

Object Meditation Essay: “The Gold Wheel”

GRADE LEVEL

Grades 9-12

SUBJECTS

Language Arts; Social Studies

ESTIMATED TIME

One or two 50-minute sessions

“One frosty night in early fall I turned up a gold wheel. It was not gold really, but I pretended it was.”

OVERVIEW

This lesson is essentially a writing prompt that asks students to take an object and explore its origins and/or its connection to the writer. It can be used in conjunction with Eiseley’s essay, “The Gold Wheel” or any of his essays in which he explores and imagines the natural and/or anthropological history of an artifact, fossil or otherwise.

MATERIALS AND TECHNOLOGY

- A copy of the essay “The Gold Wheel” from *The Loren Eiseley Reader* for all students.
- An appropriate object or artifact, teacher-defined and student-selected.
- The handout accompanying this lesson plan.

PREPARATION

1. Read Eiseley’s essay, “The Gold Wheel,” paying particular attention to the description of the gold wheel.
2. Make copies of all handouts and have all materials available for use.

INSTRUCTIONAL PLAN

STUDENT OBJECTIVES

In this series of lessons, students will

- synthesize concepts and make connections between themselves and the world around them,
- practice writing in a variety of genres, and
- practice precise word choice.

PROJECT SEQUENCE

After a brief informal introduction to the project, the class could read one of the previously recommended selections from *The Loren Eiseley Reader*. Afterwards, the students read the assignment sheet accompanying this lesson, followed whole class idea-generation activities. For example, the instructor could choose an object that the class could then explore according to the suggestions on the handout.

What was it made the mystery there?
Object Meditation Essay Assignment

Directions

Choose an object or artifact (natural or otherwise). It could be an object with personal significance to you or your family, a natural object that you've found (including fossils, interesting rocks), or even something provided by your teacher.

“One frosty night in early fall I turned up a gold wheel. It was not gold really, but I pretended it was.”

Then, write a thorough description of the object below.

After that, write a three-page double-spaced essay about these things:

- What is your relationship to the artifact? What personal experiences does it remind you of?
- Where did the artifact come from originally?
- Consider the age of the artifact, and write about what it has ‘lived’ through. What kinds of things has it potentially seen?
- Where might the object end up in ten years? In fifty? In a century?
- What lessons have you learned from the object?