

Lesson Plan—Week 2: No Ideas But In Things

Topic

Show Don't Tell: Presenting the story and evoking the scenes through description of objects, artifacts or art

Learning objective

Learn to focus on the specifics and the fine details by describing a specific item or a photographs that conjures or suggests the themes of science and religion for you, student participant. The learner will understand the importance of artifacts from the writing point of view as a way to focus the abstract ideas of science and religion into the concrete details of their everyday lives.

	<i>Instructional Aid</i>
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Anticipatory set: activating prior knowledge and setting up for the topic of the week
 Dipping into your memory: what object brings your mind to your personal experience of science? A microscope, a telescope, a personal DNA testing kit? What object brings you to the sphere of religion? A religious image on your bookshelf that came from your childhood or your world travels, religious object that you or someone you know might wear? A religious chant as a non-physical form of art?

Pre-assessment and self-assessment

- How do you understand your own relationship with “concrete objects”? Do you hold on to a favorite item – clothes, favorite cup, a book, a handbag – for a long time and can you bring it into your mind’s eye?
- How does your “favorite mundane object” from the question above feel for you? Can you hear that dress/gown rustle? Can you feel the texture of your lucky tie? Can you smell the material from which that object is made? Can you feel the taste of your favorite dish?

After pre-assessment, share Betsy Hubbard’s “Using Artifacts and Photos to Inspire Writing”

Learning activity
Lecture
 Artifacts are the concrete objects in our lives that embody a memory, person, or idea. When we write about those

- *Jennie Goode, 2015, A Picture’s Worth*

<p>objects, they help tether our stories to the real experiences of our everyday lives. This is especially important with topics like science and religion, which easily veer off into the abstract. Ideas are universal, but artifacts are specific, personal--something you can see, touch, taste, and smell.</p> <p><i>Student activity</i> Find an object in your home that embodies something about your views on science, religion, or both. It could be as obvious as a crucifix or as unexpected as an old handkerchief. Free-write about that object, focusing on the tangible details: its size, shape, smell, color, texture.</p>	
<p>Post-lecture reinforcement Taking your initial description of the artifact, expand your draft by describing, from your memory, a specific event whose recollection was sparked by this object. Muse, through writing a scene, how the specific items connects for you with the bigger themes are you exploring in this class – your Big Idea.</p>	<p><i>Develop pointers for writing about artifacts that includes physical description, point of view, imagery, cultural context</i></p>
<p>Week 2 closing assessment: Connecting with a Real Reader Find a trusted reader for your artifact description. Share it with them – you are only requesting 15 minutes of their time, so willing readers should be findable. Then ask them questions about your artifact: did they remember the color? Did they feel the texture? Did they see your point why this items embodied so much meaning around science and/or religion? Reader’s feedback will help you find areas where you can do better as a writer.</p>	

Week 2 Learning and Instructional Materials

Jennie Goode, A Picture’s Worth: Learning from Looking at Photographs with Judith Kitchen, Brevity Sept 1, 2015. Available at brevitymag.com/craft-essays/a-pictures-worth/

Betsy Hubbard, Using Artifacts and Photos to Inspire Writing: Discovering the Writer’s Life, Two Writing Teachers (website) Feb 6, 2016. Available at twowritingteachers.org/2016/02/06/artifacts-and-photos/