



A BOOK by ME (ABBM) Instructions

Complete Checklist for A BOOK by ME

- As this is a six-week project, please ensure you have the time to complete
- Choose a subject for the book
- Who is the Young Author
- Who is the Young Artist
- Who is the adult Writing Coach
- Register project online (link below)
- Send in a sample of artwork to contact@understandingworks.org (Subject line of emails must be consistent. Use your book subject's first and last name for all email communications)
- Watch videos as a team and discuss
- Read writer's guidelines
- Adult Writing Coach sets up meeting with subject for interview (in person or on Zoom)
- Review interview tips and add questions of your own
- Take several pictures with your subject (take in good lighting for sharp image)
- Get copies of old photos of subject (10-12) spanning their life
- Write, edit, and consult with Writing Coach
- Artist illustrates project
- Complete ten-page book project
- Scan artwork (must be a high-resolution scan to a pdf to be print worthy - all 11 pages including the book cover)
- Submit to contact@understandingworks.org

Suggested Timeline for a Six-Week Writing Project

Week One:

1. Learn about writing project, read through website, review videos and writer's guidelines
2. Choose a subject
3. Register book project [here](#)

Week Two:

1. Interview subject
2. Ask the subject or their family for 10-12 photos to include in the published storybook. Digital photos are best for the project but if not, photos need to be scanned at the best quality possible.
3. Research the time period and include important facts in your storytelling. Also, the artist should research photos to see the styles including use of colors to make sure images align with the time period. (use reliable sources)
4. Make a list of open-ended questions to ask the subject
5. Arrange interview with subject (author, illustrator and writing coach should all attend if possible)
6. Video record the interview (after getting consent from your subject)



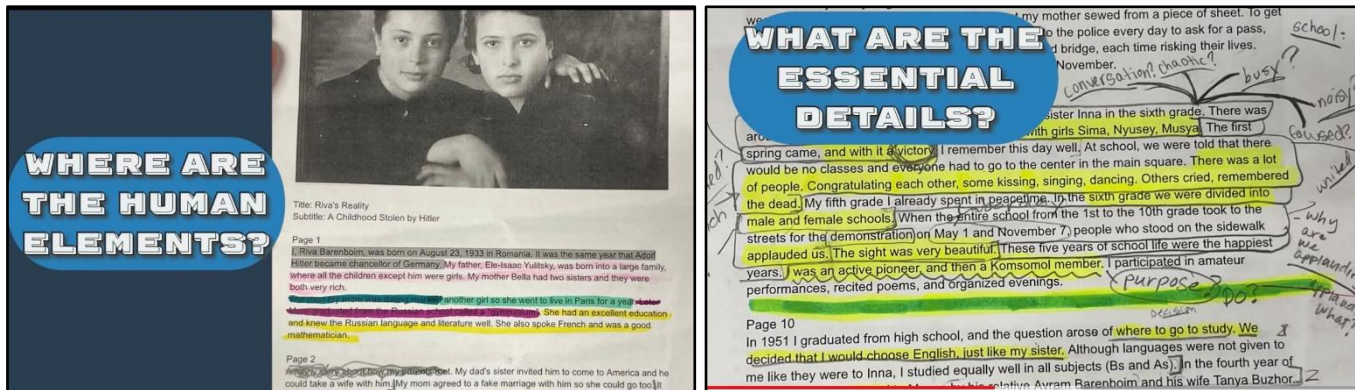
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Week Three:

1. Send thank you note to subject
2. Choose book title and discuss artwork with illustrator
3. Artist begins to create artwork for the book cover
4. Write ten-page script (share a brief description of ten-page script so artist can start imagining and sketching their drawings)

Week Four:

1. Write and edit ten-page script in a Microsoft Word Document
2. Clearly define what text goes on which page i.e. Page 1, Page 2, Page 3, etc.
3. Share ten-page text with artist
4. Edit work with Writing Coach



Week Five:

1. Finish the art for each page (plus cover art)
2. Scan each illustration naming each file according to page number
3. Writing Coach completes two-page bio for back of book (include educational research of people or places your subject encountered) and back cover summary (details below)

Week Six:

1. Complete About the Author and About the Illustrator page and Dear Reader page (below) with help of Writing Coach
2. Think about what the project has meant to you and mention on either Dear Reader or the author / illustrator page
3. Have Writing Coach submit the project to contact@understandingworks.org
4. Please email contact@understandingworks.org if additional time is needed due to special circumstances



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Additional Notes for Writing Coach

1. Arrange a meeting with the subject in person or via Zoom. Let the subject know the interview typically takes an hour.
2. Subject should be notified to bring 10-12 photos of their youth, teen years, significant events and their family. If the subject does not have a digital copy of these photos, you can 1) take a clear picture of the photograph using a cell phone 2) stop at a copy center or your local library, get a digital scan and immediately return the photos to the subject 3) take the photos home to scan and return the photos to the subject.
3. Take several photos of the young author/illustrator with their subject. Because it will be included in the book, please make sure the photo is clear.
4. Notify the subject they will need to sign a release. The official release will be sent with a proof copy of the subject's book during the first stage of publishing. After the project is complete, the subject will have the opportunity to edit their storybook as needed.
5. Author and illustrator's parents will need to sign releases as well.
6. Take detailed notes so that you can write a two-page biography of the subject. Write down dates as well. A list of dates is needed (birthday, shipped out, wedding, ect.) for the timeline created by ABBM staff.
7. Ask permission to record the interview if you are able. It's beneficial if you or the kids have trouble remembering details later.
8. Encourage the author to follow up with a thank you card.

Writing

Encourage the author to type their book on a Microsoft Word Document. This way, they can easily edit it and note the ten pages so we know where to make page breaks. The responsibility of the writing coach during the writing process is to answer any questions that the author has and to edit their final draft. Give constructive criticism regarding the period of time if needed (especially with artwork).

Illustrations


Coach needs to review the artwork for accuracy regarding period clothing, military uniforms, housing, and buildings, etc. Artists can easily look on Google images and find what people were wearing, how roads looked during that time, and more.

Illustrations are to be done on separate paper from the writing. The illustrator may use 8 1/2 x 11 computer paper. The illustrator can use any art supplies. Usually, illustrators use markers, crayons, colored pencils, etc. The illustrations should be dark, so they are easy to scan. Bright, bold colors make the illustrations more appealing to readers. When they are finished, the 11 illustrations (10 for each page of the book and one for the cover) must be scanned to a pdf. The picture files must be labeled as the page numbers so that we can easily match the illustrations to the correct page.



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Two-page Biography



Casey Celske
Special Forces: The Black Devils

Casey "Casey" Celske is one of the few surviving members of the celebrated World War II Special Forces unit known as The Devil's Brigade or The Black Devils. This Catholic boy was born on March 4, 1921 in Centralia, Wisconsin. His father, Albert, was a farmer and his mother, June, was a housewife. Casey remembers his mother working in a big family garden to keep food on the table for their large family. He was the oldest in the family of fourteen children, and he can't remember a time when his mother wasn't pregnant. Two of her babies died in childbirth, and Casey's mother died during childbirth in December of 1940. That was pretty common back in those days when babies were born at home instead of in a hospital. Other neighbors served as midwives before the antibiotic gave birth without a doctor.

Casey was drafted into the U.S. Army in December of 1942. He caught a bus to basic training and went to Fort Benning, Georgia. It was in June 1943 that he was shipped out to the Special Forces training center at Fort Bragg, North Carolina. He was assigned to the 10th Special Forces Group, which was the first Special Forces unit to be activated. Casey was one of the first Special Forces soldiers to be trained in the jungle. He was trained in the jungle for 25 days. They were dodging Nazi submarines before landing in North Africa. "It was a terrible trip because everybody was leaving," said 93-year-old Casey. "I got out of the sleep hold and slept up on the deck."

His unit then shipped to Naples, Italy where the Americans set up their camp at a horse racetrack. Casey found the Italian people to be very nice. While spending time in Rome, he called to his father to see Pope Pius XII as often as he could. The Pope would pray and give a blessing at his window every morning so he could see the Pope when possible. He bought twelve books at a store in Vatican City and felt more at peace and blessed to be at the center of the Catholic Church during wartime.

After a boundary of a mountain, the Americans found many casualties. They lost 1,330 of the 1,800 men. Then, Casey answered a call for replacement troops for a specialized unit nicknamed The Black Devils. They were named by the Nazis because of the black shoes they wore on their feet during night missions. This was an elite American-Canadian commando unit who fought in the Aachen Islands, Italy and southern France before being disbanded in December of 1944. Today, the modern American and Canadian special operations forces trace their heritage to this unit. Casey went from being an auto mechanic to a machine gunner. His monthly pay went from \$21 per month to \$24.

1st Lt. Robert T. Frederick was the mentor and commander of the 1st Special Service Force, one of the most feared and most elite (reconnaissance) units ever activated. Frederick was called into General Eisenhower's office and given this assignment which was originally called "Project Hush". This was a joint effort between the Americans and the Canadians.

While part of the Special Service Force, Casey was wounded twice. The first wound came from

shrapnel that hit his head, face and ears, splitting his helmet in two and knocking him unconscious. It killed the soldier next to him in the foxhole. Then in Anzio, Italy, he was wounded in the leg when a bullet from a machine gun struck him as he crawled on his belly across a wheat field. "I was lucky," he insists. "I was wounded twice but I just kept quiet because I'd seen so many dead kids or ones with legs blown off. It was horrible."

It was during the attack at Anzio that the brigade got their nickname. Some say the diary of a dead Nazi soldier was found saying, "The black devils are all around us every time we come into the line. We never hear them coming." Another German prisoner stated, "They are treacherous, unmerciful and clever. You cannot afford to relax." The Black Devils were immortalized years later in Hollywood in a 1968 movie titled *The Devil's Brigade* starring William Holden. The film portrays the first mission of the Italian campaign, the seemingly impossible task of capturing an impenetrable Nazi mountain stronghold called Monte La Difensa. Casey knew how to handle mules from life on the farm back in Wisconsin. He volunteered to bring a pack of four with supplies up the mountain in Italy. The plan was to lead one and have the other three follow but that plan didn't work all the time because mules can be stubborn. It was an extremely cold and tedious journey up the mountain.

A great victory was won when Monte La Difensa was in Allied hands and eventually the Allies took the other mountain peaks nearby. Afterward, they tried to catch up to Patton's Army who were at the Battle of the Bulge. They never did find them. Casey's unit was near the Goetz holder in the spring of 1945 when the news came that the Allies had won the war in the European theater. Casey came home on a victory ship in October of 1945. It was foggy when he came into the harbor in New York City but he could see the arm of Lady Liberty as they arrived. Like thousands of American soldiers, he kissed the ground when he stepped foot on American soil. Back then, they didn't have the title for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder but Casey now admits he suffered from the condition. He drank for one whole year after the war. Then, he stopped cold turkey and decided to get a job at the Iron firm in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. He soon met Helen Ward and got married. Together, they raised eleven children in Oak Creek, Wisconsin. Casey retired after thirty-seven years and moved to Alton, Illinois to be near his son and his family.

Casey is a decorated war veteran with a Bronze Star and two Purple Hearts. In 2013, the United States Congress passed a bill to award the first Special Service Force member the highly prestigious Congressional Gold Medal. Casey hopes to attend the award ceremony in 2015. Casey Celske was proud on February 3, 2015 when he went to Washington D.C. to participate in the first Special Service Force (SSSF) receiving the highest civilian honor: the Congressional Gold Medal.

"War is a grim, cruel business, a business justified only as a means of restoring the forces of good against those of evil."
-General Dwight D. Eisenhower

As the Writing Coach, you need to attend the interview with the author and illustrator. It would be best if you proofread the questions the author has prepared. During the interview, please take detailed notes. Include dates in the biography. The two-page biography is a more comprehensive version of the story. Check facts and dates to reassure the biography is historically

accurate. If there is not enough information about the subject, add research information that corresponds with the storyline. This biography should 1,000 – 1,100 words long.

Dear Reader Page

This page introduces the reader to the story but also has the potential to inspire new students to write or illustrate. It is written as a letter to the reader from the author and illustrator. The first paragraph should introduce the students and explain why they chose to do this project. The middle section needs to list the subject's name, date of birth, family members, favorite activities, and a few sentences about their story. The last paragraph is more thoughts from the students. This space could be used to acknowledge the Writing Coach and encourage future young authors and illustrators. This page will include one of the old photos of the subject.

Dear Reader,

I'm from a small town in Illinois called Macomb. That's where the hero of our story, John Moon, lives, too. Western Illinois University is in our town, and the college is a big part of John's story. It was a big experience meeting John, writing his story and creating the artwork, too. It was a labor of love for a true American hero. Let me introduce you to John:

Name: John Moon

Born: April 3, 1916 in Macomb, Illinois

Family: John's father, Frank, was a contractor and mother, Sarah, was a housewife. Much more than that, she was well known for helping people in need. There were many hobos who came through town from the railroad tracks. Sarah always had a kind word and a bite to eat for them. She became known as "Mother Moon." Frank and Sarah had ten children, five girls and five boys.

Story: After high school, John went to Western Illinois Teachers College (now called Western Illinois University) in Macomb. He graduated with a major in chemistry and got a good job at Caterpillar Inc. in Peoria. He was working there when he heard about the Japanese bombing Pearl Harbor. By this time he was married with one small child. Immediately, he knew he had to do his part to make the world a safer place for his little boy.

Sitting at the table with John and listening to him talk about Pearl Harbor and his reaction to the bombing being to protect his family, I was in awe. He made the history books I've read real to me. John said he was inspired by his college football coach, Colonel Ray Hanson, a WWI and WWII hero. Like Coach Hanson, John joined the Marines because he felt it was best to fight in small groups. Now 103 years old, John still believes the Marines are more mobile and the best.

He fought alongside his fellow Marines at Iwo Jima, one of the bloodiest battles in history. John says he is one of the luckiest men in the world. I think I was lucky to meet him and share his story with you.

Mary Hammond
Young Author



John Moon



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Book Summary

The writing coach is responsible for the synopsis on the back of the book cover. It should only be a maximum of 250 words. Summarize the story in a way that will make the story appealing to young people.



Author/Illustrator Page

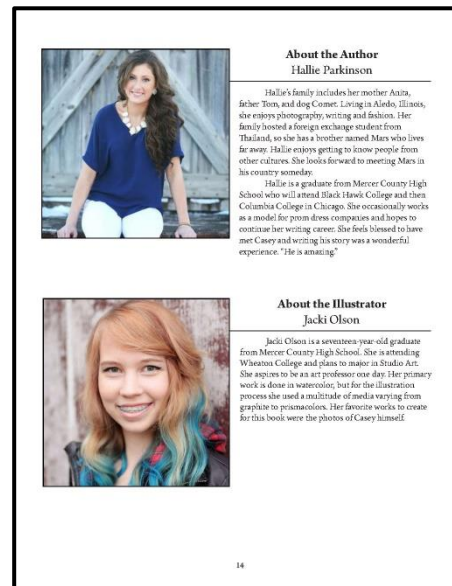
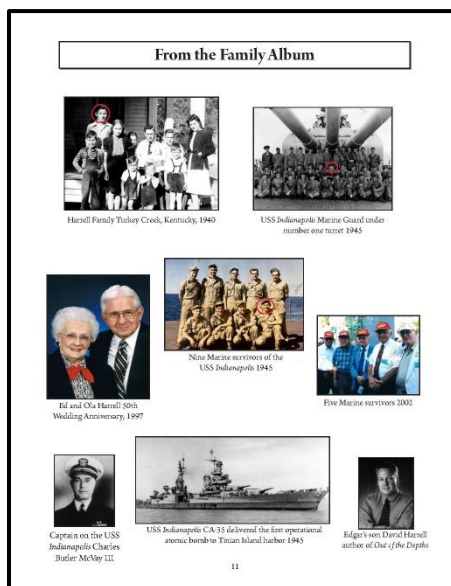


Photo Page



For both the young author and illustrator, include information that showcases their unique accomplishments and aspirations. Introduce the student by highlighting their name, age, family, school and hobbies. Showcase any notable accomplishments or awards received. Share their favorite authors, books or personal experience that have shaped their writing and/or artwork.

Both author and illustrator bio should be 100 - 125 words long.

This page includes 8-9 photos of the subject. When submitting the photos please name the picture file with the caption. For example, name the file according to who is in it and when or where it was taken.