

INDIAN STORY BAG

Students write a story, gather objects to use as visual aids, and tell their story to the class.

TEACHER NOTES FOR DISCUSSION

This is a great activity for the beginning of the semester or school year because students get to know a little bit about each other. The idea of this activity is that students use objects to enhance a story about their lives.

Before class, create your own Indian Story Bag. Incorporating your objects, tell the class an interesting story from your life. Afterwards go through and ask what made your story interesting. In addition to effective visual aids, steer students towards the components of a good story.

This activity works best if students think about the story and the story telling objects together. Ask students to recall a story from their own lives and to think about things that would represent the most important parts of their story. Then have them go home and find objects that would help them tell that story. For instance, a ticket stub from their first concert, or a match to represent what they forgot on their last camping trip, or a green marker to show what color they became after riding the Tilt-a-Whirl at the fair.

Objective

By the end of this activity, students should be able to:

- incorporate the elements of a story into a personal story.
- effectively present to the class.
- proofread and revise to free writing of grammar, usage, and mechanics errors.

Time Considerations

Instructor preparation:
one hour

Student activity:
two classes

RELATED STANDARDS AND BENCHMARKS

Language Arts

Standard 1. Demonstrates competence in the general skills and strategies of the writing process

- writes stories or essays that show awareness of intended audience
- writes expository compositions
- writes narrative accounts

Standard 3. Uses grammatical and mechanical conventions in written compositions

Standard 8. Demonstrates competence in speaking and listening as tools for learning

- presents simple prepared reports to the class
- uses explicit techniques for oral presentations

INDIAN STORY BAG

UNDERSTAND YOUR MISSION

In this activity, you will write and present a short story about an interesting episode from your life and gather objects in a story bag, which will illustrate your story to the class.

LEARN THE LINGO

personal narrative	a story told in the first person from that person's history
story bag	a bag that is decorated on the outside to illustrate the holder's life as a whole, while the inside holds objects that illustrate one particular story from that person's life; objects change depending on the story

BACKGROUND

Many Native American storytellers have their own story bags or baskets. Most are decorated according to the taste of a particular storyteller, with feathers, shells, leather ties, and bits of animal fur to jog his or her memory about a certain part of the special tale or story.

The most fascinating part of any story basket or bag is the contents. A basket or bag may contain any number of items, such as shells, wild mushrooms, feathers, plants, roots, a doll wrapped in red flannel, a pottery bear wrapped in a rabbit skin, or anything else that can be used to represent some part of the storyteller's tale.

CHART A COURSE FOR EXPLORATION

Write Your Story

Think about a good story from your life such as the first time you tried something new, a great family vacation, or how you met your best friend. Your story should be at least 500 words. Make sure it has a clear beginning, middle, and end. Include a lot of good details so the class will feel like they are reliving your story.

Make Your Indian Story Bag

The bag will represent you. It can be a brown paper bag, a shopping bag, or a cloth bag. On the bag, draw or cut from a magazine pictures, symbols, and designs that reflect your life. Put your name and the story title on your bag.

Fill Your Indian Story Bag

Collect tiny symbols of your story. Take your time and select things with care. As you work on your story, draw the characters that are most special in your story on a piece of cardboard. Cut them out and put them in your story bag. Practice telling your story with the aids you have selected.

Tell Your Story

Turn your story in to your teacher. Tell the class your story using the objects in your bag.

Gather Your Supplies

- cardboard
- colored pencils
- glue
- markers
- paper bag
- paint
- ribbon
- scissors
- stapler
- stuff

Go Beyond

Read the adventure story *Minn of the Mississippi* by Clancy Holling Holling. Write an adventure story of 300-400 words about you and a friend traveling on or along the Mississippi River. Include a map that follows your journey. Describe narrow escapes from dangerous situations. Include at least two or three characters, a realistic setting along the Mississippi, and a suspenseful plot.

INDIAN STORY BAG

	EXPERT	PROFICIENT	NOVICE
IDEAS AND CONTENT	<input type="checkbox"/> captures the listeners' attention <input type="checkbox"/> description rich in details	<input type="checkbox"/> interesting but could use more details	<input type="checkbox"/> lacks details to make the story come alive <input type="checkbox"/> story needs to have more focus
STRUCTURE AND FORM	<input type="checkbox"/> well-chosen relevant sentences or details <input type="checkbox"/> good transitions between paragraphs <input type="checkbox"/> all parts tell a good story	<input type="checkbox"/> few irrelevant sentences or details <input type="checkbox"/> good transition but some work is needed	<input type="checkbox"/> many irrelevant sentences or details <input type="checkbox"/> lacks development <input type="checkbox"/> needs transitions between paragraphs
GRAMMAR, USAGE, MECHANICS (G.U.M.)	<input type="checkbox"/> no G.U.M. errors <input type="checkbox"/> excellent word choices	<input type="checkbox"/> Fewer than 3 G.U.M. errors <input type="checkbox"/> some very nice word choices	<input type="checkbox"/> more than 4 G.U.M. errors
VISUAL ELEMENTS	<input type="checkbox"/> story bag is creatively designed and ties into the story very well <input type="checkbox"/> all contents of the story bag help tell the story	<input type="checkbox"/> story bag is creatively designed but could be into the story a little more <input type="checkbox"/> most story bag contents aid in the story telling	<input type="checkbox"/> more thought needs to go into the story bag and its contents <input type="checkbox"/> contents do not match well story
ORAL PRESENTATION	<input type="checkbox"/> clear and effective <input type="checkbox"/> professionally told story	<input type="checkbox"/> adequate and clear <input type="checkbox"/> could use a little practice	<input type="checkbox"/> unprepared <input type="checkbox"/> need to practice story telling with the story bag

REFERENCES

Holling, Clancy Holling. *Minn of the Mississippi*. Houghton Mifflin, 1972.

Kavasch, Barrie E. *Earth Maker's Lodge*. Cobblestone Publishing, 1994.

Kendall, John S. and Robert J. Marzano. *Content Knowledge: The McREL Standards Database*. <<http://www.mcrel.org/standards-benchmarks/>>, April 15, 2000.

Stowell, Charlotte. *Making Books*. Larousse Kingfisher Chambers, 1994.