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# Lesson Plan: Hall of Heroes - A Historical Biography Museum

## Materials Needed:

- Access to the internet for research (with parental supervision)
- Library books or encyclopedias about various historical figures
- Notebooks or a digital document for taking notes
- **For the Project (student's choice):**
- Poster board, construction paper, markers, scissors, glue
- Computer with presentation software (like Google Slides, PowerPoint, or Canva)
- Video recording device (like a smartphone or tablet)
- Costume pieces and simple props (hats, glasses, tools, etc.)
- Index cards for presentation notes
- A "Project Rubric" sheet (template provided below)

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## Lesson Overview

This is a multi-session, project-based lesson where students become "museum curators." Each student will select a historical figure, conduct in-depth research, and create a museum exhibit (presentation) to share with the group. The focus is on creative expression, research skills, and understanding the impact of an individual's life.

## Learning Objectives

By the end of this project, students will be able to:

- Select a historical figure and formulate key research questions about their life and impact.
- Gather and organize information from multiple sources (books, websites, videos).
- Create a clear and engaging timeline of the person's major life events.
- Analyze and explain the historical figure's influence, challenges, and acts of "heroism."
- Design and deliver a creative, multi-media presentation to an audience.

## Alignment with Standards (Examples for Grade 5)

- **Social Studies/History:** Analyze the character and leadership of a historical figure. Describe the contributions of individuals to society.
- **Reading/Research:** Gather relevant information from print and digital sources; summarize or paraphrase information in notes.
- **Writing/Speaking:** Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic. Present knowledge and ideas, sequencing ideas logically and using appropriate facts and relevant, descriptive details.

## Lesson Activities (Structured over 4 Sessions)

### Session 1: The Spark - Choosing a Hero (Approx. 60 minutes)

#### 1. Introduction (15 mins):

Start with a discussion. Ask: "What makes someone a hero? Do heroes have to wear capes? Can a scientist, an artist, or an activist be a hero?" Discuss how people who change the world for the better, overcome great obstacles, or show incredible courage are often considered historical heroes. Explain that the group will be creating a "Hall of Heroes" museum, and each person is in charge of creating one exhibit.

#### 2. Brainstorming & Exploration (30 mins):

Provide a diverse list of potential figures to spark ideas (e.g., Marie Curie, Leonardo da Vinci, Harriet Tubman, Martin Luther King Jr., Albert Einstein, Frida Kahlo, Neil Armstrong, Jane Goodall). Encourage students to suggest names as well. Give them time to do some quick, preliminary online searches or flip through books to see who sparks their interest. The goal is not deep research, just exploration.

#### 3. The Choice & "I Wonder" Questions (15 mins):

Each student officially chooses their historical figure. Once chosen, they must write down at least five "I wonder..." questions about that person. For example: "I wonder what Marie Curie's lab looked like," or "I wonder what was the hardest part of Harriet Tubman's journey." These questions will guide their research.

### Session 2: The Detective - Research and Planning (Approx. 90 minutes)

#### 1. Organizing Research (20 mins):

Introduce a simple note-taking system. Create categories in a notebook or digital doc:

- **Early Life:** Where/when were they born? What was their childhood like?
- **Major Accomplishments:** What are they famous for?
- **Challenges/Obstacles:** What difficulties did they face?
- **Influence/Legacy:** How did they change the world? Why do we still talk about them?
- **Fascinating Facts:** What are some surprising or cool details?

#### 2. Deep Dive Research (50 mins):

Students use library books, approved websites (like National Geographic Kids, Ducksters, or biography.com), and videos to find the answers to their "I Wonder" questions and fill in their research categories. The teacher should act as a facilitator, helping students find good sources and paraphrase information (not just copy and paste).

#### 3. Project Blueprint (20 mins):

Students decide on their presentation format (the "exhibit"). Will it be a poster? A slideshow? A first-person monologue in costume? They should create a simple plan or sketch of what their project will look like and what information will go where.

## Session 3: The Creator - Building the Exhibit (Approx. 90 minutes)

### 1. Timeline Creation (30 mins):

First, have every student create their timeline. It should include at least 5-7 key dates (birth, major discovery, important event, death). This provides a strong structure for their story. They can draw this on a poster or use an online timeline creator.

### 2. Project Work Time (60 mins):

This is dedicated time for students to work on their chosen project format. The teacher circulates to offer guidance, help with technical issues, or provide creative suggestions. Encourage them to be creative! If they are dressing up, they can practice their "in-character" voice. If they are making a poster, they can think about using compelling images and clear headings.

## Session 4: The Grand Opening - Hall of Heroes Museum Day! (Approx. 60-90 minutes)

### 1. Exhibit Setup (15 mins):

Students set up their projects around the room as if it were a real museum. Posters are hung, laptops are opened to slideshows, and props are laid out.

### 2. Presentations (45 mins):

Each "curator" stands by their exhibit and presents their historical figure to the group. Encourage a 3-5 minute presentation length. The rest of the group acts as museum visitors and can ask one or two questions after each presentation. This is the culmination of their hard work!

### 3. Reflection and Connection (15 mins):

After all presentations, gather as a group. Ask reflection questions: "What was the most surprising thing you learned about someone else's figure?" "Did any of these heroes have similar challenges?" "What character trait did you admire most from all the people we learned about today?"

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## Differentiation and Inclusivity

- **For Extra Support:** Provide a pre-selected list of 3-4 figures to choose from. Offer fill-in-the-blank graphic organizers for research. Provide sentence starters for the presentation (e.g., "My historical figure is... They are important because...").
- **For an Advanced Challenge:** Encourage students to compare and contrast their figure with another historical figure from the same era. Have them create a short video documentary or a "dialogue" between two historical figures debating an issue.
- **Inclusivity:** Ensure the initial brainstorming list is diverse across gender, race, culture, and field of accomplishment (not just presidents and generals, but also artists, scientists, and activists).

## Assessment

Assessment is based on the final presentation and the research notes. Use a simple, clear rubric that students can see beforehand. The focus is on completion, effort, and clear communication, not on memorizing dates.

### Example Project Rubric (Checkbric)

| Criteria                                                                         | Yes / In Progress | Notes |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|-------|
| The presentation includes a clear timeline of major life events.                 |                   |       |
| The student clearly explains the person's influence or major accomplishments.    |                   |       |
| The student shared at least one major challenge the person faced.                |                   |       |
| The presentation includes at least two fascinating or surprising facts.          |                   |       |
| The presentation is creative, organized, and shows clear effort.                 |                   |       |
| The student spoke clearly and was able to answer one question from the audience. |                   |       |