

Humanities Accelerator Course (HAC) Launch Module

Task: Autobiography

Overview

Focus Question: Who are you, and what is your story?

Key Understanding:

- Identity is made up of a variety of factors, both internal and external, and you determine both the ways in which they come together to define who you are and the ways you express who you are to others.

Language Objectives:

- Reading: I can identify details within text and media sources to support the description and expression of my identity.
- Writing: I can create an autobiography, using words and visual elements, that represents my identity.
- Speaking: I can orally rehearse and present my autobiography to my class.
- Listening: I can listen for similarities and differences between my autobiography and the autobiographies of my classmates.

Task Summary:

This task is intended to support the tenets of identity, literacy, and community by creating an opportunity for both the teacher(s) and students to explore, research, and ultimately present to the class a short autobiography about themselves.

- **Explore:** Part of the course launch includes engaging students in [Facing History's Identity & Storytelling text set](#). Their work during this portion can and should contribute to the creation of their autobiography. For more explicit connections, see details in the [Note for Teachers](#) and [Student Directions](#).
- **Research:** During the third period throughout the course launch, students will learn and use research practices and strategies to highlight and deepen their understanding of themselves in relation to specific focus areas: Place, Family & Culture, News & Events, Learner Self/Reader Self, All About You, and Interest & Hobbies. This part of the autobiography is meant to be driven by student choice within those focus areas.
- **Present:** At the end of the course launch, students will present their autobiographies to the class. It is expected that all students participate, though the format of their presentation will vary depending on how they decide to express their work. Students may choose from a menu of options for presenting or come up with their own idea. To build their final presentation, students can

use their work from the Facing History text set and their individual research. The final presentation should be between 10–12 minutes. As needed for time constraints, consider having students present in groups of 4–5 students each over the course of one to two class periods. It is possible that not all students will be able to present before the end of the Course Launch, so time should be put aside to ensure all students are able to present.

Standards:

- CC.K-12.W.R.6: Production and Distribution of Writing: Use technology, including the Internet, to produce and publish writing and to interact and collaborate with others.
- CC.K-12.W.R.7: Research to Build and Present Knowledge: Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects based on focused questions, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.
- CC.K-12.SL.4: Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas: Present information, findings, and supporting evidence such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
- CC.K-12.SL.5: Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas: Make strategic use of digital media and visual displays of data to express information and enhance understanding of presentations.
- CC.K-12.L.R.3: Knowledge of Language: Apply knowledge of language to understand how language functions in different contexts, to make effective choices for meaning or style, and to comprehend more fully when reading or listening.
- CC.K-12.R.R.7: Integration of Knowledge and Ideas: Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse formats and media, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.

Note for Teachers

An important part of building a classroom environment in which the type of personal sharing described above can happen is establishing a sense of psychological safety. To that end, teachers themselves should engage in the Facing History text set and personal research, as well, in order to write their own autobiography. We highly suggest that teacher presentations of their own autobiography should be done close to the beginning of the course launch or right before the autobiography is introduced to students. Making the thinking, skills, and vulnerability visible to students will model what is expected of them and provide opportunities to build connections between teacher(s) and students. Consider identifying parts of your lived experiences that may directly relate to students, offer them insight into something about you that they wouldn't be able to tell from looking at you, and highlight growth or learning. Please note that we encourage the use of home language in the development of

autobiographies, which requires leading with curiosity and willingness to learn together about each other’s linguistic strengths. And, the more humor the better!

Key activities and student work to draw on from Facing History Text Set:

- [Lesson: Authoring My Identity](#)—Identity chart, My Honest Poem notes and discussion
- [Lesson: Why Identity Matters](#)—Journal reflection, social identity wheel, Complexity of Identity exit card
- [Lesson: Stories of Identity & Belonging](#)—Navigating identity challenges t-chart
- [Lesson: Cultivating Identity Literacy](#)—Journal reflection, Personal Action exit card
- [Assessment options](#)—Socratic seminar, visual storytelling, final reflection

To support students in their personal research, draw on the [research strategies and supports](#) outlined in the third period framework.

Student Directions

Welcome to the course! As part of the course launch, you will be exploring, researching, creating, and sharing your own autobiography. An autobiography is a story about your life written by you. Through the lessons in the course launch and your research time in third period, you will explore your identity in a variety of ways. By the end, your task is to be able to deliver a 10–12 minute presentation to your classmates that shares your autobiography.

Your final, shared autobiography can take many forms including but not limited to:

- Powerpoint/Google Slide deck
- Video
- Art
- Music (song, rap)
- Skit
- Poem/spoken word
- A combination of any of these forms
- [Your idea here!]

No matter what form you choose, your **presentation** needs to include a verbal/oral component and a visual component. Feel free to use the language that feels most comfortable and natural when sharing your identity. Consider: How can you express your identity in a way that is authentic to you and understandable to your audience?

In terms of the **content** of your autobiography, you will use the research prompts below to determine what makes up the story of you.

To support the **creation** of your autobiography, we suggest that you use some of the tasks from the Facing History text set including:

- [Identity chart](#)
- [My Honest Poem Sentence Starters](#)
- Notes from [Exploring the Concept of Identity/ Exploring the Concept of Identity \[adapted\]](#)
- [Social identity wheel](#)
- [Assessment task](#)

Research Prompts

Choose at least three prompts from each row/category to research or write about for your autobiography.

Place	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where were you born? What do you know about that place? What do you know about its geography or environment? • Where have you lived? Where do you currently live? What is that place famous or known for? What's something important that happened in the history of where you live? • Where do you feel most at home/safe? Why? • Where do you feel like you most belong? Why? • Where do you feel like an outsider/unsafe? Why? • What places/locations do you feel connected to? Why?
Family & Culture	<p><i>Family</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who makes up your family? (born/chosen) • Where do you fit into your family? (age order/role/responsibilities) • How does your family impact how you view yourself? How do you express yourself? (appearance/behavior/beliefs) • What do you wish people knew about you and your family? • Is there anyone in your family you feel especially close to? <p><i>Culture</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How would you define your culture? • How does it impact how you view yourself? How do you express yourself? (appearance/behavior/beliefs) • What do you wish people knew about you and your culture? • What traditions or customs are important to your culture and identity? • What role does language play in your culture and identity? • What role does religion or spirituality play in your life?
News & Events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is a current local news story or event that impacts you or that you feel connected to? Why? • What is a news story or event from within the U.S. (past/present) that impacts you or that you feel connected to? Why? • What is a news story or event from outside of the U.S. (past/present) that impacts you or that you feel connected to? Why?

<p>Learner Self, Reader Self</p>	<p><i>Learner Self</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When you hear the word “school,” what thoughts or feelings does it bring up for you? Why? • When have you felt successful at learning something? What made you feel that way? • Describe a time when you were faced with learning something new that you’d never done before. What were you doing? Who or what helped you learn that new thing? • When/how have you learned at home/with family/with friends? What did you learn? • How does language influence how you learn? • What do you wish people knew about you and your learning experience? <p><i>Reader Self</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When you hear the word “reading,” what emotions does it bring up for you and why? • When have you felt successful in reading? What made you feel that way? • Describe a time in reading/literacy class when you were having a hard time or felt stuck. What were you doing? Who or what helped you get unstuck? • How do you or your family use reading in everyday life? • What’s your favorite book/story or anything you have read? Why? • How does language shape how you think/feel about reading? • What do you wish people knew about you and your reading experience? • What did reading look like at home? Did anyone in your family read to you when you were younger or now? Did you enjoy that? Do you remember what was read? Do you read aloud to your younger siblings or anyone?
<p>All About You, Interests & Hobbies</p>	<p><i>All About You</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First memories at home • Memories from first days of school • First time you were aware of your race/gender • First friends, best friends • Funny stories from school, home, or anywhere • Any time in your life you did something you wish you could take back • An embarrassing moment • Some of your favorite teachers • What thoughts at this point do you have about your future? <p><i>Interests & Hobbies</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do you like to do in your free time? What are you interested in? Why? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Favorite activities (e.g., sports, music, art, fashion, writing, cooking, tech, etc.) • What’s a hobby you don’t currently do but want to start in the future? • How do these interests/hobbies connect to your identity?