

Historical Dossier

An Optional Assignment For U.S. History

Objective:

This optional assignment will require that you put together a biography on a historical person using the concept of a dossier. A dossier is simply a folder that contains all the important papers, pictures and documents from a person's life.



Procedure:

Select a historical figure and begin collecting personal data on the individual. You will be collecting the same data that you would if you were going to write a biography. You'll need a personal history of the person as well as a professional history of the individual, noting all the significant events and dates in that person's life. Instead of writing a biography, however, you will put together a dossier.

Here's how it works:

Let me use an example to show you how this concept works. Let's say you choose President Billy Bob Jethro for your project and your research shows that he was born on April 6, 1841 in Atlanta, Georgia. You would include this information in a biography by writing: "President Billy Bob Jethro was born on April 6, 1841 in Atlanta Georgia."

In a dossier, however, this information is all covered in . . . a birth certificate!

Granted, you can't actually use a historical person's birth certificate so you'll have to create one. This is where the creativity of the project comes in. In addition to the birth certificate, you'll want to include (create!) documents, letters, awards and photographs that highlight all the important events of this person's life.

Be sure to arrange the information chronologically so that we understand the progression of this individual's life.

Final Notes:

Be creative with this! While neatness is a must, keep in mind that a person's dossier would be constructed over many years, so the documents inside of it would not be the same size, shape or even on the same kind of paper. Try to come up with creative ways of noting an event in that person's life. Formal documents are good (birth certificates, diploma's, etc.) but informal (letters, newspaper articles, etc.) can really add depth to the project.

Due Date:

The dossier, neatly arranged and attached inside a dossier folder, is due the Friday before final exam week. The entire project is worth 50 optional assignment points.