking to your work, while still writing from your heart.

In terms of the **visual aspect** of this element, if you wish to extend yourself you will be working to make the poem itself and the page design a cohesive whole.

#### 4. A STORY

We will look at some examples of two different Lynda Barry-style visual short stories techniques, from her books *One! Hundred! Demons!* and *What It Is* (Gary FTWI).

##### Shared Criteria

- all text is written in capital letters
- legible text
- makes the reader think
- uncluttered structure with attention to meaningful detail
- spelling, grammar, and punctuation totally count

##### *One! Hundred! Demons!*-style criteria:

- at least six (panels) in length
- follows Lynda Barry's format with each panel being approximately ½ text and ½ drawing

##### *What It Is*-style criteria

- at least three pages in length
- balance between text and visuals—and text and visuals add meaning and clarity to each other

##### Options for content

- a key moment in your research figure's life—this could be a major event or a tiny moment that shifted their thinking
- a fictional imagining of you interacting with your research figure
- how your research into your research figure changed your way of thinking about yourself, other people, or the world

**Extending:** in the **written aspect** of your story, you will be using storytelling techniques to draw the reader in, hold their attention, and make them think, and you will be demonstrating insight into the essence of your research topic's being.

In the **design/visual aspect** of the work, you would be striving to bring precision and attention to meaningful detail to your work, and you might be using comic book techniques to focus and lead the viewer's eye.

## 5. DAILY DIARY/REVIEW FRAMES

You know the drill with this one: a concentration spiral, two pages of image building, and then one page divided between drawing and writing.

**You are strongly urged** to use the three videos posted on the blog of Lynda Barry guiding this activity to help generate **a rough draft** of your work. You can then go back and make edits/changes/additions after.

**At least one** of your Daily Diary/Review Frames **needs to be written from the point of view of your research figure.**

1. Choose a specific moment in their lives—this could be a known major event or a very minor imagined moment
2. Take time to imagine yourself in their shoes—trust in the research you have done; allow that to give you relaxed confidence
3. Create your first page: Did, Saw, Heard, Question
4. Choose an image from that page to open up—circle it
5. In your own comp book, make an X-page image attractor and place yourself within the image, as your research figure
6. Use the video of Lynda Barry giving X-page prompts (posted on class blog: Language Arts: Part 2 of the three videos embedded there; you can use all three videos if you'd like Lynda Barry to guide you through the whole Daily Dairy process) to flesh out the image
7. On the second page make a half-page frame
8. Draw your research figure, full body, in that scene—focus on the details of the setting.
9. Write “I am...” and then write in the first-person, present tense
10. Title the second page as you would with a regular Daily Diary: the name of the scene, with the approximate date/time

For your **second** Daily Diary/Review Frame, you can **either** repeat the above **or** find a new source (article, chapter of a book, interview, video, movie, etc.) and then do a Review Frame **after** reading or viewing.

In this option, follow the above instructions, but your first page will be:

- **Happened**—things you remember from the material you explored
- **Saw**—what images were formed in your head as you read or viewed the material
- **Quote**—a quote from the material that strikes you as important, meaningful, or interesting
- **Questions**—what is something that you are now curious about?

Your second page will be:

- A drawing of you engaging in the material, with representations of the images and thoughts it created in your head
- A written section—“I am...”—that places us inside your head while you were engaging in the material
- Titled with the date and time and the name of the source you explored

**Extending:** if you are extending yourself in this area, you be striving to bring specificity and meaningful detail to your images, in words and in drawing.

## 6. A WALK/MAP

Just like we have done with mapping out your Winter and Spring Breaks and the occasional weekend, and a familiar walk, you will follow Lynda Barry's format (see class blog).

### Options

- Important moments in your research figure's life—ideally, this is a combination of major events and small “sliding door” moments
- The details of one extended moment in your research figure's life
- An actual walk that they may have taken
- An actual journey they undertook
- Your journey, researching this person and exploring their life

Remember that this aspect is a balance of visuals and text.

**Extending:** if you are extending yourself in this area, you will be working with attention to detail, and you will be going beyond the required six containers to fill the page with images in pictures and words

## 7. A COLLAGE

Before beginning this, spend some time exploring the Lynda Barry collages on the class blog and in the books available in the room.

What do you notice about how she approaches this work? Some things that I am noticing:

- She asks an evocative question
- She includes evocative text and images
- She uses a variety of materials
- The collage works as a page, but each section also works as a mini-piece of art
- Doodles help define space

A successful collage will make the viewer think.

**Extending:** if you are wishing to extend yourself in this area, from a **visual perspective** your work will have meaning both in the individual details that make up the page and in the page as a whole. From a **content perspective**, you will be attempting to bring depth and complexity to your work by raising an evocative question and suggesting insightful answers.

## 8. OPTIONAL

If you have time, please feel very free to explore other Lynda Barry techniques on the blog and in her books (for example, the X-page observe-the-object-as-it-observes-you technique we have explored) and create additional pages in your book.

If there are other non-Lynda Barry techniques/containers you would like to explore, just let me know.

Those who are interested might looking into visual journal and altered book techniques.

Regardless of style, please keep clarity of communication—in writing and visually—in mind.

## 9. A BIBLIOGRAPHY

The last page of your work will need to be a bibliography listing all sources you used in proper MLA format. We will explore this in class.

The criteria for sources is outlined in the Part I project outline.

**Consider:** how might the design of the page make us actually want to spend time with a boring old bibliography? How might the spirit of your research figure be reflected even in this work?

## Time Management

Time management will be a huge part of this project. You will need to have a plan for yourself and you will need to be working on this **every day**, at school, and at home.

I will try my best to have work blocks on every day except for Fridays and to limit other homework commitments, but you will need to the sum of our exploration of time management skills—checklists, calendars, S.M.A.R.T. goals, CEC and equanimity, positive attitude, pre-thinking obstacles and solutions—to use in aid of this work.

Before you begin, I highly suggest rereading this outline and making a checklist for yourself.

**If you are struggling, come to me right away.**

Help each other.

Help yourself. Remember: you have choices. How you engage with this work is up to you, each day.

## Work Blocks

Keep in mind that a key part of the curriculum is to actively work to help create an **efficient and productive work environment** that is respectful, inclusive, and positive.

An efficient environment is one in which we allow ourselves and others to focus on the work; we clean up after ourselves and help others do the same; we give constructive, non-judgemental advice when asked and we receive advice objectively, not as a reflection of our worth as a person; and we are aware of what is going on around us: who is struggling? Who needs a soundboard? Who needs an extra hand? Who needs help?

## Tips

- Set up a system for yourself early on: checklist, backwards schedule, at school and at home routine, etc.
- Ask Prof. Ogion for help when you are unsure or stuck or worried: smart, strong people ask for help
- Use the breath to help you relax, focus, and find images
- Use other CEC techniques when you get distracted or discouraged: you don't have to believe everything you think

**Good luck!**

Remember that you have a responsibility to tell this story with respect for this person's life and the ideals that they represent. Remember, too, that we are trying to go beyond just a collection and recitation of facts, into a deeper examination of what all of those facts tell us about this person and their time and environment. Think "why" and "how." Think Depth and Complexity.

Dare to care—dare to take pleasure in the work, to actually allow yourself to enjoy it—and **dig deep!**