Story Coach Guidelines

Checklist for Story Coach

- Help the author choose a subject
- Help the author register online at understandingworks.org
- Read both story coach’s guidelines and writer’s guidelines
- Help young author set up meeting or a Zoom with subject for interview
- Read interview tips
- Attend interview with the book subject and young author and take detailed notes
- If possible, take several pictures of the subject and author
- Ask family for 10-12 photos to include in the published storybook
- Complete the two-page biography from information learned at interview
- Edit the author’s writing and actively advise on artwork
- Submit the book project at understandingworks.org

Suggested Timeline for Six-Week Writing Project

Week One:
- Learn about writing project, view website, and writer’s guidelines
- Attend A BOOK by ME training class
- Choose a subject
- Register book project on website

Week Two:
- Introduction to subject’s story
- Research (make sure your resources are reliable)
- Make a list of open-ended questions to ask the subject
- Arrange interview with subject

Week Three:
- Complete interview and send thank you note
- Choose book title and discuss artwork with illustrator
- Write ten-page script

Week Four:
- Write and edit ten-page script
- Clearly mark Page 1, Page 2, Page 3, etc.
- Share text with artist and discuss artwork for book cover
- Edit work with Story Coach

Week Five:
- Illustrate one piece of art for each page (plus cover art)
- Scan each illustration naming each file according to page it illustrates

Week Six:
- Complete including About the Author and About the Illustration Page and Dear Reader
- Have Story Coach submit project
Story Coach Guidelines

Interview

• Arrange a meeting in person or via Zoom. Tell subject the interview typically takes an hour.
• Subject should be notified to bring 10-12 photos of their youth, teen years, service time, 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 and immediately return them 3) take the photos home to scan and return the originals.
• Take several photos of the young author with their subject. Because it will be included in the book, please make sure photo is clear.
• Subject should be notified that they will need to sign a release. Bring a copy of the release with you for the subject to review. The official release will be sent with a copy of the subject’s proof book during the first stage of publishing. Subject will have opportunity edit their storybook as needed.
• Take detailed notes so that you can write a two-page biography of the subject. Write down dates as well. They will be needed for the curriculum timeline.
• Ask permission to record the interview if you are able. It’s beneficial if you have trouble remembering details later.
• Encourage the author to follow up with a thank you phone call or thank you card.

Writing

Encourage the author to type their book on a word document. They can easily edit it and note the ten pages so we know where to make page breaks. When they finish, they can copy and paste their work onto the online submission form. The responsibility of the story coach during the writing process is to answer any questions that the author has and edit their final draft. Give constructive criticism regarding the period of time if needed (especially with artwork).

Illustrations

Coach needs to watch the artwork for period clothing, military uniforms, housing, and buildings, etc. Artist can easily look on Google image and find what people were wearing and how roads looked in the early 1900s.

Illustrations are to be done on separate paper from the writing. The illustrator needs to use normal 8 ½ 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. The picture files must be labeled as the page numbers so that we can easily match the illustrations to the correct page.
Story Coach Guidelines

Two-page Biography

You need to attend the interview with the author. It would be best if you help the author set up the interview with the subject and proofread the questions that 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 – 1,200 words long.

Dear Reader Page

This page introduces the reader to the story but also has the potential to inspire a new young author. It is written as a letter to the reader from the author and illustrator. The first paragraph should introduce the young author 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 young author. This space could be used to acknowledge the story coach and encourage future young authors. This page will include one of the old photos of the subject.

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Michelle Trop Robovits

Michelle and her two sons, two daughters of this book, spent time in some of the best in the world, including the Museum of Natural History, the British Museum, and the Louvre. They did this to see what the world was like and to meet people who had been there. They also enjoyed the food and the architecture. They had a good time in the city and the countryside. They loved the art and the history. They learned a lot about the world and the people who live in it.

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 – 1,200 words long.

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Dear Reader,

I am from a small town in Illinois called Macom. That's where the town of our story, John Moore, 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 us. Thank you for being a part of this project.

Name: John Moore
Birth: April 3, 1936 in Macom, Illinois
Twin: John and Jack, Frank, one of his coaches, worked with us. Frank was a hardworking, ambitious man. Much more that, he was well known for his teaching in need. He was one of the best coaches ever. He was able to make any athlete a superstar. He was a great neighbor. He was a great teacher. He was a great friend. He was a great husband. He was a great family man. We will miss him.

Story: After high school, John went to Western Illinois University in Macom. 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. His dreams of being a doctor were shattered. He had to find a way to support his family. He became a nurse. He became a nurse. He became a nurse. He became a nurse. He became a nurse. He became a nurse. He became a nurse.

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. We were in awe. He had the library books to read and write. John and I were inspired by his college football coaches, Colonel Ray Lannos, a World War I veteran, and World War II hero. Like Coach Lannos, John joined the Marines because he felt it was best to fight in small groups. Now 35 years old, John still believes the Marines are more valuable and this is 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 it was lucky to meet him and share his story with you.

Mary Hammond
Young Author
Book Summary
The story 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.

Photo Album
This page includes 10-12 photos of the subject. When submitting the photos at understandingworks.org, 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.

Submissions
Submit all the work at understandingworks.org. Note: All submissions will be reviewed but not all will be published. All the information you need to submit your Story Coach Submission Form is below. You will also need to fill out the Photo Submission form, which includes: 11 illustrations, 10-12 old photos of the subject, a photo with the author and subject, a headshot of the author, and a headshot of the illustrator.

Book Title _____________________________________________

Author: ______________________________________________

Illustrator: _____________________________________________

Subject: ______________________________________________

Check which series: Holocaust Human Rights Heroes

Dear Reader – Summarize the author’s reason for writing and thoughts about their experiences writing for A BOOK by ME. (Maximum 250 words)
Dear Reader – List the subject’s full name, date of birth, city and country of birth, family members (parents, siblings, spouse, children), and a short summary of the book.

Dear Reader – With the author, write a paragraph about any additional information about the interview, appreciation of the subject or story coach, or encouragement to new young authors. (Maximum 250 words)

Back Cover Summary – Summarize the story in a way that is appealing to young readers. (Maximum 250 words)
Biography - Using your notes from the interview, write a two-page biography about the subject in chronological order. Use accurate dates. (About 1000 -1200 words)