What makes a person from history worth remembering?

Supporting Questions

1. What are some characteristics of historical figures?
2. What are the major contributions of historical figures?
3. How has history changed as a result of contributions of historical figures?
### What makes a person from history worth remembering?

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<th>Inquiry Standard</th>
<th>2.H.1.2 Identify contributions of historical figures (community, state, nation and world) through various genres.</th>
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<td>Staging the Compelling Question</td>
<td>Play “Guess Who?” with students using images of historical figures.</td>
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#### Supporting Question 1
What are some characteristics of historical figures?

#### Formative Performance Task
Infer character traits of historic figures and complete a graphic organizer to show understanding.

#### Featured Sources
- Source A: Reflection from Rosa Parks
- Source B: Letter from Orville Wright to Milton Wright
- Source C: Notes on Antietam by Clara Barton

#### Supporting Question 2
What are the major contributions of historical figures?

#### Formative Performance Task
Discuss and categorize contributions of various historical figures.

#### Featured Sources
- Source A: Biography Channel Video Links

#### Supporting Question 3
How has history changed as a result of contributions of historical figures?

#### Formative Performance Task
Write a summary on the contributions of a historical figure and then discuss ways in which the present might be different without the contributions of that past person using evidence from the sources.

#### Featured Sources
- Source A: Benjamin Franklin's Inventions and Discoveries
- Source B: Project Gutenberg's Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin, by Benjamin Franklin

### Summative Performance Task
ARGUMENT
What makes a person from history worth remembering? Construct an argument that addresses the compelling question using relevant evidence from diverse sources.

EXTENSION
Debate the historical contributions of one historical figure as the most important to our history.

### Taking Informed Action
**UNDERSTAND**
Identify the character development needs of the school by interviewing administration, teachers, and students.

**ASSESS**
Link the character development needs of the school to character traits and contributions of historical figures.

**ACTION**
Create public service announcements detailing why various historical figures are worth remembering and brainstorming ways in which the students can be more like those historical figures.
Overview

Inquiry Description

This inquiry explores historical figures with the purpose of identifying and understanding their character traits and contributions to history. The compelling question “What makes a person from history worth remembering?” is intellectually respectful of students who, by their nature, are interested in people and why they are famous.

Students gain knowledge in learning from the past and by analyzing the deeds of others to develop an argument about why certain people are remembered in history.

This inquiry reflects the following conceptual understanding:

- Historical events are often led by dynamic personalities that may help set a course that can change history.

This inquiry is expected to take 5-7 45-minute class periods. The inquiry time frame could expand if teachers think their students need additional instructional experiences (i.e., supporting questions, formative performance tasks, and featured sources). Teachers are encouraged to adapt the inquiry to meet the needs and interests of their particular students.

Structure

In addressing the compelling question “What makes a person from history worth remembering?” students work through a series of supporting questions, formative performance tasks, and featured sources in order to construct an argument with evidence from diverse sources.
Staging the Compelling Question

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<td>Featured Sources</td>
<td>Source A: Historical Figure Image Bank</td>
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To stage the inquiry, teachers will introduce students to various historical figures by playing a type of "Guess Who?" game. Teachers show students images of historical figures (Thomas Edison, Elvis Presley, Rosa Parks, The Wright Brothers, Jackie Robinson, Mahatma Gandhi, George Washington, Ben Franklin, Clara Barton, and Louis Pasteur) and then give clues to help students match the images to the names.

**Directions for teachers:**

- List the names of all 10 historic figures for the students to see.
- Read the names to the students.
- Show the students all of the images of the historical figures.
- Help students use deductive reasoning to match names to faces.
- Give clues to help students identify the figures. Clues can be general information (i.e. this person (name figure) is sitting in the photo, this person (name figure) has a beard, etc.) or the information can be more specific (i.e. this person (point to image) refused to give up her seat on the bus, these people (point to image) flew in a motorized plane for the first time, etc.).

To make this activity more enjoyable, teachers can play the song *Fame* by Irene Cara or a clean version of *Hall of Fame* by The Script featuring will.i.am during the game.

At the end, introduce students to the compelling question and a brief explanation of the inquiry that they will be working on over the next few days.

Although 10 specific historical figures have been identified to use in the Staging the Compelling Question, the teacher may choose to modify the list of historical figures to meet his/her needs. Seven of these historical figures will be analyzed in depth over the course of the inquiry.
Compelling Question

Featured Source A
Historical Figure Image Bank

Rosa Parks - Legacy
Found with Google Search - labeled commercial use with modification
Wright brothers at the Belmont Park Aviation Meet in 1910
Found with Google Search - labeled commercial use with modification
Louis Pasteur - Wikipedia
Louis Pasteur in his laboratory, painting by A. Edelfeldt in 1885
Found with Google Search - labeled commercial use with modification
The supporting questions - "What are some characteristics of historical figures?" - leads students to understand that prominent historical figures have certain dynamic personalities. It is in learning these dynamic personalities that students can begin to understand the motivation for the contributions of the historical figures. Students can begin to associate certain character traits to actions these figures took in their lifetime. The featured sources are letters/notes written by historical figures (Rosa Parks, Orville Wright, and Clara Barton) with general ties to their historical contributions.

**Formative Performance Task**

The formative performance task asks students to closely read letters/notes from 3 historical figures (Rosa Parks, Orville Wright, Clara Barton) with the purpose of inferring character traits associated with the figures. The teacher may choose to read some of the documents depending on the needs of the students and the length of instruction scheduled. Students will complete a graphic organizer to display their inferences. The emphasis of the task is to see these figures as the people they were and not just for their contributions to history. The teacher could follow the performance task with a class discussion about similarities and differences in personalities among the historical figures.

To support the students' completion of the task, it may be necessary to teach the students about identifying character traits prior to this performance task. It may also be necessary to supply students with a transcribed copy of two of these sources as they are handwritten in cursive and may be harder for students to read.
I had been pushed around for all my life and felt at this moment that I couldn’t take it anymore. When I asked the policeman why we had to be pushed around? He said he didn’t know. “The law is the law. You are under arrest,” he said. So I went with it, I didn’t resist.

Kitty Hawk, July 26,

Dear Father,

We reached Kitty Hawk safely the day following the biggest storm in the history of the place. The aneroid barometer cups blew off at 93 miles per hour so the highest speed is probably not recorded. We spent the night at Satis and attempted camp in the rain at Kill Devil Hills the next day. We got our lumber on the ground in a few days and erected our building with little difficulty. It is quite an a
progress on our tent. We
next proceeded to the construct-
ion of our machine and
expect to finish it today.

Mr. Haffaker of Tennessee
formerly connected with the
Smithsonian Institution came
down last Thursday the 29th.

He is intelligent and has
good ideas, but little expe-
tise in mechanics. His machine which he built at
Mr. Chanute's expense is a total
failure mechanically. He has
been on salary from Mr. Chanute
for a year or more. In fact
he has devoted most of his
time for eight years to
work on flying machines
on salary from the Smithsonian Institution, Mr Charne
et, Mr Spratt of Pennsylvania, arrived last eve.
He is a young man about 30 years old. We like him
very well. He is not lazy.

We find from Mr Huffaker
that he and Charne have
greater hopes of our machine
than we have ventured to
hold ourselves. In fact they
seem to have little doubt
that we will solve the
problem if we have not
already really done so.
as the machine itself is concerned, Mr. Huffaker remarked that he would not be surprised to see his tory made here in the next six weeks. Our own opinion is not so flattering. He is astonished at our mechanical facility, and as he has attributed his own failures to the lack of this, he thinks the problem solved when these difficulties are overcome, while we expect to find further difficulties.
a theoretical nature which must be met by new mechanical designs.

We expect to be careful to avoid real risks. We do not think there is any real danger of serious injury in the experiments we make.

We will not venture on their ice until we are certain that it will much more than bear us.

The mosquitoes have been almost unbearable for the past week. Affectionately, Wilbur.
This third charge was the most terrific artillery duel I ever heard, and I have had some experience. The tables jarred and rolled until we could hardly keep the men on them, and the roar was overwhelming. After a while I looked around, and to my surprise saw all the surgeons gone, except one man, the chief, who was standing by a table where a man lay, but there was no one to help him with the operation.

"What has become of your assistants?" said I going up to him. "Don't blame them, madam" said he. "They have been here through ghastly scenes since daylight and then cannonading is nerve-breaking. Don't blame them that they have retired, and some have gone down the line to the wounded."

"Very well" said I, "and how about this man? Do you want to go on with the operation? Can I assist you?"

"Can you stand it?" said he.

"Oh, yes" said I, and I took the chloroform. He gave me directions and we tended the man through the whole of the frightful firing.

With night the firing ceased, and I went to see about lighting up the barn. I had brought plenty of lanterns with me this time... When I came back from the barn I went into the house where I saw a solitary light burning. The surgeon was sitting in one of those dark, dank rooms with two inches of a candle by him, and his head on his hand, the picture of despair.

"You are tired, doctor" I said, going to him and putting my hand on his shoulder.

"Tired" he exclaimed, lifting his head with a wrathful gleam in his eyes, "yes, I am tired of this human incompetence, this neglect and folly which leaves me alone with all these soldiers on my hands, five hundred of whom will die before daybreak unless they have attention, and I with no light by that two inches of candle," and he let his head fall on his hand again.

"Come, doctor", said I gently, for from my heart I pitied him, "I want to show you something." I took him to the door, and told him to look towards the barn; it was like a garden illumination of Chinese lanterns.

"Lanterns" said I.

"Lanterns, where did they come from?"

"I brought them. The men will be here in a few moments to light the house. You will have plenty of light and plenty of assistance. Don't despair in your good work doctor". He didn't say a word, but he looked at me, and afterward set his own particular guard to keep close by me all the time, to follow me like my shadow ... so that I should always have some one at my elbow to help me. The doctor and I have been good friends ever since. We worked through that long bloody night together, and the next morning the supplies came up, my things were all gone, my strength was all gone, they made up a bed for me of an old coverlet on the floor of a wagon; and I lay down on it, and was jogged back to Washington, eighty miles. When I reached there, and looked in the mirror, my face was still the color of gunpowder, a deep blue. Oh yes I went to the front!

Source:
Excerpted and transcribed from an essay entitled, "Clara Barton and the International Red Cross Association", Clara Barton papers, Library of Congress, reel # 109, beginning at frame # 409.
The second supporting question - "What are the major contributions of historical figures?" - suggests that in order for a person to be remembered in history they had to have had some sort of impact on society or change on society. These contributions could be positive or negative, however, they are in direct correlation to the personality traits associated with the historical figure.

**Formative Performance Task**

The performance task asks students to watch short biography videos on the life and contributions of three historical figures (Mahatma Gandhi, Jackie Robinson, and Thomas Edison). After watching the videos, the students should identify and discuss the major contributions of the historical figures with a partner. Following the partner discussion, the teacher facilitates a class discussion on how they could categorize the contributions of the historical figures. The teacher should use the contributions of the three figures discussed in supporting question 1 (Rosa Parks, Orville Wright, and Clara Barton) to model how to categorize the historical figures based on their contributions and impact on society (i.e. technology development, humanitarian change, cultural contributions, medical advancements, political influences, etc.). It should be noted that a historical figure may fall into more than one category based on their contributions. Students should then discuss with their partner which categories Mahatma Gandhi, Jackie Robinson, and Thomas Edison should fall under. The teacher may want to create a class graphic organizer during this task to visually represent the learning of the class.
Excerpt

Mahatma Gandhi was an international symbol for human rights whose personal dedication to nonviolent resistance inspired generations. Find out more about his life and work in this mini biography.

- Mahatma Gandhi - [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ept8hwPQQNg](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ept8hwPQQNg)

Inventor Thomas Edison, known in his time as “The Wizard of Menlo Park,” developed numerous practical devices that changed the world such as the phonograph, the movie camera, and the light bulb.

- Thomas Edison - [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HQ2RJC1a8T0](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HQ2RJC1a8T0)

While serving in the military, Jackie Robinson was arrested for refusing to move to the back of a segregated bus. In 1947, he made history when his debut with the Brooklyn Dodgers ended racial segregation in Major League Baseball.

- Jackie Robinson - [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CX3tv9uKj1I](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CX3tv9uKj1I)

Source:
Videos are property of the Biography Channel and are available online at [https://www.youtube.com/user/BiographyChannel](https://www.youtube.com/user/BiographyChannel) as part of the Biography Channel Mini-Bio series.
Supporting Question 3

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The third supporting question - "How has history changed as a result of contributions of historical figures?" - leads students to the understanding that not only do historical figures do something to impact society during their time in history, they have a lasting impact and fundamentally change society over time. The students will have an opportunity to reflect on how they think life would be different without the historic figure to emphasize the lasting effect that person had on society.

**Formative Performance Task**

The performance task asks students to review the accomplishments of Benjamin Franklin from the provided sources and then summarize these contributions while thinking about the impact the contributions had on society in the past.

The teacher should then facilitate a discussion on how Benjamin Franklin’s influence and accomplishments changed history in a number of different ways (politically, scientifically, artistically, etc.). He/she should ask the students to turn and talk to a partner and infer ways in which life today might be different if Benjamin Franklin had not lived.
Benjamin Franklin was a prolific inventor and scientist who was responsible for the following inventions:

- Franklin stove: Franklin’s first invention, created around 1740, provided more heat with less fuel.
- Bifocals: Anyone tired of switching between two pairs of glasses understands why Franklin developed bifocals that could be used for both distance and reading.
- Armonica: Franklin’s inventions took on a musical bent when, in 1761, he commenced development on the armonica, a musical instrument composed of spinning glass bowls on a shaft. Both Ludwig van Beethoven and Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart composed music for the strange instrument.
- Rocking chair
- Flexible catheter
- American penny
- Franklin also discovered the Gulf Stream after his return trip across the Atlantic Ocean from London in 1775. He began to speculate about why the westbound trip always took longer, and his measurements of ocean temperatures led to his discovery of the existence of the Gulf Stream. This knowledge served to cut two weeks off the previous sailing time from Europe to North America.
- Franklin even devised a new “scheme” for the alphabet that proposed to eliminate the letters C, J, Q, W, X and Y as redundant.

In 1752, Benjamin Franklin conducted the famous kite-and-key experiment to demonstrate that lightning was electricity and soon after invented the lightning rod. His investigations into electrical phenomena were compiled into “Experiments and Observations on Electricity,” published in England in 1751. He coined new electricity-related terms that are still part of the lexicon, such as battery, charge, conductor and electrify.

Source:
Article Title - Benjamin Franklin Biography.com
Authors - Biography.com Editors
Website - https://www.biography.com/people/benjamin-franklin..
Excerpt from the Introduction to Project Gutenberg’s Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin, by Benjamin Franklin

Franklin has indeed been aptly called “many-sided.” He was eminent in science and public service, in diplomacy and in literature. He was the Edison of his day, turning his scientific discoveries to the benefit of his fellow-men. He perceived the identity of lightning and electricity and set up the lightning rod. He invented the Franklin stove, still widely used, and refused to patent it. He possessed a masterly shrewdness in business and practical affairs. Carlyle called him the father of all the Yankees. He founded a fire company, assisted in founding a hospital, and improved the cleaning and lighting of streets. He developed journalism, established the American Philosophical Society, the public library in Philadelphia, and the University of Pennsylvania. He organized a postal system for the colonies, which was the basis of the present United States Post Office. Bancroft, the eminent historian, called him “the greatest diplomatist of his century.” He perfected the Albany Plan of Union for the colonies. He is the only statesman who signed the Declaration of Independence, the Treaty of Alliance with France, the Treaty of Peace with England, and the Constitution. As a writer, he has produced, in his Autobiography and in Poor Richard’s Almanac, two works that are not surpassed by similar writing. He received honorary degrees from Harvard and Yale, from Oxford and St. Andrews, and was made a fellow of the Royal Society, which awarded him the Copley gold medal for improving natural knowledge. He was one of the eight foreign associates of the French Academy of Science.

Source:
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Title: Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin

Author: Benjamin Franklin

Editor: Frank Woodworth Pine

Illustrator: E. Boyd Smith

Release Date: December 28, 2006
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<td>Argument</td>
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<td>Debate the historical contributions of one historical figure as the most important to our history.</td>
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**Argument**

In the summative performance task, students address the issue of what makes people from history worth remembering. After identifying character traits of historical figures, analyzing historical contributions, noting historical changes, and theorizing how life would be different without the influence of these people, students should be able to develop an answer to the question “What makes a person from history worth remembering?” while citing examples and evidence from diverse sources. The argument may be written in the form of a short essay.

Student arguments will likely vary but could include personalities and character traits of a historical figure, information about how remembered people have changed society, and a reflection on how life would be different without these people. In all cases specific examples should be utilized during the argument.

**Extension**

As an extension, students should choose one historical figure that was discussed during this inquiry and write a paragraph about why that person should be considered the most important to our history. Students can work in teams (same historical figure as a team) to then debate the issue with other teams.
Students have the opportunity to take informed action by using the character traits and actions of historical figures to promote the character development of all of the students in the school. They demonstrate their ability to understand by identifying the character needs of the school through interviews with students, teachers, and staff. They show their ability to assess by linking the character development needs of the school to historical figures that promote the positive character traits needed based on the figures’ personality and actions. Finally, they act by creating school-wide public service announcements, informing the students on the deeds associated with historical figures of good character and specifically explain how they, the students of the school, can be more like those historical figures using real world examples thus demonstrating how students can also be worth remembering.