



Legislator Journal

Day 2

Grade Levels 7-9

This lesson is based on the Women of the Oklahoma Legislature Oral History Project. It is provided courtesy of the Oklahoma Oral History Research Program (OOHRP) at the Oklahoma State University Library with generous support from the Women's Archives at OSU and the Oklahoma Commission on the Status of Women.

Formally established in 2007, the OOHRP has collected and preserved firsthand accounts from individuals who have witnessed historic moments. The Program explores the lives and contributions of Oklahomans from all walks of life.

The Women of the Oklahoma Legislature is one of many projects undertaken by the OOHRP. This oral history project captures and records information about female Oklahoma legislators in their own voices and provides an opportunity to reflect on their individual paths to the Capitol. It also documents more completely the presence of these women in state government.

The OOHRP invites you to explore the website (www.library.okstate.edu/oralhistory/wotol/) and meet the women who have played an important role in Oklahoma politics.



Oklahoma PASS Objectives

- **Language Arts, Reading/Literature 4:1b** Analyze characteristics of subgenres, including autobiography, biography, fable, folk tale, mystery, and myth. (Grade 7)
- **Language Arts, Reading/Literature 4:1b** Identify and distinguish characteristics of subgenres, including autobiography, biography, fable, folk tale, mystery, myth, limericks, tall tales, and plays. (Grade 8)
- **Language Arts, Reading/Literature 4:2a** Analyze and explain elements of fiction, including plot, conflict, resolution, character, setting, theme, and point of view. (Grade 7)
- **Language Arts, Reading/Literature 4:2c** Describe how the author’s perspective, argument, or point of view affects the text. (Grade 7)
- **Language Arts, Reading/Literature 4:2e** Analyze characters and identify author’s point of view. (Grade 9)
- **Language Arts, Reading/Literature 4:2f** Identify literary forms and terms such as author, drama, biography, autobiography, myth, tall tale, dialogue, tragedy and comedy, structure in poetry, epic, ballad, protagonist, antagonist, paradox, analogy, dialect, and comic relief as appropriate to the selections being read. (Grade 9)
- **Language Arts, Writing 2:1** Write biographical or autobiographical narratives (stories) that:
 - a. identify a real person, living or not, who has had a special influence on other people.
 - b. provide a sequence of factual events and communicate the significance of the events to the person.
 - c. isolate specific scenes and incidents in times and places significant to defining the person’s influence. (Grades 7 and 9)
- **Language Arts, Writing 2:1** Write biographical or autobiographical narratives or short stories that:
 - a. tell about an incident, event, or situation by using well-chosen details.
 - b. reveal the significance of, or the writer’s attitude about the subject.
 - c. include narrative and descriptive strategies, such as, relevant dialogue, specific action, physical description, background description, and comparison or contrast characters. (Grade 8)

Lesson Objective

The students will be able to create a “Legislator Journal” about the life of one of the women who has served in the Oklahoma Legislature using information from yesterday’s lesson.

Lesson

Yesterday we gathered information for a special journal, which we are calling a Legislator Journal. We learned about writing in a specific *point of view*. We also learned about writing in the voice of *first person*. What words would we use when writing in *first person*? (Allow time for students to respond.) We took time to read the interview transcripts of our research subjects and took notes about specific events in their lives. Today we will construct our Legislator Journals.



Return each student's Legislator Journal Student Sheets from yesterday. Who can share an interesting story about your legislator's early life? (Allow time for students to share.) How would you transform that story into a "first person" story? Remember, you would use "I" or "me" when telling the story. (Allow time for the class to rephrase the story so that it is stated in *first person*.)

Today we are going to create our Legislator Journals. You will need scissors and markers and pens or pencils for this project. You will need a minimum of three pages of plain photocopy paper. If you found more interesting things in your research and would like to add more pages to your journal, let me know when we pass out the paper. Each sheet will be folded in half. You wrote down six things yesterday. You will use three pages, folded in half to make SIX pages. You can figure the extra pages that way. (Pass out the plain photocopy paper for each student. Take class time to fold each paper in half lengthwise. Now open the papers. Stack them together on your desk and fold them together.)

You will also be receiving a plain brown paper bag or sack. You will cut this sack to fit as a cover for your journal. Before we do that, we have a special treatment for the sack. When each of you have your brown sacks we will begin. Wad up your bag just like this. (Demonstrate for the class.) Now smooth it out. (Again, demonstrate this. Be sure their desks are relatively clear so they have room for this.) Now, again wad up your sack. Now once again smooth it out. One last time, please wad up your paper sack. As you smooth it out, really press it out with your fingers. Your sack looks worn, which is what we want the covers for our journals to look like. Because it is brown, it could also resemble a leather book cover. We will now trim our sack to be slightly larger than our paper. (Tell them to use the folded plain photocopy papers as a guide when cutting the paper sack.)

What could we write on the front cover of our journal? (Allow time for the students to make suggestions. Basically, they will need to write the NAME of their legislator. You may wish to give them choices for the remainder of the information to be added to the journal cover.)

On the back of the journal cover, please write YOUR NAME. This will help us know who has authored this journal. (Allow time for them to write their names on the back. You may also wish for them to write the HOUR or period in which they attend your class or today's date. Tell them specifically what you want them to add on the back cover.)

Now place your journal pages inside your journal cover. We will pass around the stapler so you can staple your journal together. You will probably only need three staples to keep it secure. (If you have a different binding planned, share that with them at this time.)

Let's now take a look at the information you collected yesterday. Please bring out your Legislator Journal Student Sheets again. See the first set of information you gathered? It was about EARLY LIFE. Before writing, think of how you can state your notes in first person. I have a sample to read to you. Please listen to the point of view as I read this.

[My name is Susan Jones. I was born in 1941. My family lived on a farm outside of Simms, Oklahoma. Part of our farm was a dairy. We had plenty of milk and I always had cats to play with. We moved into Simms when I was five. I attended Simms Elementary School, which was only one block from my home. My school was made of red bricks. We had an old wooden floor made of long planks. The windows were very long and large. Our classroom door had a transom above it so additional air could circulate throughout the room. Everyone at my school was so nice. I had a wonderful time there.]

How did you know that this information was stated in *first person*? **What** signs did you hear about the *point of view* of the excerpt?

Who can read their notes to the class in *first person*? (Allow time for a student or two to share. Ask the same questions again-- **How** did you know that this information was stated in *first person*? **What** signs did you hear about the *point of view* of the excerpt?)

We will now take class time for you to transform your notes into journal entries written in *first person* with the *point of view* from the person who is the topic of your journal. You will write each entry on one page. You may use pencils or pens. Be sure your pens do not bleed through to the other page. It will also be used as a journal entry page.

We do not have the dates that these entries would be made. Therefore, we will not put dates on our journal pages.

Allow class time for the students to complete writing their journal pages.

Yesterday we gathered information for a special journal, which we referred as a Legislator Journal. We learned about writing in a specific *point of view*. We also learned about writing in the voice of *first person*. Today we constructed our Legislator Journals. We created our cover from a brown paper sack. We wrote information on each page of our journal from the information we gathered yesterday on our Legislator Journal Student Sheets. Our finished product is a unique type of journal based on the lives of the women who have served in the Oklahoma Legislature.

Evaluation

A rubric can be designed to give points to each component of this journal—the front cover, the back cover, page 1—Early Life, page 2--School Experiences, page 3—Life Before the Legislature, page 4—Campaign Stories, page 5—Life as a Legislator, page 6—Life After the Legislature. Each journal was to be written in first person.

The page entries and the use of first person per page would equal 12 + front and back covers = 14 components. If each component was worth 7 points, the total for the project would be 98 points.

Materials

Student

- Plain brown paper bag or sack that will be used for the cover of the Legislator Journal.
- Scissors to cut sacks to the correct size (Teacher may have already done this in advance.)
- Pencils, pens, markers
- Legislator Journal Student Sheets from yesterday

Enrichment

Visual Arts

- Teach the students the elements of drawing a portrait. Using the photo of the woman who was the topic of their project, allow class time and provide supplies to add a portrait to the journal. (Hint: Turn the photo upside-down before they begin the portrait. They will examine the lines and features much more closely.)

Technology

- The students can scan in their Legislator Journal entries. These can be combined to create a class book of stories.

