

MA 330, SPRING 2008
COMMENTS ON BIOGRAPHICAL ESSAY

Please keep the following comments in mind as you write your biographical essays.

- (1) You are allowed to choose any mathematician for your paper, including those discussed in our books. However, if your choice coincides with someone discussed in *Journey Through Genius* or *Math Through the Ages*, I expect your essay to go above and beyond what is covered in those books.
- (2) Your biographical essay should be approximately half personal biography and half mathematical biography, though your paper does not need to be split into two parts in any formal way. For the mathematical portion, this will “look” different depending on who you are discussing. Some papers will give a broader survey of the mathematical contributions of an individual, while others will focus on one particular theorem they produced.
- (3) I expect you to place the work of your mathematician in context by discussing why their work was important. I also expect you to explain the mathematics you are discussing: this might be done by giving proofs if they are short and/or understandable, but it might also be done through good examples. When in doubt, use *Journey Through Genius* as a model for various methods of discussing mathematics.
- (4) Please remind yourself of the length requirements found in the syllabus.
- (5) You need to properly document all of your sources, using an established citation method: MLA, APA, the bibliography and/or BibTeX packages used by LaTeX, etc.
- (6) Plagiarism is a violation of the University Senate Rules discussed in Chapter 9 of the syllabus, and will be dealt with according to University Policy (i.e. you will get an E in the class if you plagiarize someone else’s work). Remember, when in doubt, cite your source!