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Object Analysis

Grades 6-12



Purpose: This activity demonstrates to students that objects are important sources of knowledge, if the right questions are asked.

Program Link: As a part of the Agents of Change: Pioneering Women Dentists program, students will be asked to examine a few objects related to the pioneering women dentists they will be learning about and use these objects to collect information about the female dentists.

Learning Objectives: Upon completion of this activity, students will...

- Identify different sources of knowledge used to acquire information about people, places, and events
- Closely examine objects and glean information from these objects by asking and answering relevant questions
- Write in complete sentences a paragraph about the information they can gather about an object in the classroom by simply examining that object

Materials: Several objects, both ordinary and unusual, that can either be carried into the classroom, or that you can show a clear picture of.

Procedure:

1. Warm-Up:

- Have students answer the following question:
 - Think about your favorite object (book, toy, piece of clothing, etc.). What might a stranger learn about you from this object?
- Review students' answers

2. Object Analysis Activity:

- Ask students: How can we collect information about other people, places, and events?
- Explain to students that one way we can learn about people, places, and events is by examining objects related to the people, places, and events in question
- Bring multiple objects into the classroom for students to examine. To help students get comfortable with obtaining information from objects, make the first object the students examine an ordinary object that students are familiar with. To challenge students, other objects can be unusual objects that they are unlikely to identify right away.
- Have students analyze the object(s) for information
- To show students how objects can tell multiple stories about people, places, and events, encourage students to ask and answer the following questions about the object(s):
 - What materials is the object made of?
 - What use does it have?
 - Why do you think the object was created?
 - What does this object tell us about the people/civilization that made it?
 - This is not an exhaustive list of questions, so feel free to add questions or have students create questions of their own.

3. Wrap-Up:

- Have students choose any object in the classroom (this object should not be one already examined)
- The students will write in complete sentences a paragraph (length of your choosing) about the information that they can gather from the object in question.

Curriculum Connections

National Social Studies Education Standards 6-12	
NSES II	d. Identify and use various sources for reconstructing the past, such as documents, letters, diaries, maps, textbooks, photos, and others.
NSES IV	h. Work independently and cooperatively to accomplish goals.

Common Core	History/Social Studies	Writing	Speaking & Listening
6	RH.6-8.2	W.6.4, W.6.10	SL.6.1.C, SL.6.2
7	RH.6-8.2	W.7.4, W.7.10	SL.7.1.C, SL.7.1.D, SL.7.2
8	RH.6-8.2	W.8.4, W.8.10	SL.8.1.C, SL.8.1.D
9-10	RH.9-10.2	W.9-10.4, W.9-10.10	SL.9-10.1.C, SL.9-10.1.D
11-12	RH.11-12.2	W.11-12.4, W.11-12.10	SL.11-12.1.C, SL.11-12.1.D

*For more information about this activity or the National Museum of Dentistry please email Patrick Cutter at pcutter@umaryland.edu or call 410-706-0600.