

Title: *Grandparents and Grand Stories: Documenting the Past for the Future*

Grade Level: High School

Curriculum Areas: Language Arts, English

Purpose / Objective:

Students will observe, interview, and write stories they have "heard over and over" from their grandparents in order to document and appreciate their families and traditions. Students will engage in several writing activities, and these will form a mini family portfolio to be shared with students and family.

Procedure / Activities:

Students will be given characteristics of folklore and folk life. See additional references for list.

Activity One

1. Students will bring in a picture of a deceased relative—preferably a grandparent or great-grandparent.
2. Students need as much information as possible about this relative (date of birth, name, age at time of picture, place lived, etc.).
3. Students will write a brief summary of what they know about this person.
4. Students will also write a brief summary of what they *don't* know about this person.

Activity Two

1. Students will create a brief diary entry from the point of view of the relative describing a "day in the life" of this person's life.
2. Students are encouraged to use sensory detail and narrative structure (diary form) for this writing exercise.
3. Students will share with a partner and with the class.

Activity Three

1. Students will share writings with a parent or guardian, and the parent or guardian will write a response to this writing.
2. Parents or guardians may give factual information about this person or simply write a response.
3. Writing will be included in their family portfolio.

Activity Four

1. Students will interview a grandparent or relative about a family story.
2. Students will use material gathered about interviewing from websites provided.
3. Students will conduct mock interviews in class with students and teachers and focus on what makes a good interview.
4. Family stories can include the following:
5. Legend or family stories passed through generations
6. Family histories
7. Songs (children's songs, ballads, work songs, ethnic songs)
8. Games played
9. Artifacts special to the family
10. The place of family (farm planning, use of land and space)
11. Folk art
12. Crafts and trades
13. Customs of the family or religious traditions
14. Rites of passage such as weddings, funerals, births, deaths

Activity Five

1. Students will create a mini family portfolio.
2. Students will use the interview for several different types of writing: narrative, expository, and descriptive.
3. Teacher will encourage students to write poems or stories from what they have learned.
4. Students will be encouraged to present finished portfolios for assessment.

Additional Activities:

N/A

Time Required: 2-3 weeks

Materials:

1. Pictures
2. Pen, pencil, paper

Additional References:

1. Characteristics of folklore and folk life include the following:
2. Folk life is living traditions passed down through time. They are closely connected to history.

3. A group or family shares folk life and folklore. Everyone belonging to a group shares folklore.
4. Folklore is traditionally learned by word of mouth, observation, or imitation.
5. Folklore can be either complex or simple.
6. Folklore changes through time. Certain things are lost or kept as they are retold.
7. Folklore can be anonymous in origin and often can't be remembered as a 1st writing.
8. Folklore is not necessarily antique or old; in fact, it is often contemporary.
9. Folklore is not written history, not is it an historical re-enactment of an event.
10. Folklore is not elite or popular culture.
11. Folklore is not something crude, primitive, or quaint; it is not always good, true, and beautiful.

Examples: Children's games or songs, oral stories told by family members, traditions in towns that were never officially written down, and ways of doing things that perhaps are no longer used in society today.

1. Websites for interviewing hints
2. <http://lcweb.loc.gov/folklife/pub.html>
3. <http://www.crt.state.la.us> (use the path Arts, Folklife, Louisiana Voices)
4. Websites helpful for writing about place
5. <http://www.edheritage.org>
6. <http://www.crt.state.la.us>

Lesson Plan Provided By:

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