

Object Stories: Narrative Writing

Matt Chalmers, Alder Creek Middle School, 8th grade

[** Each prompt will be modeled with mentor writing examples from my own process.]

Prompt #1: “Objects in My Life”.

A. Title three journal pages On each page, create four equal sections.

B. Now, think of three objects in your life that have some importance to you. (These do not need to be fancy, expensive, etc. Sometimes the simplest things have the greatest significance!)

1. Section #1: List the top ten words that come to mind about these three objects.
2. Section #2 Draw the object from memory.
3. Section #3 Describe physically what the object is.
4. Section #4 Explain what the object reminds you of or makes you think about.

Prompt #2: “My Selected Object”

Consider the following as you approach the beginning steps of figuring out the importance of your object as well as its place in your life: (Select one or two to write about in your journal)

1. Explain when and how the object became yours.
 - * Who gave it to you? Why was it given to you?
2. Tell why the object is special and meaningful to you.
3. Describe the day or event that surrounds the object.
 - * Where/How did you get it? Where do (did) you keep the object?
4. Tell what emotions/feelings come from thinking about (or spending time with) object.

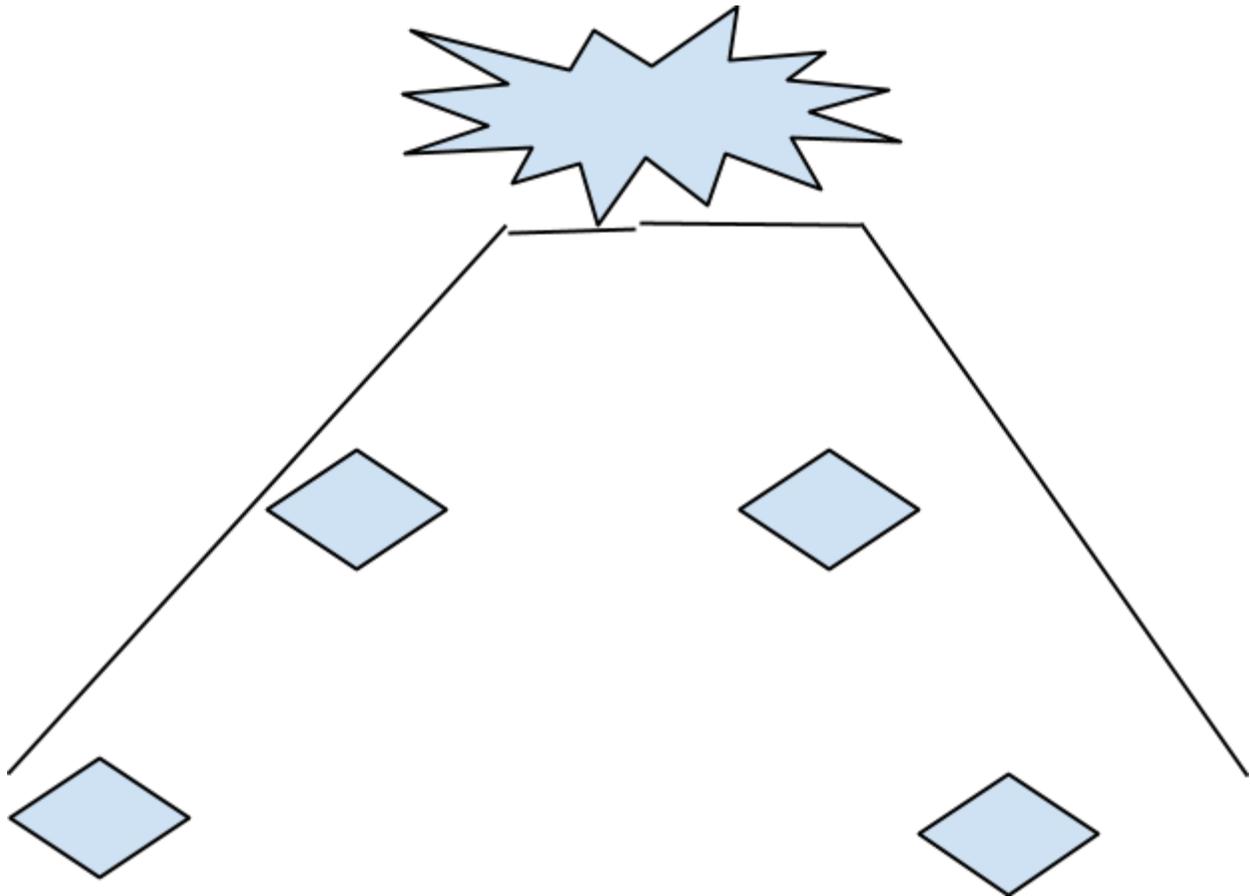
Prompt #3: “Sensory and Word Play with Your Object”

1. With eyes closed, hold your object. Move your hands all around.
 - * Describe its texture, its, shape, its weight
2. Compare your object to something, using “like” or “as” to create a simile.
 - * “My object is like a wind chime, dangling and clanging in the wind.”
 - * “My object looks like a metallic holiday chandelier, complete with silver, gold, emerald, and azure hanging colors.
 - * “My object (is like, looks like, sounds like, feels like, etc.) a/n _____, always _____

Prompt #4: The “story” behind the object

Think about the story behind your object.

- * Refer back (and reread through) your writing on prompt #2.
- * Using the graphic organizer, create a story arc, that shows the journey - beginning, turning points, current place in life - of your object.
- * (I apologize for my juvenile ability to show my plot arc on Google Docs. It will look better and will have labels attached to it for students.)



As you write, consider the following:

1. Use transitions - first, second, third - to begin, also, in addition, - first of all, along with this, however, finally, overall - to move the writing from one section/idea to the next.
2. Include at least three of the following in your writing:
 - a) What you always appreciated, like, or regretted about the object.
 - b) What has the object taught you? What have you learned about yourself, about other people,

about life, from the object?

c) What is something that no one else would know about the object?

d) Identify a creative and original for the entire piece of writing that reflects the story.

* Do this last!

* Sometimes the best title exists within the writing itself.

* The six-word title given to the telling of your story could be a great choice as well.

Materials Used:

- 1. Student journals**
- 2. Graphic organizer for story map**
- 3. Highlighters**
- 4. Crayons and colored pencils**
- 5. Sticky notes and/or post-it notes**

Assessment Tool:

- 1. Rough Draft - with a midpoint editing/feedback plan so to not sucker-punch students with comments given only at the end.**
- 2. Smarter Balance Narrative Rubric - emphasis on elaboration of details and conventions.**