

## **How to get an 'A'**

Created by:

**Melanie Bonanza, Teacher-Librarian and Sara Schepis, Classroom Teacher**

Hyde Park (NY) Schools

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Note: This lessons is from a packet of excellent materials shared with the Big6 team. We will post additional lessons and content in the future. Thanks to Melanie Bonanza for bringing these to our attention and giving permission to share.

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### **Big6 Stage #1.1 - Task Definition - Define the Problem.**

Can also be used to learn Big6 Stage #6.1 - Judge the Product (Effectiveness)

**Teacher(s): Sara Schepis**

**Location: B-25 Lab**

**Grade: 6**

**Lesson Length: approximately 40 minutes**

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## **How to get an 'A'**

**Objective:** Students will be able to brainstorm questions to figure out what, specifically, they wonder about a topic they have previously selected. Students will also be able to identify the marks of "A quality" work.

**AASL Standards for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Learner:**

1.1.2 Use prior and background knowledge as context for new learning

1.1.3 Develop and refine a range of questions to frame the search for new understanding

**Materials (Teacher and Student):**

Big 6 Notebooks pages 4-5

Pencils

Books from the *You Wouldn't Want to Be...*series

Whiteboard and markers

### **Introduction (Including Guiding Questions):**

Question – What does one need to do to get an A in Information Fluency?

Procedure:

Part 1 – Students will be asked to consider two scenarios of hypothetical students, both of whom are given the topic “Civil War” for a paper. One uses the Big 6 to ask questions before looking for sources while the other rushes off to the shelves. Who do you think will have the better paper at the end? Why? (See attached sheets. 10 minutes)

Part 2- The five main requirements for an “A” in Information Fluency will be reviewed and the students will write them down on page 4 of their Big 6 Notebooks. These requirements are as follows:

- 1) Read book and enter comments on blog – 20%
- 2) Reflection Piece – 20%
- 3) Works Cited Page – 20%
- 4) Socratic Debate – 20%
- 5) Big 6 Notebook and Folder – 20%

Students will next be asked, “What is A quality work like?” A rubric will be created on the whiteboard. See attached sheet for sample.

### **Guided Practice:**

The students will retrieve their *You Wouldn't Want to Be...*books (as assigned in the previous class) and open to page 5 in their Big 6 Notebooks. At the top of their questions list the students will be asked to write “I wonder...” to remind them that this is brainstorming, a thinking exercise that is meant to tap into what they actually wonder about their topics. They will then be given time to go through the list of questions on page 5 and write any they wonder about. Any other questions they come up with on their topic can also be recorded even if they do not start with the prompts in the notebook.

**Summary/Closure:** Each student will share one question he/she formulated that will help them focus on his or her task with the teacher as she comes around to the tables. (5 minutes.)

**Differentiation and Accommodations:** Students who are at a different level of writing will be permitted extended time to fill out questions and/or focus on fewer questions. Those students with IEPs concerning writing accommodations will follow those procedures (i.e. if an aide is assigned to scribe for a student.)

**Assessment:** The notebooks will be collected and graded for completeness and effort to create questions.

**Extensions:** The question lists will be used as the “jumping off point” for the KWL lesson.

**Josie and Jessie are assigned a four page paper on the Civil War. They may pick an aspect that interests them. They must have at least five sources on their works cited page.**

Josie writes down "civil war paper" in her planner and immediately goes over to the catalogue and checks out a book called *Civil War in the Americas* and another called *The Battle of Gettysburg*. They were among the first that popped up when she searched the keywords 'Civil War.' She takes the books home and starts to write the outline of her paper that is due in five days. That's when she realizes that her first book, *Civil War in the Americas*, is actually about civil wars in Bolivia and other countries in South and Central America. She puts it aside, promising herself to read more carefully next time, and starts in on the other book. The book is filled with details about the battle and the Gettysburg address and how important it was but it is not easy to take notes from because the print is very small. She does not notice if the book has an index. She spends hours reading the book from the beginning and taking notes on looseleaf.

The next day Josie goes to the public library and is allowed to take out two books on a subject. She chooses two, both called *The Civil War*. She also photocopies an article from an encyclopedia. Over the next three evenings she copies notes and writes her paper but there is so much to fit in that she is not sure where to even start. One of her four pages ends up being mostly lists of what battles happened and the names of the places they were fought. She needs one more source so she goes online next and adds information from one of the 70 million results she gets when she "googles" the words *Civil War*.

When she goes to do her works cited page, she realizes that she doesn't know the name of the encyclopedia she copied the article from or what year it was published, but now it is late the night before the paper is due so she can't go back and look it up. She can't leave it out since she used the article a lot in her paper and that would be plagiarism, so she just lists "an encyclopedia." She hands in the paper the next morning wondering what grade she will get with great trepidation all week.

Jessie writes down all the assignment details in his planner and then gets out some paper. He makes a bubble chart, thinking to himself, "Civil War, hmm...what *about* the Civil War? I can't fit the whole thing into four pages. My dad has twelve *huge* books at home about the Civil War. [Draw diagram: food, medicine, weapons, strategies used by the north, money, etc.] He chooses medicine during the Civil War and writes, "What was medicine like during the Civil War?" He shows the question to his teacher and she approves it.

Then Jessie gets out another sheet of paper and folds it in half long ways. On one side he writes what he knows already about that topic (not a whole lot) and on the other side the questions he wants to answer: Did they bring doctors to the battlefield? Nurses? Were there special hospitals? How did people treat wounds during the Civil War? Did they have anything for anesthesia? He's off to the catalogue and looks up Civil War and other keywords like *medicine* and *nurses*. He finds a book called *The Wounds of War* that has a long chapter on the Civil War and another called *Grey Hats, Blue Jackets, and Red Blood: Nurses in the Civil War*. He goes to the index of each book and takes notes on note cards putting WW on notes from *Wounds of War* and GBR on notes from the other. He also makes cards with all the details he will need for his works cited page.

The next day Jessie also goes to the library and finds three more resources: a website recommended by the reference librarian, an article from a database from his school library webpage, and an encyclopedia article from 2009 *World Book*. Books on clothes in the Civil War or horses on the battlefield or the Underground Railroad are easy to separate from the books he needs most.

At last he wrote his paper organized by topic (he just interfiled his note cards into piles) and soon had five paragraphs, plus a works cited page. He is confident that he has reported good information on one part of an important war and does not worry about it again for the rest of the week.

**The moral: work smarter, not harder! It's not that Josie isn't putting in effort, but Jessie has strategies that make it easier for him to be successful.**

What does an 'A' paper look like, if you were a teacher?

Would it be wrinkled/torn? Would it have smudges/thumbprints/food spots?

What grade would you give it if it were clean, but made no sense or were disorganized? If it were hand-written?