

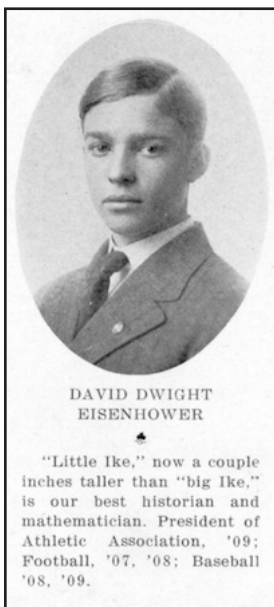


Dwight D.
Eisenhower
Memorial

NATIONAL EISENHOWER MEMORIAL EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS

LESSON

Recommending Eisenhower



Duration

One 45-minute period

Grades

7–12

Cross-curriculum Application

U.S. History, English



Historical Background

Dwight D. Eisenhower's leadership skills and successful military career were the result of both opportunities he received and his decisions to make the most of them. Before Eisenhower was accepted to West Point, and long before he became famous for his leadership, his ambition and emerging leadership skills were evident in his actions as a boy and young man growing up in Abilene, Kansas.

Objective

Students examine primary sources related to decisions Eisenhower made throughout his early life: the role of his family, his time at school in Abilene, and eventually applying to West Point. Of particular interest: Eisenhower's options, how these options were shaped by the circumstances of Eisenhower's early life, and the role of resilience. This lesson invites students to delve into key primary sources to develop a factual understanding as well as demonstrate critical thinking in sourcing evidence and supporting an argument in a well-crafted letter of recommendation.

Essential Questions

1. What experiences in Eisenhower's early life shaped his character?
2. How do we determine our path through life? What opportunities are given to us? What opportunities do we create for ourselves? How do we understand these opportunities within a broader historical context?
3. What does it mean to be "resilient"? What role did it play in Eisenhower's life? What role does it play in your own life?

Sources

- » Eisenhower E-Memorial Timeline

<https://eisenhowerfoundation.net/timeline>

Teacher Notes: A digital timeline of Eisenhower's life as well as other points of historical and cultural significance.

Interesting details:

- *The timeline divides Eisenhower's life into five sections; the "Early Years" focuses on Eisenhower's boyhood and life before West Point.*
 - *Have students look at the contextual entries in the timeline to see what else was happening in the world while Eisenhower was growing up.*
-



- » “West Point, 1911: The Beginnings Of A Life In Service.” Eisenhower Memorial Commission.

<https://youtu.be/TdYFZEU0-S8>

Teacher Notes: This short video offers an overview of Eisenhower’s boyhood, as well as his time at West Point.

Interesting details:

- *The video provides background on Eisenhower’s early years as a boy, including hobbies, chores, and school.*
- *Describes the pact that Eisenhower and his brother, Edgar, made to raise money for each other’s college educations.*
- *Describes the components of Eisenhower’s West Point education, including the initial indoctrination called “Beast Barracks,” as well as academics, athletics, teamwork and discipline.*

- » “E.T. Fairchild to United States Senator Joseph Little Bristow.” October 22, 1910. Kansas Historical Society.

<http://www.kansasmemory.org/item/208269/page/2>

Teacher Notes: This source shows the exam results for Eisenhower and the seven other students applying to U.S. military academies from Kansas.

Interesting details:

- *The average score for each person taking the exam is on the right and the ranking is on the left.*
- *Eisenhower did not receive the top score—his was the second highest.*
- *The exam consisted of different subjects: U.S. history, General History, Spelling, Geometry, Algebra, Grammar, Geography, Arithmetic.*
- *Eisenhower scored the highest in only a couple of subjects, but had no very low scores giving him a good average.*

- » “Dwight David Eisenhower to Joseph Little Bristow, United States Senator.” August 20, 1910. Kansas Historical Society.

<http://www.kansasmemory.org/item/208267/page/1>

Teacher Notes: This source is Eisenhower’s first letter to Senator Bristow to follow up on his application to a U.S. military academy.



Interesting details:

- *Eisenhower was writing to a powerful and important person and he is asking for consideration to apply for an appointment to a military academy.*
- *Eisenhower uses polite and respectful language.*
- *The letter is brief and its purpose is clear.*

- » “Dwight David Eisenhower to Joseph Little Bristow, United States Senator.” September 3, 1910. Kansas Historical Society.

<http://www.kansasmemory.org/item/208268>

Teacher Notes: This source is Eisenhower’s second letter to Senator Bristow dated two weeks later.

Interesting details:

- *As with the above letter, Eisenhower is writing to the senator for consideration—to apply for an appointment to a military academy.*
- *Eisenhower is following up for news of his status after not receiving a reply to his first letter.*
- *Note how his letter balances persistence with politeness.*

- » “Dwight David Eisenhower, a senior at Abilene High School.” 1909. Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Library.

Teacher Notes: This source is a page from the Abilene High School yearbook featuring Eisenhower’s picture along with some of his accomplishments.

Interesting details:

- *Eisenhower is called “our best mathematician and historian.”*
- *Eisenhower participated in baseball and football.*
- *He was president of the Athletic Association.*

- » “Oral history interview with Abram Forney.” May 13, 1964. Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Library.

<https://www.eisenhowerlibrary.gov/sites/default/files/research/oral-histories/oral-history-transcripts/forney-abram.pdf>

Teacher Notes: This source is an interview conducted with Abram Forney who knew Eisenhower as a young man—they worked together at the creamery in Abilene.



Interesting details:

- *Eisenhower worked the night shift for \$32.50 a month.*
- *Note that Eisenhower was going to school, participating in sports, and working at the creamery.*

» “Oral history interview with Lelia Grace Picking.” January 27, 1965. Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Library.

<https://www.eisenhowerlibrary.gov/sites/default/files/research/oral-histories/oral-history-transcripts/picking-lelia-7.pdf>

Teacher Notes: Like Abram Forney, Lelia Grace Picking knew Eisenhower as a young man.

Interesting details:

- *Picking and Eisenhower went to the same school and church.*
- *Picking talks about Eisenhower and includes some details about life for young people in Abilene.*
- *Eisenhower served on the volunteer fire department as a teenager.*

Materials

- » Source Discovery Handout

Preparation

- Cue timeline from Eisenhower E-Memorial <<https://eisenhowerfoundation.net/timeline>> to show students.
- Cue video “West Point, 1911: The Beginnings Of A Life In Service.” <<https://youtu.be/TdYFZEU0-S8>> to show students.
- Print out copies of sources —one for each group.
- Print out copies of the Source Discovery Handout —three for each student.



Procedure

1. Briefly introduce Dwight D. Eisenhower using the E-Memorial website's timeline <<https://eisenhowerfoundation.net/timeline>>. Prompt students with questions: What stands out? What events or people have you heard of before? What questions do you have? What would you like to learn more about?
2. Play the "West Point, 1911: The Beginnings Of A Life In Service" up until Eisenhower is accepted to West Point (Beginning to 2:40). Focus question on board (optional): What were the key events of Eisenhower's early life?
3. Divide the students into groups of four and give each group a document packet consisting of Eisenhower's exam results, his two letters to Senator Bristow, his high school yearbook entry, and interviews with his classmates.
4. Tell students they are taking on the role of Eisenhower's guidance counselor. The senator has asked that you gather information on Eisenhower and write a letter explaining why he should be accepted into West Point. Have a discussion with the students about what makes a good recommendation letter: What qualities of the applicant are military academies interested in? What examples might help illustrate those qualities? Write these answers on the board for students to reference when they write their letters.
5. Ask the students to carefully review the documents. Tell the students to complete the Source Discovery Handout for ~~at least three~~ **at least three** of the sources. In the table, students will record basic sourcing information (title, date, creator), qualities to look for in an applicant to a military academy, and evidence for these qualities in the source. You may want to choose one source and complete it together as a class.
6. Using the details from the handout, ask each student to write a one-page letter recommending Eisenhower for West Point. Alternatively, students could record a brief video "recommendation." Stress that it is important that the letter or video use real examples and facts from the sources in their document packet.



Differentiation

The text sources may be excerpted by the teacher to accommodate different levels of reading ability. Teachers may also want to use a recommendation letter template to aid students (consult the *Resources* section below for links). The “Recommendation Letter” assignment could also take the form of a PowerPoint presentation with the same objective: explain why you recommend Eisenhower for West Point and use evidence to back up your claim.

Teachers may also make use of the Teacher Notes that accompany the above sources. Providing these notes to students may help them to notice important details within the sources.

Assessment

Students will be assessed on their recommendation assignment and their ability to use evidence from the sources to support their argument. For example, does the student use specific and relevant details from the sources to support the idea that Eisenhower would succeed at West Point? Per the attached rubric, the recommendation and Source Discovery Handout should demonstrate a factual understanding of the context as well as critical thinking in sourcing evidence and supporting an argument in a well-crafted recommendation letter or video.

Related Resources

Lesson Plans

- » *Dreams of a Barefoot Boy: 1890–1911*. Eisenhower Presidential Library.
<https://www.eisenhowerlibrary.gov/education>

This packet of learning activities contains sixteen primary sources students can use to explore Eisenhower’s early life. The title is from a speech Eisenhower made upon returning to his hometown of Abilene in 1945.

Secondary Sources and Digital Resources

- » *A Brief History of West Point*. United States Military Academy at West Point.
<http://www.usma.edu/wphistory/SitePages/Home.aspx>

The website for West Point features a brief history of the institution as well as information on the application process and life at the academy.



- » *West Point: A Life in Service to his Country*. Eisenhower E-Memorial.
http://eisenhowerfoundation.net/experience/#/west_point
In this pivotal moment, users can learn about key events from Eisenhower's early life including sections titled *Abilene*, *Getting into West Point*, and *Life in the Army*. The documentary film includes an interview with General Robert L. Caslen, 59th Superintendent of West Point.

- » *Reference Letter Template*. University of Washington-Bothell.
<http://www.uwb.edu/careers/faculty-and-staff/referenceletters/reference-letter-template>
If students need assistance writing a letter of recommendation, this template provides useful scaffolding.

Primary Sources

- » *USMA Library Digital Collections*. United States Military Academy Library.
<http://digital-library.usma.edu/cdm>
This online collection features a wide range of primary sources related to West Point including the student yearbook, *The Howitzer*, going back to 1897.

- » *West Point Center for Oral History*. West Point Center for Oral History.
<http://www.westpointcoh.org>
This collection is an excellent oral history archive dedicated to the story of the American soldier, in both war and peace. Interview subjects currently include veterans of World War I, World War II, Korea, Vietnam, Desert Storm, Bosnia, and the recent conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan. Students can filter the interviews by location and select "West Point" for interviews on the topic of the academy itself—a great opportunity to compare West Point over the years.



"E.T. Fairchild to United States Senator Joseph Little Bristow." October 22, 1910. Kansas Historical Society.

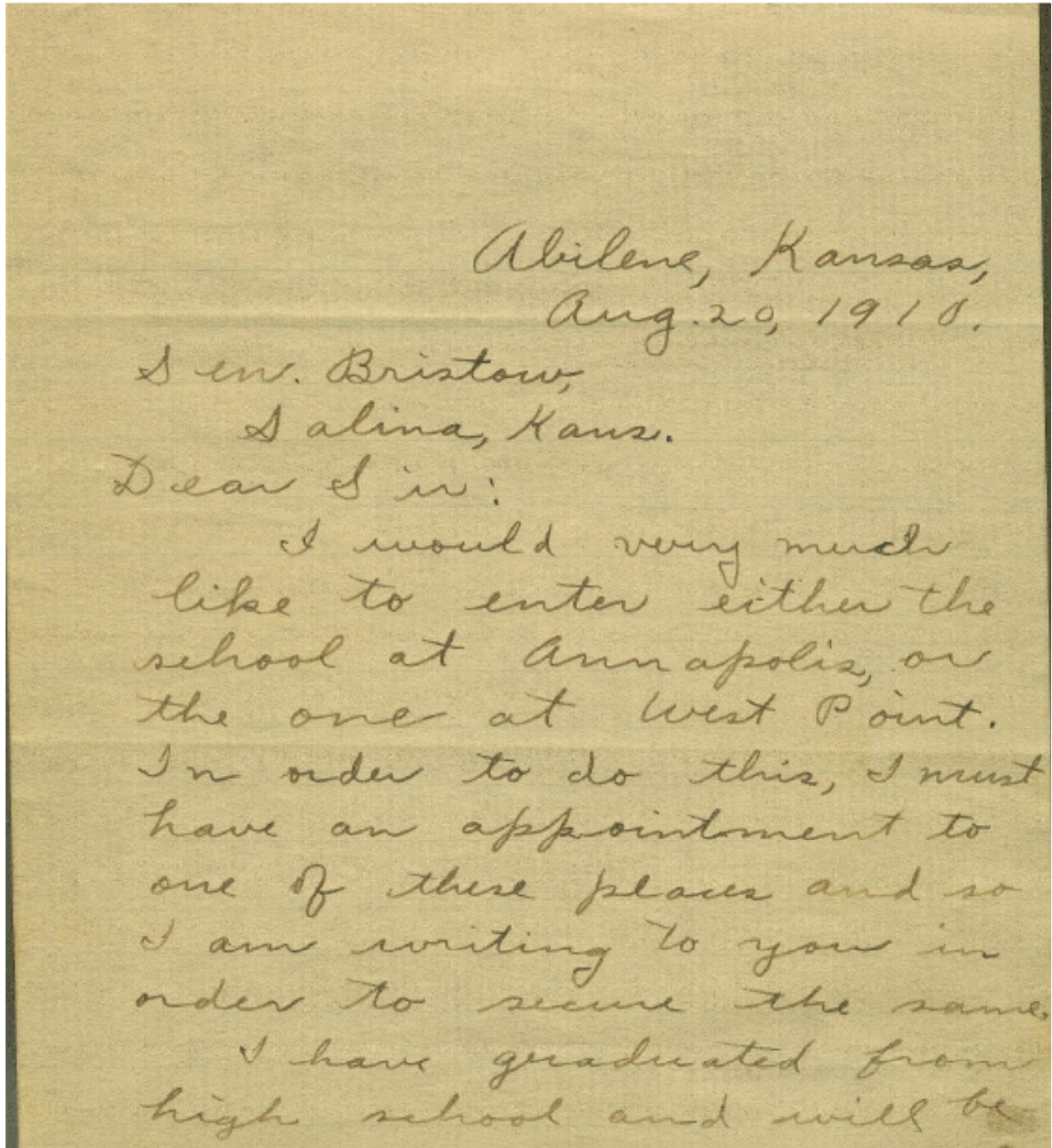
	U.S. Hist.	Gen. Hist.	Spel.	Geom.	Alg.	Gram.	Geog.	Arith.	Av.
(7) W.C. Battaille <i>W.P.</i>	66	61	70	34	73	77	64	90	66 7/8
(5) G.L. Campbell <i>W.P.</i>	66	50	52	57	91	92	89	100	74 5/8
(2) Dwight Eisenhower <i>W.P.</i>	73	79	90	77	94	99	90	96	87 2/3
(4) Arthur Jones <i>W.P.</i>	77	71	96	70	88.5	96	87	80	79 2/3
* (6) A.J. Moore <i>W.P.</i>	82	66	83	53	79	92	90	80	70 5/8
(3) Aaron A. Platner <i>W.P.</i>	87	88	82	33	100	98	95	90	84 1/8
(1) Geo. Pulsifer, Jr. <i>W.P.</i>	87	87	88	86	100	99	90	80	89 4/8
(8) Allen W. Vogele <i>W.P.</i>	60	62	67	12	69	70	76	66	62 4/8

Grades made in Competitive Examination
Held in office of State Superintendent
Fairchild, October 4 and 5, 1910.

Army	Av.	Navy	Av.
1. Geo. Pulsifer	87 7/8	(either) 1. Dwight Eisenhower	87 2/3
(either) 2. Dwight Eisenhower	87 2/3	(either) 2. Arthur Jones	79 2/3
3. Aaron A. Platner	84 1/8	(either) 3. A.J. Moore	70 5/8
(either) 4. Arthur Jones	79 2/3	(either) 4. W.C. Battaille	66 7/8
5. G.L. Campbell	74 5/8		
(either) 6. A.J. Moore	70 5/8		
(either) 7. W.C. Battaille	66 7/8		
8. Allen W. Vogele	62 4/8		

1 Branch
2 Jones
3 Battaille
4

“Dwight David Eisenhower to Joseph Little Bristow, United States Senator,” p.1. August 20, 1910. Kansas Historical Society.



Abilene, Kansas,
Aug. 20, 1910.

Sen. Bristow,
Salina, Kans.

Dear Sir:

I would very much like to enter either the school at Annapolis, or the one at West Point. In order to do this, I must have an appointment to one of these places and so I am writing to you in order to secure the same.

I have graduated from high school and will be

“Dwight David Eisenhower to Joseph Little Bristow, United States Senator,” p.2. August 20, 1910. Kansas Historical Society.

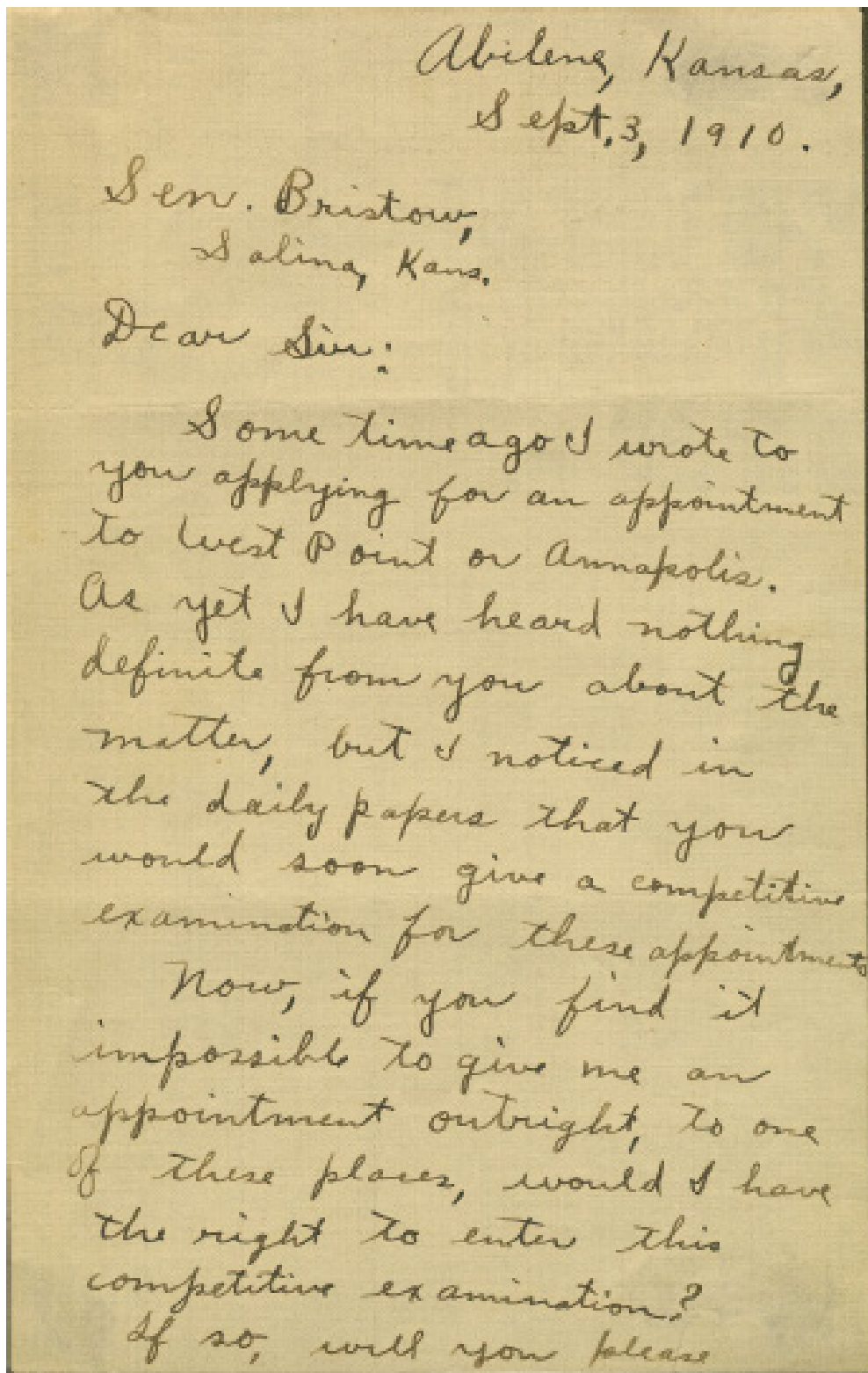
Nineteen years of age
this fall.

If you find it
possible to appoint me to
one of these schools, your
kindness will certainly
be appreciated by me.

Trusting to hear from
you, concerning this
matter, at your earliest
convenience, I am,

Respectfully yours,
Dwight Eisenhower

“Dwight David Eisenhower to Joseph Little Bristow, United States Senator,” p.1. September 3, 1910.
Kansas Historical Society.



Abilene, Kansas,
Sept. 3, 1910.

Sen. Bristow,
Salina, Kans.

Dear Sir:

Some time ago I wrote to you applying for an appointment to West Point or Annapolis. As yet I have heard nothing definite from you about the matter, but I noticed in the daily papers that you would soon give a competitive examination for these appointments.

Now, if you find it impossible to give me an appointment outright, to one of these places, would I have the right to enter this competitive examination? If so, will you please



“Dwight David Eisenhower to Joseph Little Bristow, United States Senator,” p.2. September 3, 1910.
Kansas Historical Society.

explain the conditions to be
met in entering this
examination, and the
studies to be covered. Trusting
to hear from you at your
earliest convenience, I am,

Respectfully yours,

Dwight Eisenhower,

Abilene, Kansas.



“Dwight David Eisenhower, a senior at Abilene High School.” 1909. Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Library.

Senior Class



EDGAR NEWTON EISENHOWER

“Big Ike” is the greatest football player of the class. Also on his head there is a depression due to non-development of the conscious and over-development of the sub-conscious brain. Football teams '07, '08, '09. Baseball teams '07, '08, '09; captain '08.



DAVID DWIGHT EISENHOWER

“Little Ike,” now a couple inches taller than “big Ike,” is our best historian and mathematician. President of Athletic Association, '09; Football, '07, '08; Baseball '08, '09.



NELLIE AMELIA GRAVES

One never feels quite sure of Nellie. She has very decided moods and woe to the fellow who disturbs her wrong mood. Class Historian.



LOIS BRADSHAW HARGER

Salutatorian. Lois must be heard and she must always have her own way. Vice president '06, '07; Helianthus Editor.



“Oral history interview with Abram Forney,” May 13, 1964. Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Library.

Oral History Interview
Abram Forney
May 13, 1964

p. 1

MR. BARBASH: Mr. Forney, would you please identify yourself and tell us your relationship to Dwight Eisenhower?

MR. FORNEY: My relationship with Dwight Eisenhower dates back many years. We were both near the same age, as I am two years and two days older than Dwight and my early remembrance of him was being in the same Sunday school class. During my school vacation at the age of twelve, I worked at the [Belle Springs] Creamery in the east section of Abilene. It was Dwight's job to come to the Creamery each day, either on foot or horseback, bring a gallon can in which he took home a gallon of buttermilk. Dwight's father was the engineer and, also, in charge of the milk receiving department, and on occasions substituted as butter-maker.

p. 4

MR. FORNEY: Nearly all the Creamery employees, having sons able to do the work, hired them during school vacations to work in the creamery. I remember one such school vacation in 1906 where Dwight and I were employees on the same job. He had the night shift, which didn't require quite as much as work on the day shift. Dwight was receiving \$32.50 a month and the company paid me \$35.00 a month because the day shift had considerably more work to do serving the delivery—ice delivery wagons and the neighboring towns who purchased ice there, transferring it to their own locations.

pp. 6-7

MR. BARBASH: Mr. Forney, could you, please, tell us under what circumstances you became—you went to work at the Belle Springs Creamery?

MR. FORNEY: This dates back to about 1904 where I was in High School at the time. I chose to leave High School in my sophomore year and took a position with the creamery with about a year's work in the different capacities in the butter room, the engine room, and the ice room, when I was given a job in the office as shipping clerk. Of course, in today's category that job would have been called sort of a traffic manager. I had charged of all the shipments of butter both local, express, and carload.



“Oral history interview with Lelia Grace Picking,” p.1. January 27, 1965. Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Library.

p. 10

MR. BARBASH: Miss Picking, you say you lived in the country when you went to school with Dwight, did you have to, so to speak, commute to school every day or did you live in town during the school year?

MISS PICKING: We certainly commuted every day. We would get up at five o'clock every morning, milk cows and get in the buggy and ride those four miles to school and go home again and do our chores and do our studying. My sister was valedictorian so you may know we put in good days. We used to sing our high school anthems and repeat our memory work going to and from school. We drove an old sorrel horse. He went to school for 10 years. We called him the “educated horse.”

p. 2

MISS PICKING: [The city] building stood at the site of the present Municipal building at the corner of 5th and Broadway Streets in the town of Abilene. . . . The accommodations the building afforded were not the best but we managed. There was a large room on the east of the second floor used as a recitation room and study hall combined. In it we met for Chapel. On the southwest was a recitation room and another on the northwest. In this room from a cupola housing the fire bell, dangled a rope. When the firemen grasped the rope to ring the bell the boys of A.H.S., Dwight among them, responded immediately by skipping classes to help man the old two wheeled hose cart—a far cry from our present truck with its snorkel. If Dwight didn't get to the hose cart he was among those who sprinted to the store to buy treats for the girls. On the first floor one room was used by History classes. Here Miss Pauline Sleeth taught Dwight. The city marshal's family occupied the east half of the first floor. In the basement were the jail cells.

p. 8

MR. BARBASH: Miss Picking, you mention the fact that the boys in town were sort of a volunteer fire department so that when the firemen rang the bell they all left school and if the fire wasn't of any great importance they would spend this time to purchase candy for the girls—did Dwight—was Dwight part of the Volunteer fire department and did he participate in these candy buying expedition?

MISS PICKING: Well, I don't know as I could recall a specific incident where Dwight helped to man this hose-cart, but it was a rule that the boys were allowed to do this, and he probably was among them because he, as I stated, was a boy of action. Usually, the upper classmen had the first place.



“Oral history interview with Lelia Grace Picking,” p.2. January 27, 1965. Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Library.

Historical Note: William A. Stacey was Abilene’s Superintendent of Schools during Dwight Eisenhower’s school years. By 1943, Stacey was Assistant State Superintendent of Public Instruction, when “General” Eisenhower took the time to write to him. “[T]he example you gave us of a kindly and sympathetic instructor and of an individual completely devoted to his duty, has lived with me all these years.”

pp. 8 - 9

MR. BARBASH: Miss Picking, you mentioned earlier in your talk the fact that you had a daily Bible session in one of the rooms of the school . . . were all children of all religious faiths allowed to attend and what was the Bible that was used—was it a Bible of a particular Church or a particular religious group?

MISS PICKING: I stated in my talk on Dwight that we had our chapel in the east room of the old city hall building and everyone was allowed to attend. The King James Bible was used and few, not too many comments on it. We, often, had a speaker who would give us a talk and then we, also, each time we had chapel repeated the Lord’s Prayer. All religious faiths were included in this. They, at least, were there, if they were not allowed to take part that was quite all right and in the new high school we had a stage and I remember the teachers sat upon the stage and I, also, remember Mr. Stacey [Superintendent of Schools] many times giving excellent talks based on the Bible and we learned to know the favorite scripture passage of each one of the teachers because they took turns in leading the devotions in chapel.



Source Discovery Handout

Title of Source:

Type (*document, image, map*):

Who created this source?:

Date or time period (*If there is no date explain when you think the source was created and why*):

What details from this source can be used in a recommendation letter? (*Complete the table below*)

Important quality for applicant	Evidence of quality in this source

Recommending Eisenhower Rubric

	Fully Meets Expectations <i>3 points</i>	Minimally Meets Expectations <i>2 points</i>	Not Yet Within Expectations <i>1 point</i>
Factual Understanding	The letter demonstrates understanding of the main idea of each source (or piece of evidence) and identifies its key details.	The letter demonstrates understanding of the main idea of each source (or piece of evidence) but does not identify key details.	The letter does not demonstrate understanding of the main idea of each source (or piece of evidence).
Sourcing	The letter demonstrates understanding of each source's origin: especially when it was created and the creator's goal.	The letter demonstrates partial understanding of each source's origin: when it was created and the creator's goal.	The letter demonstrates insufficient understanding of each source's origin: when it was created and the creator's goal.
Evidence-Based Claim	The letter makes a reasonable claim about Eisenhower's qualifications for college and uses appropriate sources and evidence to support that claim.	The letter makes a reasonable claim about Eisenhower's qualifications for college but the sources and evidence only partially support that claim.	The letter makes a claim about Eisenhower's qualifications for college that is not supported by appropriate sources and evidence.
Presentation	Letter is well-organized and clear. No (or only minor) spelling and grammar errors.	Letter is somewhat disorganized and unclear. Several spelling and grammar mistakes.	Letter shows little or no organization and is unclear. Frequent and major spelling and grammar errors.