

Lesson Plan Template

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Lesson Title: [5th grade] Minging Mike Writer's Workshop: 3-Paragraph Alter Ego Biography & Album Art

Date: 2015

LESSON JUSTIFICATION

Who are my students? (background, interest, and needs)

What **conditions/ limitations** might impact the planning and delivery of the lesson?

What research/theory supports my intended teaching goals?

The scaffolding of this entire instructional unit - reflected in the mini-lessons at the start of each day's lesson, the expansion of workshop time in each day's lesson as the unit progresses, and the blend of student choice with teacher approval (creation of each student's bio, necessity of teacher approval before moving onto the next writing stage, etc) – is supported by the Constructivist research/theory of Lev Vygotsky. This is particularly the case regarding the ideas of Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), using instructional scaffolds toward the gradual release of responsibility (moving from teacher-modeled examples/mentor texts to the students' independent creation of a product demonstrating application of the art/writing skills and concepts), and the role of social peer-supported learning.

The latter of these is also supported by the Cooperative Learning research published by Dr. Spencer Kagan. While this lesson doesn't employ the full requirements of Kagan's cooperative learning structure (students are not assigned specific interdependent roles within their small groups), the intermittent use of small group discussion is intended to tap into some of the same prosocial learning benefits of cooperative learning while also increasing the interactivity and child-centeredness of the lesson.

Finally, the Writing Workshop structure – brief mini-lessons followed by ample and fairly open writing time - of each day's lesson of this instructional unit is supported by the ideas and writings of Ralph Fletcher and JoAnn Portalupi. While there is some prompted structure to the writing assignment (biography), there is also a fair degree of student-directed activity and choice in it.

Fletcher, R. & Portalupi, J. (2001). *Writing workshop: The essential guide*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Kagan, S. & Kagan, M. (2009). *Kagan cooperative learning*. San Clemente, CA: Kagan.

Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). *Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Why am I teaching this lesson? (justify content and instructional strategy)

Day 1

The content of this particular lesson, which serves as an introduction to the instructional unit for the short biography writing project, is largely meant to introduce students to what a biography is and its role in the upcoming project (creating a musical alter ego and designing an album). The project, and what the class will be expected to do in the next 4 days of class, is described in detail. The targeted writing skills to be developed in this writing project are sequence, sentence and paragraph organization, transitional words and phrases, and other conventions. Near the end of this lesson, students will begin brainstorming ideas and filling out graphic organizers to help them sequence and structure their ideas.

Creativity (divergent thinking), creative decision-making/evaluation (convergent thinking), and multimodal composition skills are valuable skills and the practice of them can foster maximum intellectual development for all students. In fact, such skills are included in the 21st Century Skills promoted by the Common Core Initiative. The option to use collage rather than free-drawing is offered to all students so that those who are resistant to or struggling with drawing are not discouraged from the project. Additional differentiation options in this regard would be to use laser-print photographic transfers and stencils for the album cover images/text, or to adapt this project to a digital format (using basic graphic design software with an age/developmentally-appropriate interface – even Microsoft Paint would suffice). These options do not diminish the value or rigor of the integrated art content; rather, it simply provides differentiated access to demonstrating understanding of the art and design elements.

Day 2

The content of this particular lesson introduces students to some fundamental knowledge regarding art and design – specifically, in the context of multimodal composition that combines visual design with text. This lesson is necessary because even the most basic art/design knowledge (AKA “visual literacy”) is not usually provided in the daily curriculum. This lesson provides a brief crash course on 3 elementary concepts/frameworks (Rule of Thirds for composition, selecting imagery, and using text as a component of design) that students can use as guidelines. Numerous mentor texts/examples of album cover design are shown and discussed during the mini-lesson, drawing as much from student response as teacher-centered lecture. Following the mini-lesson, there is a workshop portion. This workshop time is split evenly between writing (either finishing their graphic organizers, or beginning on their rough drafts), and designing their album covers (either by way of drawing, collage, or a combination of both).

Day 3

The content of this particular lesson, like the one preceding it and the final lesson to follow, is composed of an opening mini-lesson followed by open-ended workshop time. This mini-lesson is focused on sentence/paragraph construction and organization skills as they pertain to the short biography the students are working on (organization, sentence fluency, and conventions). Introductory sentences, transition words and phrases that describe sequence, and the proper use of commas will be defined and discussed, using examples as support and scaffolding.

The Writer’s Workshop portion of the lesson (the bulk of the lesson, proportionally) will be focused on writing and/or completing their rough drafts; at this point, all students are expected to have finished work on their graphic organizers. In addition to the teacher(s) circulating the room to monitor progress and provide feedback, students who have completed their rough drafts will begin to meet one-on-one briefly (1-3 minutes each) with the teacher(s) during this day’s lesson to have their rough drafts looked over for suggested revisions and approval to move onto their final copies. However, each student who has their rough draft reviewed by the teacher(s) will have the option to use the remainder of class workshop time to either begin the final draft of their biography or to switch over to working on their album cover.

Day 4

This lesson is the final installment of this instructional unit. The content of this particular lesson, like the ones preceding it, is composed of a brief opening mini-lesson followed by ample workshop time (so that students have sufficient time to finish their projects). The mini-lesson is focused on potential creative extras that some students may want to incorporate into their album designs. These extras include both visual and written elements such as blurb quotes (from critics or other celebrities, real or imagined ... which also connects to persuasive writing), record label logos, a list of tracks, various liner note-type details (thank-you's, dedications), and other details (recorded live at ---, featured/guest artists, awards/accolades, price, "recorded in stereo sound", where it was recorded, etc). While any student is free to incorporate these ideas into their project, the main purpose of this mini-lesson is to provide extension/enrichment activities to students who may have finished early with their final biography drafts.

The Writer's Workshop portion of the lesson will be focused on students' writing and completing their final drafts. Like the previous lesson, the teacher(s) will continue circulating the room to monitor progress and provide feedback/assistance. All students will be expected to have completed the final draft of their short written biographies by the end of this class period. Students who have not fully completed the album design portion of the assignment to their satisfaction will not be penalized; there will be the option to complete them at home. However, the written bios must be turned in at the end of this lesson for assessment. At the discretion of the cooperating teacher, it is possible that in-class work time on the album designs may be extended to future class periods.

How does this lesson connect with and build on previous/subsequent lesson(s)? (Learning Progression)

Day 1

Although this is the introductory lesson of the unit, connections can be made to prior lessons on topics ranging from genre types and characteristics, Greek and Latin roots/affixes (bio=life, graph=to write), and author's point of view (third person perspective). The 'alter ego' aspect of the project description can refer back to prior knowledge/learning from within this introductory lesson, by comparing to the "Mingering Mike" example. Furthermore, I also used the example of Beyonce (who conveniently polled in the top 5 favorite musicians when I surveyed the class I taught this unit in ... obviously the relevance and usefulness of this particular example is situational) to make the connection to how one of her albums used the alter ego of "Sasha Fierce".

Day 2

This lesson builds on the previous lesson by continuing work in the Writer's Workshop where the last had left off: completing their graphic organizers, and possibly moving into the preliminary drafting stage. The mini-lesson introduces new content (art and design concepts & guidelines) but even this content can be connected to the content of the previous lesson by focusing on the visual examples of albums that were shown previously. However, this time students will have some tools to help them analyze these album covers as multimodal products of intentional design.

The mini-lesson content of this day's lesson (visual literacy and multimodal production) is very intentionally placed here in the sequence of this instructional unit because students will not yet have begun designing their albums OR have made enough progress with the writing to need instruction focused on editing or revising the writing portion. It is during the Writer's Workshop of this lesson that students will first begin any of the art/design work, which will continue throughout the workshop time of the two lessons yet to follow this one in the unit.

Day 3

This lesson, situated roughly in the middle of the writing process for the project being completed in this instructional unit, has obvious connections to the lessons which precede it. There are connections to prior learning such as revisiting the biographies they've read in class – including the Mingering Mike text – to look for examples of introductory sentences, proper paragraph construction/organization, transition words/phrases, and usage of commas that are explicitly addressed in the content of this day's mini-lesson.

This lesson builds on the lesson to follow it because the workshop time in this day's lesson is primarily focused on writing (and possibly finishing) rough drafts, revising, and editing. The content of the mini-lesson that precedes this workshop time is all about the kinds of details and polish that are likely to be addressed in suggested revisions of their rough drafts ... so, in a way, it is establishing/creating prior knowledge (unless the students already were aware of these things) that will help them understand the kind of feedback they may be likely to receive in the one-on-one conferences to look over rough drafts that will begin during this class period. The content is all about the sorts of writerly details that make good, fluent writing. Considering that the students will begin working on final drafts in the lesson to follow this one, the connection to subsequent lessons is simple and clear.

Day 4

This is the final lesson of the instructional unit and all of the content of the previous lessons will culminate here; by the end of this day's lesson, students will be expected to have at least completed the final drafts of their short written biographies. Additionally, they should have made good progress on their album designs – if not having had completed them by the end of class. Aside from the connections to previous units within this lesson, there is at least one connection made to other writing units the students have worked on that is addressed in the mini-lesson: the option to add promotional blurbs/quotes to their album cover design, which connects to persuasive writing (which they have learned about and written previously).

ACADEMIC LANGUAGE (Identify academic language, particular words/phrases that are essential to understanding the content of this lesson.)

DISCIPLINARY VOCABULARY/ASSORTED VOCABULARY TERMS:

Alter ego, cover song, live (recording), merge, record/album, genre, biography, third person perspective, narrative, sequence, schizophrenia, rough draft, final draft, revise

ACADEMIC LANGUAGE/LANGUAGE FUNCTIONS:

Analyze, compare, contrast, organize, sequence, evaluate

Prior to creation of this lesson plan, you should have completed a thorough description of the “Context for Learning.”

LEARNING GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Goal	Content Objective	Assessment (formative &/or summative)
<p>CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.5.3 Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, descriptive details, and clear event sequences.</p> <p>CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.5.3.a Orient the reader by establishing a situation and introducing a narrator and/or characters; organize an event sequence that unfolds naturally.</p> <p>CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.5.3.b Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, description, and pacing, to develop experiences and events or show the responses of characters to situations.</p> <p>CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.5.3.c Use a variety of transitional words, phrases, and clauses to manage the sequence of events</p>	<p>WHOLE PROJECT: The student will write a 3-paragraph biography for a musical alter ego they create. The paragraphs, and details they contain, must be logically organized according to the narrative structure provided by the graphic organizer (i.e., Introduction of the Artist and Life before the Music Career, Development and Trajectory of Career, Description of Current Album). The writing task will be assessed at 3 stages of the writing process (though only the final stage will be formally graded): graphic organizer, rough draft/editing & revision process, and final draft.</p> <p>LESSON-SPECIFIC (Day 1): Within this specific lesson of the unit, students will only get as far as the graphic organizer stage (and it’s likely not all students will finish this stage during this lesson)</p>	<p>FORMATIVE:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher observation of student work and discussion participation/responses • Graphic organizer for mentor text activity (analysis of sequence, structure, organization) • Graphic organizer for student-created biography [formal formative assessment of Stage 1: checked, not graded]

MATERIALS

Paper, pencils, lesson powerpoint/slide presentation (intro to unit/project: Minging Mike, biographies, filling out the graphic organizer/writing process), SMARTboard or projector, example of a record and album packaging, “Minging Mike” biography handout, mentor text handouts (3-paragraph biographies), graphic organizers for idea/event sequence and organization of paragraphs (2 per student; one for mentor text analysis, 1 for their own writing project), 1 blank “album sleeve & cardboard record” per student (not needed yet in this lesson, but it is a good idea – especially for fostering maximum student motivation, interest, understanding, and enthusiasm - to show a physical sample of the project “template” to students during this first lesson so they can begin to visualize what the overall project is)

DAILY LESSON PLANS

DAY 1

INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES AND LEARNING TASKS		
Time	Instructional Strategies/Learning Task	Differentiation
5 minutes	<p><u>INTRODUCTION TO UNIT PROJECT: HOOK, ACTIVATE/CREATE BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE:</u> **Pre-Assessment** Prior to beginning thye unit, teacher surveys students for their favorite musicians. The top 3-5 can be used as subjects for mentor text biographies (teacher may write these themselves to ensure alignment to the 3-paragraph graphic organizer format).</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Teacher shows pictures of biography books of musicians (several should be drawn from student pre-assessment survey results) on Powerpoint presentation. Discuss genre. Ask the class: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. “What genre of books are these all examples of?” (biography) b. “What is a biography?” (a book/story about somebody’s life. ALSO: not written by that person) c. Do you see any Greek/Latin roots in the word <i>biography</i>?” (bio=life, graph=to write) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of student pre-assessment survey data to maximize student buy-in and activation of background knowledge and interests • Use of visual supports/examples in Powerpoint slides • Connection to prior knowledge (genre, Greek and Latin roots/affixes)
20-25 minutes	<p><u>CONTENT: MINGERING MIKE BIOGRAPHY:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Show pictures of Minging Mike’s albums on Powerpoint. Teacher tells class who Minging Mike was: an artist, unknown at the time, who had made all of these fake record albums out of cardboard. “They even contained cardboard records, painted black, with grooved painted on them.”* *Teacher shows class a real vinyl record to pass around (getting a worthless thrift shop example specifically for this purpose would be recommended, in case of accidental breakage or mishandling) 2. Teacher discusses vocabulary (that will appear in the Minging Mike biography the class is about to read), assesses which need to be explicitly defined. 3. Teacher passes out Minging Mike biography handouts to students. Read-aloud to class. <p><u>SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Teacher asks students to talk in small groups (pairs, rows, groups of 4, etc) for 1 minute or so to all share their thoughts/reactions to the biography with each other. Thinking prompt questions: “What is the main idea?” “What did you think were some interesting details?” “What did you think of Minging Mike and his idea? His records?” b. WHOLE CLASS DISCUSSION of a few student responses. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Teacher shows class the graphic organizer that was used to write the Minging Mike biography they just read. Whole class 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of visual supports in Powerpoint • Explicit vocabulary instruction • Use of discussion and open-ended questioning promotes deeper thinking, fosters communication skills, encourages student engagement • Guided analysis of Minging Mike bio and small group analysis activity of mentor texts provides sacaffolding for independent application of the project-specific 3-paragraph structure

	<p>guided analysis of the Mingering Mike bio to “reverse” fill out the 3-paragraph Graphic Organizer</p>	
<p>20 minutes</p>	<p><u>ACTIVITY: Analysis of Sequence of events, ideas, and details (13-15min)</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Teacher hands a different biography to each small group (the bios are drawn from the pre-assessment survey to find the favorite and popular musicians among the students). Each biography is written to follow the same graphic organizer shown for the “Mingering Mike” bio. Each is 3 paragraphs long (just like the students’ bio assignment/writing project will be), along with a graphic organizer for each student. 2. Teacher tells the class they will read their bios and then work together in their small groups to fill out the G.O. to match the ideas/events and sequence in the bio they read. Groups work together, but each student fills out their own G.O. to turn in. 3. Small group work time discussing and filling out corresponding G.O.s. (10min) 4. Brief WHOLE CLASS DISCUSSION of the various small group G.O.s and bios, drawing responses from each group. (3min) <p><u>INTRODUCE WRITING PROJECT w/ ART & DESIGN COMPONENT (5min):</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The students will each make up their own musical alter egos, just like Mingering Mike did. It can be anything they want, as real or imaginary as they want. Have fun with it! 2. They will then be writing 3-paragraph long fake bios of their musical alter egos, in 3 stages/steps: G.O., rough draft, and final draft. They can make up whatever they want, as long as it’s well-organized. The music can be any style they want. It must be written in third person. (Teacher defines <i>third person</i>, points out examples on Powerpoint slide) 3. They will make and design their very own fake record, just like Mingering Mike did ... except this will be their own! (Teacher shows class the physical blank records/albums they will each get to decorate and design on) 4. Teacher hands out Graphic Organizers. <p><u>IN-CLASS WORK TIME (if any class time remains):</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Students begin to brainstorm ideas and fill out their graphic organizers. 2. Homework: finish filling out the graphic organizer. Use pencil! 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of student preassessment survey data for mentor text bios • Use of visual supports in Powerpoint • Cooperative learning/ small group/peer-supported learning • Project is structured, and instruction re: structure is explicit and clear
<p>CLOSURE</p>		
<p>Teacher tells class that tomorrow there will be more work time, and we will talk about album design and look at examples. There will be time for writing AND time to start working on their albums for everyone tomorrow. Bring the GOs home to work on them tonight/try to think of ideas. You’ll get to keep these records forever and your parents are going to love them!</p>		

DAY 2**INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES AND LEARNING TASKS**

Time	Instructional Strategies/Learning Task
15-20 minutes	<p><u>MINI-LESSON (Album Design) and DISCUSSION:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Teacher discusses album design (with support of Powerpoint) and some simple, basic, helpful guidelines to good design: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Composition: what is it? How things are arranged. Discuss Rule of Thirds as one guideline (show examples). b. Text: How big? Where? What kind of lettering? What color foreground? Background? c. IMAGERY: Images of what? Who? Or just abstract shapes and designs? A combination? How many images? How big? How are they composed on the cover design with the text? 2. Teacher shares many real record album cover examples on Powerpoint. Use Smart board to trace compositions, point out features, magnify, etc. Handouts of same examples also passed out to students. 3. WHOLE CLASS DISCUSSION of examples and responses/thoughts. 4. Transition to Writer's Workshop: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Remind class of work expectations/ behavior expectations. b. Need to finish GOs and have teacher see/approve it before beginning rough draft of bio. GOs must be finished and approved by the end of today's class. c. If already finished the GO, begin rough draft.
<p>20 minutes (Art/Design)</p> <p>20 minutes (Writing)</p>	<p><u>WRITERS' and DESIGNERS' WORKSHOP:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Divide class into 2 groups: Group A and Group B. 2. One half of class works on writing for half of workshop time; other half of class works on album design for workshop time 3. Halfway through class work time, switch work focus (writing to design; design to writing) <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Have magazines for collage, art supplies, etc available. b. Teacher circulates to approve/check-off GO's, offer assistance 4. HOMEWORK: work on rough drafts of alter ego biographies
CLOSURE	
<p>Teacher commends hard workers in class and gives specific feedback. Tells students that tomorrow's workshop time will be even longer. Just like today, it will be split between writing and design. Tells class that they will need to meet with teacher for a brief one-on-one conference with teacher to look over rough draft to get feedback, suggested revision and corrections, and approval before moving into final draft stage. These conferences will start tomorrow for those who are ready.</p>	

DAY 3

INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES AND LEARNING TASKS

Time	Instructional Strategies/Learning Task
15 minutes	<p><u>MINI-LESSON (transition words and phrases, introductions, commas, etc) and DISCUSSION:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Teacher lectures and uses Powerpoint to deliver instruction on writing organization and conventions in the revision/polish stage: introductory paragraphs and sentences, transition words and phrases, proper use of commas and punctuation. Teacher asks class: “Why should we use these things?” (Good writers use these to make writing easier to understand and follow for readers, it gives writing good flow, etc)2. Use mentor text bio handouts, and Mingering Mike bio handouts, to analyze for examples. Whole class discussion of findings drawn from student responses. Teacher may point some out too, especially if students are struggling to identify them.3. Teacher reads aloud an example without these things. Asks class: “How does it sound?”4. Re-iterate expectations for writer’s workshop. Tell students they should try to finish their rough drafts today. Everyone will still get time to decorate albums too, just like yesterday. But today the class gets more workshop time altogether. Also, reminder that students need to have 1-on-1 rough draft conference with teacher before starting final draft. Conferences will continue throughout the workshop time.5. If you are waiting for a conference, just work on album design while waiting. All workshop time must be constructive and on part of this project.
45 minutes	<p><u>WRITERS WORKSHOP TIME:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Half for writing2. Half for art/design.3. Teacher circulates and observes students (feedback, etc) and/or conducts the brief 1-on-1 rough draft conferences

CLOSURE

Teacher tells students that tomorrow will be for completing final drafts with revisions, and finishing album designs. There will be a lot of work time. The lesson will start with a short discussion of cool extras they might want to add to their records, like logos for the record label, track listings, thank-you’s and dedications, all kinds of little details. More will be discussed and examples will be shown tomorrow. The rest of the class period will be there work time.

DAY 4

INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES AND LEARNING TASKS	
Time	Instructional Strategies/Learning Task
10 minutes	<u>MINI-LESSON (creative extras/details like logos, blurbs, dedications, track listings, etc):</u> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Teacher delivers instruction, using Powerpoint and real world examples of creative extras (blurbs, track listings, etc) students may feel like adding ... especially those who feel finished or close to finished, and may want a new challenge. But, of course, any student may want to use these in their album design. There will be a lot of work time today.2. Teacher makes persuasive writing connection to writing fake blurbs for the album cover.3. Teacher reminds students to write their final drafts in their best handwriting. Effort pays off and neatness counts!
50 minutes	<u>WRITER'S WORKSHOP:</u> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Same breakdown as the other workshop days.2. Teacher circulates, observes, gives specific feedback and encouragement.
CLOSURE	
**** If more time is needed for students to finish their projects, another workshop day may be added** *** Otherwise, time will be taken tomorrow to share projects – bios and albums -- with the class and discuss each of them**	

MENTOR TEXT BIO SAMPLES

The mentor text bios below are examples of biographies that the students read and compare to the graphic organizer structure they will use. A teacher using this lesson may want to create new bios based on a “fave musician” survey done with their class prior to the unit -- but if not, these texts make it a ready-to-use lesson package.

Beyonce Giselle Knowles-Carter is a contemporary pop musician. She was born in 1981 in Houston, Texas. Her mother was a hair stylist and her father was a salesman who sold copy machines. Beyonce also has a younger sister who is a singer. Beyonce attended two different elementary schools and two different high schools. In school, she was always looking for any way to express her love and talent for singing and dancing.

Beyonce’s incredible singing talent was discovered early in elementary school, where she performed in many singing and dancing competitions. In 1996, Beyonce started her professional music career. She formed the musical group Destiny’s Child with some friends she had been singing with since she was 8 years old, and her father worked as their manager. Two years later, they released their first album. After recording 4 albums, the group decided to break up in 2001. Since then, Beyonce has released 5 successful solo albums. For one her albums, she even created an alter ego named “Sasha Fierce” – just like Minging Mike did with his fake records! She has won 20 Grammy Awards and is currently the most nominated woman in the history of the Grammy Awards. Beyonce has even done some acting. The 2006 movie *Dreamgirls*, which is based on the career of Diana Ross and The Supremes, was a huge hit. Beyonce’s latest album is titled *Beyonce*.

Both as a member of Destiny’s Child and as a solo artist, Beyonce has been an inspiration to many musicians – and to females in general. She is a strong, independent woman who has found success through hard work and amazing talent. Her music is very popular and her audience includes boys as well as girls of many different ages. Anyone who is a fan of dance music with powerful vocals could be a Beyonce fan. These days, Beyonce is busy raising her baby daughter, Blue Ivy, with her husband, rapper Jay-Z. However, motherhood doesn’t mean her music career is over. Audiences can probably expect more catchy hits from Beyonce well into the future.



Michael Jackson was a world-famous pop singer. He was born in 1958 in Gary, Indiana. His father was a former boxer who worked at a steel factory, and his mother worked part-time at Sears. Michael came from a large family, growing up with 3 sisters and 5 brothers. Both of Jackson’s parents had musical talent and they strongly encouraged musical expression in their children. Jackson attended public school in Gary until the age of 11. By that time, the demands of his music career grew so much that he received the rest of his schooling from a private tutor.

Michael Jackson’s career in the spotlight began unusually early. At the young age of 7, Michael permanently joined his older brothers’ musical group called The Jackson 5, which was managed by their father. Then, in 1969, the Jackson 5 signed a contract with Motown Records and the whole family moved from Indiana to California. After signing with Motown, the group had a series of hits with Michael singing lead vocals. In 1978, he starred as the Scarecrow in the musical film *The Wiz*, also starring Diana Ross. The very next year, he released his first solo album *Off the Wall*. Jackson ended up releasing 10 albums in his

career. As the 1980's progressed, Jackson won numerous awards, eventually earning him the nickname "The King of Pop". His biggest success came in 1982, when Michael Jackson released the *Thriller* album. *Thriller* became the best-selling album of all time. Jackson was a dancing sensation as well as a talented singer, and it was around the time of *Thriller* that he first performed the famous "Moonwalk" dance move. His distinctive dancing style became as well-known as his voice.

There had never been an artist quite like Michael Jackson – he was truly one-of-a-kind. His massive popularity and success opened new doors for black artists. His audience included people of every race, gender, and nationality. Some had grown up listening to his music since the Jackson 5, others discovered him when his solo career brought him global stardom. The power of his voice and the captivating style of his dancing inspired his fans. Tragically, Jackson passed away unexpectedly in 2009, leaving behind a young son and daughter. The whole world grieved. Fortunately, Jackson left a recorded legacy that fans can still enjoy now ... and new fans will surely discover his music far into the future.

Taylor Swift is a pop country musician. She was born in 1989 in Pennsylvania. Her father is a financial advisor and her mother used to work in marketing, but she gave up her career to be a full-time mother to Taylor and her younger brother, Austin. Taylor's father made enough money in his career to make this possible. Swift went to a couple different private schools during her elementary school years. Then, she attended public school for middle and high school.

Taylor Swift's music career started early. By age 9, Taylor Swift was already performing country music songs wherever she could, including festivals, fairs, coffee shops, and even karaoke contests. When Swift was 14, she moved to Nashville. Her parents wanted to help her start a music career, and a record label there was already interested in hiring Taylor to work on other musician's albums. The very next year, she decided to leave her job with the record label so she could focus on making her own music. In 2006, Swift released her first album, which was a huge success. She has released 4 more albums since then and won many awards, including 4 Grammy Awards for *Fearless*, her second album. This record has become the most awarded album in country music history, and Swift herself is the youngest person to win a Grammy for "Album of the Year". Her latest album is titled *1989*, named for the year she was born.

From the very beginning of her music career, the independent young Swift has shown a talent for promoting herself as well as making music. Using the internet, touring often, and covering songs by artists from other genres – such as the pop and hip hop music of Beyonce and Eminem - have all been among the strategies she has used to find a large audience. Now, her audience is made up of boys and girls of all ages. They like the catchy tunes and emotional, heartfelt lyrics. These days, Swift is about to go on a large tour next month to promote her latest album. The first show is going to be in Tokyo, Japan. The world can expect to hear plenty more music in the future from this young, fast-rising star.

