

## Learning Targets

- Evaluate genres and plan a multi-genre research project.
- Identify information relevant to a specific research question.

## Before Reading

1. To begin a multi-genre research project you must first decide on a topic—a person, event, movement, etc.—of interest to you, compose relevant research questions, and then do research. For the purpose of modeling, suppose you chose the cartoonist Charles Schulz, and that his personal and professional journey toward the American ideal of the “pursuit of happiness” is your central focus.

Develop a research question that can direct and focus your research on Charles Schulz.

## During Reading:

2. Read closely and mark the text to identify textual evidence that supports the research question.

## Biographical Sketch

# Sparky

by Earl Nightingale

**1** For Sparky, school was all but impossible. He failed every subject in the eighth grade. He flunked physics in high school, getting a grade of zero. Sparky also flunked Latin, algebra, and English. He didn't do much better in sports. Although he did manage to make the school's golf team, he promptly lost the only important match of the season. There was a consolation match; he lost that, too.

**2** Throughout his youth Sparky was awkward socially. He was not actually disliked by the other students; no one cared that much. He was astonished if a classmate ever said hello to him outside of school hours. There's no way to tell how he might have done at dating. Sparky never once asked a girl to go out in high school. He was too afraid of being turned down.

**3** Sparky was a loser. He, his classmates, . . . everyone knew it. So he rolled with it. Sparky had made up his mind early in life that if things were meant to work out, they would. Otherwise he would content himself with what appeared to be his inevitable mediocrity.

**4** However, one thing was important to Sparky—drawing. He was proud of his artwork. Of course, no one else appreciated it. In his senior year of high school, he submitted some cartoons to the editors of the yearbook. The cartoons were turned down. Despite the particular rejection, Sparky was so convinced of his ability that he decided to become a professional artist.

## LEARNING STRATEGIES:

KWHL, Close Reading, Marking the Text, Graphic Organizer, Discussion Groups

## My Notes

# Exploring, Recording, and Imagining Research

## My Notes

5 After completing high school, he wrote a letter to Walt Disney Studios. He was told to send some samples of his artwork, and the subject for a cartoon was suggested. Sparky drew the proposed cartoon. He spent a great deal of time on it and on all the other drawings he submitted.

6 Finally, the reply came from Disney Studios. He had been rejected once again. Another loss for the loser.

7 So Sparky decided to write his own autobiography in cartoons. He described his childhood self—a little boy loser and chronic underachiever. The cartoon character would soon become famous worldwide. For Sparky, the boy who had such lack of success in school and whose work was rejected again and again was Charles Schulz. He created the “Peanuts” comic strip and the little cartoon character whose kite would never fly and who never succeeded in kicking a football, Charlie Brown.

## After Reading

3. Write your initial thesis statement that responds to the research question below.

4. A multi-genre research project consists of creative pieces—poetry, artwork, letters, diary entries, interviews, conversations, newspaper articles, scripts, speeches, email, obituaries, etc.—imaginative writing based on fact. The multi-genre research project begins with interest in the subject. **Coherence** is developed along the way as the writer collects information, interprets it, and considers appropriate genres to creatively represent ideas. Use the graphic organizer that follows to record information as you conduct research.

**Topic:** Charles M. Schulz

**MLA Entry for a Works Cited Page:** “Sparky” by Earl Nightingale  
Nightingale, Earl. Nightingale’s Greatest Discovery: “The Strangest  
Secret – Revisited.” The PMA Book Series. New York:  
Dodd, Mead, 1987.

My Notes

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Melding Fact, Interpretation, and Imagination			
Research Question: How did Charles Schulz overcome obstacles to achieve his pursuit of happiness?			
Research Facts:	Reflection:	Variety of Genres:	Purpose/Rationale:
<i>Record pertinent information from the source and include page numbers. Be sure to use quotation marks if it is a direct quote.</i>	<i>Question and comment on the facts presented. Imagine the people, the situation, the events surrounding the research facts.</i>	<i>Consider possible genres to convey the facts and a creative response to the question posed or comment posed. What is the best format for this information?</i>	<i>Note ideas for content to contain within the genre.</i>