

Essay 3—Classic Obituary

Write a one to two page (250-600 words) obituary of a significant historical figure. Your obituary should include the subject's name, age, birth date, and the date, place, and cause of death. It should also include a concise biography of the subject that demonstrates what made the subject notable or important.

You must conduct research for your obituary and must document your sources in MLA format. You must cite at least three substantial sources. (Encyclopedias—including on-line encyclopedias like Wikipedia—do not count as substantial sources.) At least one of your sources must come from somewhere other than the internet. You must use proper MLA documentation, including a list of Works Cited.

Organize your obituary around a thesis, a claim about the person that your essay will demonstrate. This will help you select which details of the person's life to highlight in your essay.

Write your obituary in classic prose style: clear and concise, specific and engaging.

Make every word count.

Initial Draft Due: March 19

(Bring THREE copies of your essay to class.)

Revised Draft Due: April 4

(Bring your Revised Draft, your Initial Draft with my comments on it, and all the Peer Critiques you received to class in a folder.)

A classic obituary of Bonnie Parker

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Ms. Bonnie Parker, a ninety-pound outlaw from Texas who bloodied up four states and shot thirteen people with her partner Clyde Barrow, met her own death last Thursday from complications of thirty-six bullet wounds. The freckled, strawberry-blond woman was twenty-three years old and possibly two and a half months' pregnant at the time of her death.

She was born in Rowena, Texas on October 1, 1910 and began her felonious career when she met Clyde in 1929, shortly after the collapse of Wall Street. With the Barrow gang, Bonnie Parker is credited with robbing seven gas stations, a hardware store in Waco County, the Alliance Bank of Texas, the Laredo National Bank, and several grocery stores, including two Piggly Wigglys and an A & P store in Arkansas. People followed the outlaws' adventures in the newspapers, and Bonnie and Clyde frequently sent photographs of themselves, in poses that parodied their own glamorized, Robin Hood images, to the local press.

The police ambushed Bonnie and her partner in Bienville Parish, Louisiana on May 23, pounding 167 bullets into their getaway car after Clyde's gun jammed and he was unable to shoot back. Bonnie received the majority of the bullet wounds and died immediately, her mangled head slumped between her knees.

Besides committing robbery and homicide, Bonnie Parker also wrote poetry and contributed her poems, "The Story of Suicide Sal" and "The Ballad of Bonnie and Clyde," to the West Dallas Inquirer.

A classic obituary of Faye Dunaway

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Faye Dunaway died in a car accident in Los Angeles yesterday. She was 54.

Dunaway was the last of the Hollywood actresses who knew what it was to be a star. Like Joan Crawford and Bette Davis, she ate chauvinistic Hollywood bigwigs for breakfast and used her severe beauty to seduce and conquer. Her steely sexuality and cold egotism made her intimidating but irresistible. Those around her tolerated her diva-ish behavior because her talent, focus, and dedication made it worth it. They knew she had fought her way from the dusty streets of a Florida hamlet to play alongside Warren Beatty and Jack Nicholson and to win an Academy Award. In her forty-year career she has played the unforgettable roles of a young woman on a crime spree with her boyfriend (*Bonnie and Clyde*), a ruthless TV executive (*Network*), a delicate socialite widow (*Chinatown*), and Joan Crawford (*Mommie Dearest*).

Dunaway stormed off the set of *Chinatown* for two weeks when Roman Polanski pulled a stray hair out of her head, she battled Bette Davis on the set of the TV movie *The Disappearance of Aimee*, and she refused to continue her Broadway role of Maria Callas until the producers promised her the same role in the movie version.

Today's stars throw fits and make petty demands on their coworkers, but they just seem petulant and bratty. They lack the talent that would justify their bitchiness. So many of them are, as Dunaway's Joan Crawford says in *Mommie Dearest*, "spoiled Hollywood brats."

A classic obituary of Anne Boleyn

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When Anne Boleyn was born, it was such a nonevent that no one bothered to record the year, let alone the date. But her execution on May 19th will change how an English king is remembered. When she was born, she came into a family of petty nobility. Her mother, Elizabeth, like a number of noblewomen at the time, made claims to a royal descent that no one acknowledged, and her father, Thomas, tried to hide the fact that he was a glorified merchant. When Henry VIII came to the throne, though, her family rose considerably. Thomas Boleyn liked to think his family's rise was due to own brilliant politics, but he mistook politics for sycophancy and was not exceptional in either. However, he was passable enough to get Anne a position as lady-in-waiting to Mary, the king's sister and future wife of the King of France, but Thomas's virtues could only take the family so far. It was his daughters' lack of virtue that truly advanced their family. Anne's sister, Mary, readily let the king into her bed and enjoyed the gifts that started filling her room, and the titles that started filling the space after her father's name. But Mary was neither intelligent nor scheming and she did nothing to secure her power. Shortly after Mary returned from France, Henry abandoned her to pursue Anne, which did more for his ruin than hers.

Unlike the rest of her family, Anne was intelligent, clever, and ruthless. Though at the time of Henry's first attentions she was in love with a nobleman, she quickly forgot that love and began plotting, using her broken heart as an excuse to reject Henry. She learned well from her sister's mistakes and began to ask Henry for everything, including the crown, but gave him nothing. Between her resistance, his lawyers' scheming, and his own greed and desire for a son, Henry went to great lengths to obtain a divorce. He and Anne married in secret, England became a Protestant nation, and five months after her coronation as Queen, Anne gave birth to a daughter. Had her next two pregnancies not ended with stillborn sons, she would not have been beheaded, but like her predecessor, her only surviving child was a daughter. Unlike her predecessor, Anne bore no patience toward Henry's affairs and by the end of 1535, he and his lawyer, Cromwell, were already making plans to get rid of her. She

was tried for adultery, a treasonable offense for a Queen, in May of 1536, and found guilty because her musician, her brother, and several of Henry's friends admitted under torture to being guilty with her. Her daughter with Henry, Elizabeth, has not yet been executed, and may not be since no one believes she is a legitimate heir. Her parents still serve in court, and were in attendance when Henry announced his engagement to Jane Seymour on May 20, 1536.