

## Writing Assignment

Step 1: Choose a constructed identity from the past. You could choose an actual person, like George Washington (but only if you are comfortable with or willing to become comfortable with his biography), or you could create your own person, choosing a class, ethnicity, region, etc. For example, one student chose to be a Catholic-Irish immigrant in New York in the late 1800s, who works building skyscrapers. Right away, I know this person faces severe economic hardship, faces the wrath of anti-immigrant groups, endures exploitation at the hands of his employer, and struggles with the emasculating reality that he cannot provide for his wife and children, etc. Answer these questions: Do I want to be male or female? How old do I want my character to be? What is my character's ethnic background, sexual orientation, marital status, educational background, occupation, etc.? Where and when does my character live? What are the major historical events taking place during my character's lifetime? Even create a name for your character.

Step 2: Work with a librarian to find a scholarly article in an encyclopedia that discusses the situation, time, place, and lifestyle of people with your identity. You want to read one or two scholarly essays about the general area and situation in which your person would live. You will need to cite these articles in your works cited.

Step 3: a). Work with the librarians to find three primary sources that reflect the identity, time, place, or life's events of your chosen person, like the Irishman above. b.) Answer the academic inquiry questions for each source. I'll provide these. c). In a separate "journal," create three different journal entries for each primary source, writing your reflections through the perspective of your chosen identity.

Step 4: Write a one-page biography for your character.

Step 5: a). Read any three primary sources from *America Firsthand* through the lens of this identity. b). Answer the academic inquiry questions for each source. These are listed before and (often) after the source in *America Firsthand* c). In your separate journal, create three different journal entries for each primary source you chose from *America Firsthand*, writing your reflections through the perspective of your chosen identity.

Step 6: Write a two-page, argumentative, analytical essay arguing what characterizes American history and culture through this person's perspective during the time they lived.

Step 7: Include a formal works cited page, listing all your primary and secondary sources.

I look forward to reading these. Enjoy!