

**Month/Honoree(s):** January/Mary M. Bethea

**Lesson Title:** Get to Know a Person: Read a Biography

**Grade Level/Course:** 8

**Subject:** ELA

**SC Academic Standards Addressed:**

8.RI.1	Cite the textual evidence that that most strongly supports an analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.
8.SL.1	Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher led) with diverse partners on grade 8 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.
8.SL.4	Present claims and findings, emphasizing salient points in a focused, coherent manner with relevant evidence, sound valid reasoning, and well-chosen details; use appropriate eye contact, adequate volume, and clear pronunciation.
8.W.4	Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
8.W.5	With some guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on how well purpose and audience have been addressed.
8.W.6	Use technology, including the Internet, to produce and publish writing and present the relationships between information and ideas efficiently as well as to interact and collaborate with others.
8.W.7	Conduct short research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question), drawing on several sources and generating additional related, focused questions that allow for multiple avenues of exploration.
8.W.9	Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.
8.W.10	Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.

**Social Studies Literacy Skills Addressed:**

- Evaluate multiple points of views or biases and attribute the perspectives to the influences of individual experiences, societal values, and cultural traditions.
- Understand responsible citizenship in relation to the state, national, and international communities.
- Analyze evidence, arguments, claims, and beliefs.

**Introductory Statement/Lesson Overview:** Students will learn about Mary M. Bethea and her contributions to her community as an entrepreneur, mentor and author. As a final product, students will write a business letter to the honoree expressing their future career goals, three connections they made with her story, what they learned, and how they can apply the lesson(s) to their lives.

**Note:** Mrs. Mary M. Bethea recently died. Her funeral was November 3, 2014.

**Goals/Lesson Objectives (TSWBAT):**

- read and analyze informational text.
- discuss Mary M. Bethea’s life and contributions to her community.
- write a correctly formatted and well-developed business letter.

**Instructional Materials:** 2015 South Carolina African American Calendar (January), Business Letter Instructions and rubric, Business Letter (semi-block) template

**Additional Resources:**

- Nobia Franklin Biography (attached)
- Annie Turnbo Pope Malone Biography (attached)
- Madame C.J. Walker Biography (attached)
- Sarah Spencer Washington Biography (attached)

**Lesson Progression and Time Frame:** 2-3 days

**Activity 1:** After providing students with a purpose for the lesson, introduce and discuss the following terms: biography, economic independence, beauty school, acumen, entrepreneur, mentor, black-owned business. You may elect to have students work in pairs to discuss the terms prior to a whole-class discussion. Inform students that they will see these terms again in their reading.

**Activity 2:** Provide each student with a copy of the biography and display via Smartboard. Read together as a class or in student pairs. After reading as a class or in pairs, students should discuss the following questions and cite the evidence provided in the text:

1. Who was Mary M. Bethea?
2. When and where was she born?
3. Who inspired her to pursue her dreams?
4. What schools did she attend?
5. Where did she spend her adult life?
6. What was the name of the school she opened?
7. Who could attend the school?
8. Why was her school important to the community?
9. How long did she work as an owner, operator, and instructor?

10. What prestigious award did she earn?
11. To what person was she compared for creating a black-owned business?
12. Why were her contributions significant?
13. Why was it important to Mary M. Bethea that she give back to her community?
14. Based on your reading, what character traits did Mary M. Bethea demonstrate?

Students should highlight and make notations on their copy of the biography while reading and discussing.

**Activity 3:** After reading and discussing the biography, students will write a business letter to Mary M. Bethea using the attached instructions.

- Introduce the parts of a business letter.
- Discuss what specific content should be included in the letter to Mary M. Bethea.
- Review the writing tips and rubric.
- Provide students the template for creating their rough and final drafts.

**Extensions/Differentiation:**

- Have students share their letters orally.
- Research and obtain her son's address. Send him the best three letters written.
- Create a flow chart that illustrates Mrs. Bethea's life and accomplishments.
- Design a historical marker in her honor and display in the school's library.
- Read the biographies of other black females who may have influenced her.
- Research Poro Beauty School where Mary M. Bethea became inspired.

**Assessment:** typed final draft of business letter (rubric attached)

**Developed by:**

Linda Milligan

Berkeley County School District