



YALE NATIONAL INITIATIVE

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Curriculum Units by Fellows of the National Initiative
2010 Volume III: Creating Lives: An Introduction to Biography

Barack Obama: A Nonfiction Approach to Reading in the "Reel" World through Documentary, Political Images, and Speech

Guide for Curriculum Unit 10.03.10, published September 2010
by Stacia D. Parker

This curriculum unit can be used in English, United States History, and interdisciplinary African-American Literature classes. Students will read and respond to Barack Obama's biography and other nonfiction texts which include documentaries, photographs, and political speeches. Conducting interviews, recording oral histories, and writing biographical narratives comprise a significant portion of the activities to help students explore the lives of people that have overcome obstacles. Additionally, students are asked to examine their own lives and how they respond to challenges. Hopefully, students will discern that how they respond to challenges is a "pivotal moment" that can provide opportunity for great change in their journey to adulthood. Student biographies will be preserved in a digital story format posted to the school's Web site.

(Developed for English Literature, grade 10; recommended for English Composition, grades 10-12, and American History, grades 11-12)

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