Performance Task: Discovering Hidden Innovators

Description:

Part 1: Informative Research Essay

Write a research essay explaining one key contribution made by a hidden innovator—someone whose work was important but not widely recognized.

In your essay, you will:

- Clearly explain the innovator's contribution and the context in which they worked
- Summarize what your research reveals about their work and its impact
- Integrate evidence from at least two curated sources
- Use paraphrasing, precise STEM vocabulary, and formal academic language
- Organize your writing with a clear introduction, body paragraphs, and conclusion
- Include and explain at least one visual (chart, graph, timeline, or statistic) that strengthens your explanation
- Explain why the innovator's contribution matters to science or society

Part 2: Recognition Argument Paragraph

Write a short argument paragraph explaining why your innovator deserves recognition.

In your paragraph, you will:

- State a clear claim that the innovator deserves recognition
- Use evidence from your research to support your claim
- Explain how the evidence shows the importance of their contribution
- Use formal, persuasive language

Part 3: Presentation of Learning

Present your research to the class, sharing your innovator's contribution, key evidence, and visuals. Then, participate in peer feedback and reflection.

In your presentation, you will:

- Clearly present your claim, evidence, and explanation
- Explain how your visual supports your ideas
- Use formal academic language and clear transitions
- Listen actively and provide thoughtful feedback to peers

- Reflect on your writing, use of evidence, and presentation performance using a structured self-reflection tool

Why This Task Matters:
Not all important contributions are recognized in history. Many innovators (especially women, people of color, and others working against barriers) made significant advances that were overlooked or undervalued.

Through this task, you use research and writing to make those hidden contributions visible. You will learn how to organize evidence, explain ideas clearly, and build an argument about why recognition matters.

By presenting your findings, you also help others understand how science and innovation are shaped by many contributors—not just the ones most often remembered. This work builds your ability to think critically, communicate ideas clearly, and contribute to a more complete and accurate understanding of the world.

Criteria for Success:

Part 1: Informative Research Essay

- Clearly explains one key contribution made by a hidden innovator
- Uses evidence from at least two sources and paraphrases information accurately
- Includes a clear thesis, logical organization, and effective transitions
- Explains the significance of the contribution to science or society
- Integrates at least one visual and explains how it supports the ideas
- Uses formal academic language and precise STEM vocabulary
- Demonstrates revision for clarity, coherence, and tone
- Shows correct grammar, spelling, and punctuation

Part 2: Recognition Argument Paragraph

- States a clear claim that the innovator deserves recognition
- Uses relevant evidence from research to support the claim
- Explains how the evidence supports the argument
- Maintains a formal, persuasive tone
- Uses clear reasoning and appropriate transitions

Part 3: Presentation of Learning

- Presents a clear claim, evidence, and explanation in a logical order
- Explains how a visual supports the contribution and ideas
- Speaks clearly, at an appropriate pace, with formal academic language
- Demonstrates active listening during peer presentations
- Provides specific, respectful, and evidence-based feedback to at least two peers
- Completes a thoughtful self-reflection on writing and presentation

Performance Task Rubric: Discovering Hidden Innovators

Use this rubric to check your work before you submit. Ask yourself: does my essay, argument paragraph, and presentation meet the Proficient description in every row?

Criteria	1 — Beginning	2 — Developing	3 — Proficient
Thesis & Introduction W.6.2.a	Does not include a clear thesis, or the thesis does not connect to the hidden innovator's contribution. The introduction is missing or does not provide context for the essay.	Introduces the topic and includes a thesis, but the thesis may be vague or may not fully identify the innovator's contribution. The introduction may not clearly preview main ideas or establish context for the work.	Introduces the topic clearly and provides a focused thesis that identifies the hidden innovator and explains their key contribution. The introduction establishes context for the innovator's work and previews the main ideas to be developed in the essay.
Evidence & Research Integration W.6.2.b, W.6.8	Does not include evidence from two sources, or evidence is not connected to the innovator's contribution. Information may be copied directly rather than paraphrased, and sources are not used to support the explanation.	Includes evidence from one or two sources, but paraphrasing may not be accurate, or some evidence may not clearly connect to the thesis. The connection between evidence and ideas may be underdeveloped in places.	Integrates accurate, relevant evidence from at least two sources. Information is paraphrased accurately in the writer's own words and clearly connected to the thesis. Sources are used to support and develop the explanation of the innovator's contribution.
Organization & Transitions W.6.2.c	Lacks a clear organizational structure. The essay is missing one or more required sections (introduction, body, or conclusion), or ideas are presented without transitions, making the essay difficult to follow.	Includes an introduction, body paragraphs, and a conclusion, but the structure may not be fully consistent. Transitions are present but may be repetitive, abrupt, or insufficient to clearly connect all ideas.	Organized with a clear introduction, developed body paragraphs, and a conclusion. Transitions connect ideas within and between paragraphs, creating a logical flow that guides the reader through the explanation of the innovator's contribution and its significance.
Visual Integration W.6.6	Does not include a visual, or includes a visual with no explanation of how it connects to or supports the essay's ideas.	Includes a visual, but the visual may not be clearly connected to the main ideas, or the explanation of how the visual supports the essay is brief or incomplete.	Includes at least one relevant visual (such as a chart, graph, timeline, or statistic) that is clearly connected to the innovator's contribution. The visual is explained within the essay, and the explanation describes how

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			it strengthens the ideas being presented.
Language & Style W.6.2.d, W.6.2.e	Uses informal language, vague vocabulary, or does not demonstrate awareness of academic register. STEM vocabulary is absent or used incorrectly. The writing does not maintain a formal, academic tone.	Uses mostly formal language, but may include casual phrasing or imprecise vocabulary in some places. STEM vocabulary is present but may not always be used accurately or effectively. Tone is generally consistent but may shift at times.	Uses formal academic language and precise STEM vocabulary throughout. Word choices are appropriate to the topic and audience, and the tone is consistent and professional. Vocabulary specific to the innovator's field is used accurately to clarify explanations.
Conventions L.6.1.a-e, L.6.2.a-b	Contains frequent errors in grammar, usage, spelling, or punctuation that significantly interfere with meaning. Does not demonstrate consistent control of standard English conventions.	Demonstrates general control of conventions, but contains some errors in grammar, spelling, or punctuation that occasionally interrupt reading. Some inconsistency in proofreading is evident.	Demonstrates consistent control of standard English grammar, usage, spelling, capitalization, and punctuation. Any errors are minor and do not interfere with meaning. The writing shows evidence of careful proofreading and revision.
Argument Paragraph: Claim, Evidence & Reasoning W.6.1.a, W.6.1.b, W.6.1.c	Does not include a clear claim, or the claim is not connected to the innovator's contribution. Evidence is absent or unexplained. The paragraph does not demonstrate persuasive reasoning or maintain a consistent formal tone.	States a claim, but it may be vague or not fully arguable. Includes evidence, but the explanation of how the evidence supports the claim may be incomplete or unclear. Tone is generally formal but transitions or reasoning may be underdeveloped.	States a clear, arguable claim that the innovator deserves recognition. Provides relevant evidence from research and clearly explains how the evidence connects to and strengthens the argument. Maintains a formal, persuasive tone and uses transitions to connect ideas logically.

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Presentation: Delivery, Listening & Collaboration SL.6.4.a, SL.6.1.a-d	Presents information without a clear order or sufficient explanation of the visual or evidence. Does not demonstrate active listening, or peer feedback is missing, disrespectful, or not evidence-based. Self-reflection is missing or does not engage meaningfully with the writing or presentation.	Presents the main ideas but the order may not always be logical, or the delivery may be unclear in places. Feedback to peers is present but may be general rather than specific or evidence-based. Self-reflection is completed but may be brief or superficial.	Presents the innovator's contribution, supporting evidence, and visual in a clear, logical order using formal academic language. Demonstrates active listening during peers' presentations and provides specific, respectful, evidence-based feedback to at least two peers. Completes a thoughtful self-reflection on writing and presentation performance.