

ASSIGNMENT 2: GROUP PRESENTATION

Assignment Purpose: To help you learn to evaluate biographical texts and to understand the debates and controversies in which biographies engage; to give you the chance to get to know your classmates early in the quarter and to give you practice speaking in front of the class.

Assignment Details:

As a class we will read Jane Resh Thomas's *Behind the Mask*, which tells one version of the story of Elizabeth's life and reign. Your group will use the library to find another biography of Elizabeth. Each member of your group might skim this second biography, or you might divide the chapters and each focus on one or two.

As a group, you will co-author a 1-2 page paper addressing the following questions:

- When was the second biography published? Who wrote it? You might use the internet to research the author—was s/he an historian? a literary scholar? a novelist? a resident of England during the seventeenth century?
- What details about Elizabeth's life are most central in Thomas's biography? What details are most central in the second biography? How similar or different are the stories they tell?
- What are some of the most striking similarities and differences between the two biographies?
- Do these similarities and differences give you a sense of some of the **debates** and **controversies** in scholarly study of Elizabeth? What are one or two debates or controversies you've identified by reading two different accounts of Elizabeth's life?

I recommend using Google Docs to write this paper. It makes co-authorship easy when you each want to work from your own computer. You will also have some time in class to work with your group members.

On the day you turn in your paper, your group will also give a **10-minute presentation** to the class. Everyone in your group should play a role in the presentation (speaking, writing on the board, etc.), and your group should find an engaging way to teach the class about the second biography you chose and about the key differences from Thomas you noted. Most importantly, you should discuss the debates and controversies you identified.

Each group will need to notify me of your chosen second biography by [date] so that I can make sure no two groups have found the same text.