



Everyone Has Interesting Stuff: Talking Objects Teaching with Objects in the Classroom Appropriate for Middle School

Objective: To demonstrate that objects can tell stories about people and places. For the students to experience using objects as a research tool to learn about people and places.

Materials:

- ◆ A collection of common objects that are not contemporary to the students' lives (objects they may not know much about, but would recognize). Be sure you know about the objects' origins (where it's from, what it's used for, when in history it was used, etc).
- ◆ Pencils
- ◆ Paper

Procedure:

- ◆ Put your students into groups of three or four.
- ◆ Give each group one object.
- ◆ Tell the students they are going to be examining historical objects to learn about a past time period. Found objects often can tell historians a lot about the people who used them and what life was like at a specific time.
- ◆ Ask your students to consider the following about their object:
 - A good description of the object—size, texture, weight, material
 - What might the object be used for?
 - Where might you find the object?
 - What is the object?
- ◆ After the groups have had a discussion about the object ask them to write a story from the object's point of view. The object can describe where it can be found, what it looks like, what it is used for, etc. Ask them to finish the story by revealing what the object is.
- ◆ If students are having difficulty determining what kind of object they have you can help them or if you have access to the Internet in the classroom allow them to search there.
- ◆ Once the stories have been written bring the class back together.
- ◆ Have each group read their story aloud to the class, but ask them not to reveal what their object is. This way the class can make a guess from the story's description what they are talking about.

Assessment: Students can be evaluated on their ability to look at a relatively foreign object and make conjectures about it, in terms of its description, use, etc.