

1. **Lesson Plan Code:** W-1 (Creative Writing/English)
2. **Subject:** Language Arts / English / Creative Writing
3. **Grade Level/Course:** 11,12 /Creative Writing
4. **Title:** Family Artifacts or Who Is Mario Lanza and Why Is He in My Grandmother’s Scrapbook?
5. **Alignments:** PDE English 11 Standards : 1.1.11.B, 1.2.11. A, 1.2.11.B, 1.2.11.C, 1.4.11.B1.5.11.E, 1.5.11.F, 1.5.11.G
6. **Vocabulary:** artifact, local color, regional dialect, hidden research, primary sources, authentic detail, authority
7. **Objective(s):**
 - Conduct a personal interview with a family member from an older generation.
 - Learn “the story” behind a personal belonging, or artifact, of the interviewee.
 - Research the time period of the artifact and the artifact itself.
 - Prepare a presentation for a class “Artifacts Roadshow” which will include the actual artifact when possible, pictures of the owner, and the story you learned through the personal interview.
 - Write a piece of creative nonfiction or historical fiction employing local color and authentic detail from the time period of the artifact and the interviewee’s recollections.
 - Bonus: Provide teenagers and family members with an opportunity to talk about things that might not emerge in the daily course of life.
8. **Essential Question(s):**

How can personal interview and the study of primary sources authenticate the writer’s voice in creative nonfiction or historical fiction with accurate and engaging details?
9. **Duration:** 5-7 class periods (80 minute duration) with adequate time allowed for interviews outside of class
10. **Materials:** teacher’s sample artifacts for model presentation, computer access, excerpts from memoirs demonstrating writing with local color and authentic detail, willing family participants, primary resources that support the time period of the artifacts (i.e. photographs, magazines, music, movies, television programs, articles of clothing)

11. **Suggested Instructional Strategies:**

W	Classroom activities (reading and discussing excerpts from personal memoir) / Teacher modeling of presentation / Syllabus and Rubric Review / Discussion of Intrinsic Benefits of Personal Interview
H	Hands-on artifacts / Personal experience / Music/ Journal writing
E	Interviews / Student Presentations / Research and Writing / Peer Conferencing / Teacher-Student Conferencing
R	Journal Writing / Peer Conferencing / Rewriting Drafts / Publishing Drafts in Personal Portfolio, Class Anthology, or Presenting at School-Sponsored Showcase of Student Work
E	Writing / Presenting / Post-discussion
T	Peer Partners / Teacher Conferences / Student Choice of Assessment / Remediation and Enrichment Opportunities / Student-designed Rubrics from a “Menu of Choices”
O	Expectation of Continual Use of Skill Set (hidden research, authentic detail, local color) in Subsequent Writing Assignments / Publication / Presentation

12. **Instructional Procedure(s):**

DAY ONE.

1. Read an excerpt from *Liar’s Club* by Mary Karr. Ask students to locate what they think are examples of **local color**, **authentic detail**, and **regional dialect**. (This can be a partner or small group activity.) Discuss choices and provide correct examples, if necessary. Give actual definitions for vocabulary (in bold).

2. Choose things from the excerpt that can be experienced through a primary source. Open a tin of tamales, watch a clip of *The Donna Reed Show*, bring in articles of clothing from the early 1960’s, for example a hat and gloves like a woman might wear for church or a social engagement.

The above two steps can be done with various pieces of literature: fiction or nonfiction.

3. Have students list examples of local color, authentic detail, and regional dialect from their own lives. (Examples: the empty carousel pavilion at Brookside Park, corn fields, Teenage Mutant Ninja light-up sneakers, pogs, “The butter is all.”) These lists can grow into a journal entry about a childhood evening from the student’s own life with intentional use of local color, authentic detail, and regional dialect.

DAY TWO.

1. Steps #1 and 2 from Day One may be repeated with another literature excerpt if necessary.

2. Teacher models “Artifacts Roadshow” presentation. (Example: I bring in a photograph of my paternal grandmother from her one-room schoolhouse teaching days. I also bring her notebook from Teacher’s Institute, the locket pin she is wearing in the photograph, her standard-issue school bell, photographs of Laquin, PA, the logging town where she taught, and a photograph of her waiting with me for the school bus on my first day of second grade.) I tell the story of my grandmother’s teaching days in the logging town and how she prioritized the importance of education in the lives of her nine children and twenty-four grandchildren. (My story takes 8-10 minutes.)
3. Assign an “Artifacts Roadshow” presentation to the students. This includes a personal interview with someone related to the objects and/or photographs. Brainstorm interview questions and/or practice interviews with classmates. Discuss the common courtesies of interviewing. Encourage students to bring in several-related articles. A possibility could be to show a photograph of a grandfather in his 1959 Chevy and play a popular song from that year, perhaps one suggested by the grandfather.

Presentation results are best when students are given sufficient time to conduct interviews and gather artifacts. Include a weekend between the date assigned and the date due.

DAY THREE (this may fall a week or so after Day Two of lesson)

Students present their “Artifacts Roadshow.” After all students have presented, students set up a “gallery exhibit” with their items and allow classmates to walk around and inspect things more closely. “Do not touch” or “please feel free to touch” signs are helpful. (If class is large, this may take two class periods.)

DAY FOUR -- Need computer lab access or laptop cart.

Students begin to research the era of their photographs and artifacts. The student whose grandfather drove the 1959 Chevy may look up what movies were popular that year, what records sold the most, what fashion trends teenagers were following, how much gasoline cost, who was president of the United States, etc. The students should also try to find background on information they learn during the personal interview. (Example -- if a grandmother had a scrapbook filled with magazine pictures of Mario Lanza, find out more about Mario Lanza.)

DAY FIVE

Demonstrate hidden research. This is an immersion technique used by writers of historical fiction and creative nonfiction. Example: If the interviewee mentioned watching *The Three Stooges* every Saturday afternoon, watch several episodes of the show. Listen to time-period music. Try on vintage clothing. Eat liver and onions! Obviously this cannot all be done at school, but provide ideas and at least one classroom experience. Explain that these techniques add **authority** to the writer’s voice.

DAY SIX

Assign a writing assignment that puts together the experiences of the above five lessons. It may be a poem, a series of poems, a biographical character sketch of the interviewee, a fictionalized story of the interviewee, or a story told through letters or journal entries. Whatever the writing assignment, the objective can include using **local color, regional dialect, authentic details and a voice infused with authority thanks to hidden research.**

13. **Formative Assessment:** Teacher monitoring during class activities, question and answer time following teacher model of presentation, teacher monitoring during independent research time on computers, peer conferencing, draft checks of written piece, note checks of personal interview; final assessment -- “Artifacts Roadshow” presentation to class and final draft of creative nonfiction or historical fiction writing assignment.

14. **Related Materials & Resources:**

- internet timelines and music sites
- *The Liar’s Club* by Mary Karr
- *This Boy’s Life* by Tobias Wolff
- *Angela’s Ashes* by Frank McCourt
- LOC web link: <http://www.loc.gov/index.html> (“The Farm Letters”)

Cassi Ney
Dover High School
1/15/11
LOC Lesson Plan using Primary Source Documents