

The Freedom Writers:

Online and Traditional Non-Fiction Sources

BACKGROUND: In our Non-Fiction unit, we have discussed that there are a variety of formats such as autobiographies, biographies, and essays that help to express stories about true people and events. We will analyze these non-fiction formats before viewing a film about true events that occurred in the early 1990's at Woodrow Wilson High School in Long Beach, CA. Real people and events from several cultures and time periods influenced this inspiring story about embracing diversity.

Directions: Complete each activity in the order as they appear to tap your existing knowledge and gain new background about some of the non-fictional elements that relate to the true story of *The Freedom Writers*. These activities will include a variety of traditional texts and online resources.

- Activities 1 and 2 will be completed BEFORE we go to the media center.
- Activities 3, 4, and 5 will be completed in the media center.
- Activity 6 will be completed for homework

ACTIVITY 1: EXPOSITORY paragraph about DIVERSITY

Diversity can include differences in someone's social class, gender, race, ethnic background, economic status, religious preferences, etc. Write a brief EXPOSITORY summary to inform your audience about the diversity of your neighborhood and/or school.

ACTIVITY 2: AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL EXCERPT from *The Diary of Anne Frank*

Before reading her excerpt on the next page, read this background about Anne Frank:

- Anne Frank wrote her diary during World War II (WWII)
- During WWII, Adolf Hitler directed the Holocaust - the systematic and merciless killing of the mentally ill, gypsies, and over 6 million Jewish people
- Anne and her family were Jewish and therefore needed to hide for their own protection; she wrote this famous diary during that time in hiding.
- She wrote to herself, often using the salutation "Dear Kitty..." to begin each entry
- Margot is the name of her sister

Read the following excerpt and answer the question that follows.

In the following account of Wednesday, July 8, 1942, from Anne Frank's diary, Anne marvels at the thought of still being alive after all of the events that drove the Frank family into hiding.

Dear Kitty,

. . . Yes, I'm still alive, indeed, but don't ask where or how. You wouldn't understand a word, so I will begin by telling you what happened . . .

At three o'clock . . . someone rang the front doorbell. . . . A bit later, Margot appeared at the kitchen door looking very excited. "The S.S. have sent a call-up notice for Daddy . . .

. . . When we were alone together in our bedroom, Margot told me that the call-up was not for Daddy, but for her. I was more frightened than ever and began to cry. Margot is sixteen; would they really take girls of that age away alone? . . .

. . . Margot and I began to pack some of our most vital belongings . . . The first thing I put in was this diary, then hair curlers, handkerchiefs, schoolbooks, a comb, old letters; I put in the craziest things with the idea that we were going into hiding. But I'm not sorry, memories mean more to me than dresses.

. . . We put on heaps of clothes as if we were going to the North Pole, the sole reason being to take clothes with us. No Jew in our situation would have dreamed of going out with a suitcase full of clothing. I had on two vests, three pairs of pants, a dress . . .

Source Citation: "Diary of Anne Frank (excerpt), July 8, 1942." *DISCovering World History*. Online ed. Detroit: Gale, 2003. *Student Resource Center - Gold*. Gale. Liberty High School (MD). 5 Apr. 2008
<<http://find.galegroup.com/srcx/infomark.do?&contentSet=GSRC&type=retrieve&tabID=T006&prodId=SRC>

QUESTION for ACTIVITY 2:

- **List at least three (3) details or phrases from the text above that makes it very personal and unique, a key element of an autobiography:**

COMPLETE ACTIVITIES 3, 4, and 5 at the MEDIA CENTER

ACTIVITY 3: BIOGRAPHICAL ESSAYS (15 minutes)

- Go to The Liberty HS Media Page
- Click on References
- Scroll down to Infotrac: Gale Research Group
 - Type in *Username: elde32349*
 - *Password: elde32349*
- Click on Student Research Center - Gold
- In the BASIC SEARCH box, type in "ANNE FRANK" in the "FIND" box
- Find and read a biographical essay about Anne Frank

ANSWER the following questions for **ACTIVITY 3**:

1. What was the title of your essay? _____

2. List 3 facts that you learned about Anne Frank:

3. Circle how you think this essay was organized:

Description Sequence Comparison Cause/Effect Problem/Solution

4. Explain how you know the essay was organized that way:

5. As a reader, how did activity 2 and 3 compare and contrast for you while focusing on the same topic - Anne Frank? In other words, what was similar and different between the autobiographical diary entry and the biographical essay?

ACTIVITY 4: MAGAZINE ARTICLE #1 (15 minutes)

- Type in the following URL: <http://www.newsweek.com/id/42998>
- Read the article about Miep Gies called "A Tribute to Miep"
- NOTE, you can also ask Mrs. Thomen for a paper copy of this if you experience technical difficulties.

ANSWER the following questions for ACTIVITY 4:

1. List 3 facts that you learned about Miep Gies:

2. Circle how you think this article was organized:

Description Sequence Comparison Cause/Effect Problem/Solution

3. Explain how you know the article was organized that way:

ACTIVITY 5: MAGAZINE ARTICLE #2 (15 minutes)

- Type in the following URL: <http://www.newsweek.com/id/121754>
- Read the article about events surrounding the Rodney King trial called "Why it Happened: An L.A. Cop's View"
- NOTE, you can also ask Mrs. Thomen for a paper copy of this if you experience technical difficulties.

ANSWER the following questions for ACTIVITY 5:

1. List 3 facts that you learned about the LA Police Department's point of view.

2. Circle what purpose and type of article this was:

Descriptive Expository Narrative Persuasive

3. Explain how you know this was the type and purpose of this article:

COMPLETE ACTIVITY 6 for HOMEWORK

ACTIVITY 6: NEWSPAPER ARTICLE

Read the following *New YorkTimes* article and then answer the questions that follow:

Chaos breaks out after King verdict. (April 29, 1992)

(LOS ANGELES RIOTS)(Rodney King).
UPI's 20th Century Top Stories (April 29, 1992): pNA.

Full Text :

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LOS ANGELES, April 29, 1992 (UPI) -- Despite widespread pleas for calm, hundreds of people angered by the acquittal of four white officers in the Rodney King police beating trial rampaged through the streets, dragging people from their cars, setting fires and storming police headquarters. There were reports of scattered sniper fire, but police said nobody was hit.

The most severe violence was reported in predominantly black South Los Angeles, where bands of young people threw rocks and bottles at passing motorists. At least two motorists were pulled out of their vehicles and beaten, and a reporter was attacked.

Gangs looted a liquor store near Normandie and Florence avenues, where at least one car and a business were set on fire. Eight buildings at a nearby mini-mall were also set ablaze.

While Police Chief Daryl Gates was addressing reporters in a Parker Center police headquarters conference room, hundreds of people began to gather outside.

The gathering was initially peaceful, but police in riot gear were called in to secure the area when protesters surged toward the front lobby, throwing clods of dirt and rocks. At least one window was broken. Lt. Roger Fox said one man was arrested for throwing something at a police officer.

The entire Police Department was placed on tactical alert status, which means all officers on duty will remain on duty, days off were cancelled, and officers normally off duty were asked to report. The Fire Department called in all its high-ranking officers.

At least two businesses, a car and some mattresses in the street were set afire in the Normandie Avenue area. At one business, a cordon of police cars accompanied fire engines and a paramedic unit to protect them while they battled the blaze, but police were noticeably absent from the scene of the worst violence.

UPI Radio reporter Bob Brill was dragged from a phone booth while he was feeding his story and beaten up. Brill said a group of angry youths kicked and punched him, stole his tape recorder and smashed the windows in his car.

Brill managed to get back to his car and drive to a nearby hospital, where he was treated for a broken thumb and bruises.

At least two motorists were dragged from their cars and beaten up. Young men strode by one man who was lying in the street and pelted him with bottles and kicked him in the head.

The driver of a cement truck was pulled from his cab and beaten senseless. He was reportedly in serious condition.

The chaos came despite pleas for people to remain calm from community leaders, including Mayor Tom Bradley, District Attorney Ira Reiner, Cardinal Roger Mahony and even President Bush.

The violence brought back vivid memories of the August 1965 Watts riots, in which 34 people – 29 of them black – were killed, more than 1,000 were injured and \$200 million in property went up in flames. More than 700 fires were set. The riot started when a Highway Patrol officer arrested a man, a crowd gathered and the violence escalated into six days of rioting that devastated the area.

Source Citation:

"Chaos breaks out after King verdict.(April 29, 1992)(LOS ANGELES RIOTS)(Rodney King)." *UPI's 20th Century Top Stories*. (April 29, 1992): NA. *Student Resource Center – Gold*. Gale. Liberty High School (MD). 5 Apr. 2008
<<http://find.galegroup.com/srcx/infomark.do?&contentSet=IAC-Documents&type=retrieve&tabID=T004&prodId=SRC-1&docId=A132093398&source=gale&srcprod=SRCG&userGroupName=elde32349&version=1.0>>.

QUESTIONS FOR ACTIVITY 6

1. List 3 facts that you learned about the riots that occurred after the Rodney King trial ended:

2. Circle how you think this article was organized:

Description Sequence Comparison Cause/Effect Problem/Solution

3. Explain how you know the article was organized that way:

4. Circle what purpose and type of article this was:

Descriptive Expository Narrative Persuasive

5. Explain how you know this was the type and purpose of this article: