



You Are the Author of Your Life Story

This lesson is designed to help students think about their unique selves and purpose in life, in preparation for exploring future career choices and considering how school helps them prepare for their life mission and work.

Essential Question

How does my learning at school help me prepare to become the person I want to be?

Guiding Question

Who am I and what are my unique qualities?

Objectives

- Students will explore their own personality, values, talents, skills, interests and goals.

Advance Preparation

- Prepare 1-minute dedication of the lesson to an important person in your life, and an explanation to the class of how they will be invited to do this.
- Have a sign-up sheet ready to list student volunteers for Lesson Dedication on specific days.
- Review introductory material to prepare for presentation (including discussion questions for 5 lines of “I Know My Soul”).
- Prepare copies of student materials; place Do Now (“A Few Fast Facts”) for students to pick up.

Materials/Resources

- PowerPoint slideshow 1.2 (adapt as needed)

Student Materials

- “A Few Fast Facts” Do Now sheet
- “You Are the Author of Your Life Story” reading
- “Starring Role in Your Life Story” brainstorming sheet

Vocabulary

- pluck

Do Now

5 min.

Slide 1: Students fill out the sheet “A Few Fast Facts About Me” (included below).

Introduction (Framing/Overview)

10 min.

1. Slide 3: Model Lesson Dedication (30-60 seconds) and invite students to volunteer to do short dedications for future class periods (see <https://www.edutopia.org/article/daily-ritual-builds-trust-and-community-among-students>). Assign volunteers to upcoming dates. Review the day’s agenda (slide 4).

Slide 5: talk about the importance of reflecting on who we are and what our purpose is in life, using the Hebrew poet quotation (slide 6) and first lines of “I Know My Soul.” Lead a short discussion about “I Know My Soul” (slide 7) by telling students that Claude McKay was a poet born in Jamaica who played a large role in the Harlem Renaissance in the early 1900s. One of his poems is titled: “I Know My Soul.”

Invite students to listen as you read the first five lines of this poem, and to begin to think about their unique selves, how they form a community with others, and their purpose for learning as they continue in their schooling.

I plucked my soul out of its secret place,
And held it to the mirror of my eye,
To see it like a star against the sky,
A twitching body quivering in space,
A spark of passion shining on my face.

Lead students in a short discussion of the poem, using the following questions:

- Slide 8: What comes to mind for you when you hear a person say: *I plucked my soul out of its secret place*?
 - Slide 9: What do you think McKay means by “*held it to the mirror of my eye*”?
 - Slide 10: What things does he compare his soul to? How does it make you feel to think of your soul in these ways?
 - Why do think it is a good thing to spend time looking inward and seeking to know yourself better?
2. Slide 11: Introduce the idea that “you are the author of your life story,” and the importance of reflecting on your personality, interests, talents, skills, values, and goals as you think about your future (slide 12).

Activity 1:

10 min.

1. Slide 13: Students read “You Are the Author of Your Life Story” out loud with a partner (copy at end of this lesson guide).

**Partner
Reading****Activity 2:**

20 min.

2. Slide 14: Students use the “A Starring Role in Your Life Story” brainstorming sheet (at end of lesson guide) to summarize their personality, interests, talents, skills, values, and goals.
3. Slide 15: Students share what they have written in this brainstorming sheet and the Do Now sheet (“A Few Fast Facts”) with a partner or small group.

**Individual
brainstorming/
writing****Partner or
small group
discussion****Closure**

4. Slide 16: Tell students they will use their brainstorming activities from today to express their identity creatively in the next lesson.

Extensions/ Homework

As homework, have students begin a personal “Strategies for Success” journal. Their first journal entry could be a paragraph on things they hope to learn from this class.

DO NOW:

A Few Fast Facts About Me

1. One thing I am good at is _____.
2. Activities I enjoy doing (my hobbies) include _____
_____.
3. When I think about work I might do as an adult, I think it would be exciting to
_____.
4. When I think about work I might do as an adult, I think it would be boring to
_____.
5. My favorite subject in school is _____.
6. The subject I find hardest is _____.
7. I would rather work with people than work alone to get a job done.

Yes No

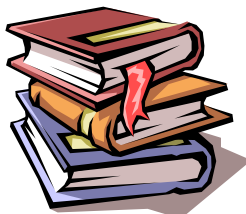
“We work to discover both who we are and why we are.”

Kenneth B. Hoyt

“The Father of Career Education”



You Are the Author of Your Life Story...



You may not have realized it, but you are an author. *You* are the author of your life story. Your story has a beginning, middle, and end. It has characters and a plot. It is full of events and emotion. Your story is non-fiction and it is totally unique... there's not another like it. You are writing your story now, and it is a good one.

The subject of your story is *life*. *Your life*. Your life yesterday, today, and tomorrow. It's really quite a story—full of adventure and obstacles, victories and defeats. It tells the drama of your past experience and the mystery of your future. There are heroes and villains, friends and foes. There are chapters of celebration and chapters of pain.

This story is yours. Write it as you wish and
tell us the story...

To begin... A story usually revolves around the main character, so your first job as an author is to create the main character. In *your* story, **you** are the main character. And *you* are a fascinating character! You have a personality, feelings, talents, and your own ideas. You have style, hobbies, and likes and dislikes. All of these make up different parts of your story, just as they make up different parts of you.

Let's begin our story with a description of you. To describe a person, you may use terms like:

Personality
Values
Interests
Skills
Talents
Goals

These words describe a person's *character*. This is the "stuff" someone is made of. Let's look at these words a little more closely before we use them...

Here are some examples to help us understand exactly what each word means. Remember, these are just examples—there are many more possibilities in each category!

Personality

This describes the way a person acts or behaves.

Example: "Jack has an outgoing personality."

Some words to describe personality include:

outgoing	shy
honest	dependable
serious	easy-going
confident	sensitive
hardworking	lively
fun-loving	anxious

Values

Values are the ideals or principles a person considers most worthwhile.

Example: "My English teacher values learning; she makes sure we understand new material."

People have different values. Here are some possible ones:

family	hard work
education	wealth
faith	moral living
friendship	leadership
success	justice

Interests

Interests are things or people a person most wants to be with, learn about, or focus on.

Example: "Ryan has a strong interest in the arts."

Some examples of different people's interests are:

art	books
children	travel
history	fashion
nature	fitness
sports	technology

Skills

Skills are abilities a person has learned and developed.

Example: "Amber's math skills really help in her job."

Skills and talents are similar. A person's skills could include:

riding a bike
giving a speech
using computers
painting a house
playing basketball
being a caregiver
relating to people
teaching
using science
selling a product
repairing things
taking photographs

Talents

Talents are a person's special *natural* abilities.

Example: "Acting is one of Dion's many talents."

Talents come from natural abilities. A person's talent could be almost anything. Consider these talents and abilities:

athletic talent
ability to persuade others
artistic talent
problem-solving ability
musical talent
mechanical talent
writing talent
ability to figure things out
leadership ability
organizing ability
talent for math

Goals

Goals are things people hope to achieve or accomplish.

Example: "My mom's goal is to see her children graduate from college."

Goals, like values, vary from person to person. People work to achieve their chosen goals. Here are some possible goals:

finding happiness
loving others
influencing society
building a strong family
reaching a high-level job
becoming wealthy
receiving recognition
acquiring knowledge
becoming wise
being a good person



The Starring Role in Your Life Story

You have the starring role in the story of your life. What are you like as a character? What makes you tick? You are a uniquely complex person filled to the brim with special qualities.

Over the next few weeks you will do activities designed to help you know your desires, interests, and skills. If you know yourself, you will be able to make wise choices for yourself and for your future schooling and career. A career that is in line with your personal qualities, skills and goals, is a *meaningful* career. And a meaningful career is a *satisfying* one.

In order to get started, complete the boxes below.

Two words that describe my **personality** are

The things I **value** most in life are

Some of my natural **talents** include

Things I am most **interested** in are

One **goal** that I would like to achieve in my life is

Some of the **skills I hope to acquire** include
