

A World of Stories: Creating Original Tales from observations and experiences of the natural world

SHEET 1

OBSERVATIONS: *You can't make something out of nothing*

1 **Look** at your object and answer the following questions:

A. The Object Itself

Describe the shape of your object? _____

What colors are in it? _____

What properties of density does it have? _____

What kind of texture or textures does it have? _____

B. The Object in its environment

Where did you first see the object? _____

Is this where it originally formed? _____

If so describe how it grows _____

If the object did not grow here describe where it is, and hypothesize how it got there. _____

Has the object affected any of the world/environment around it?

How? _____

2 **Touch** your object (GENTLY)

What does it feel like? _____

Can you name three other things that feel a little like it?

1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____

Is its texture consistent (the same) or does it change?

Please explain _____

Do you think its' texture is related to its life cycle? _____

(For instance a leaf on a tree is soft and flexible, whereas a leaf that has been on the ground a while is brittle and dry) Explain.

How do you think its texture helps it do what it does best?

(For instance a stream often feels smooth and flowing over your fingers. A stream running for hundreds of years has the power to breakdown wood, and dirt, roots and rock. What is it about the

textures and consistency of running water that enables such a soft thing to have so much power? What is it about the texture of your object that enables it fulfill its destiny?)

3 Smell your object

A. Find 4 words to describe the smell

1. _____ 2. _____

3. _____ 4. _____

B. Find 2 metaphors to describe the smell

(For instance 'The inside of the tree bark *was like* a fresh fall New England morning, exploding with possibilities)

1. _____

2. _____

4 Listen (this obviously requires a quiet environment)

A: Listen to your object. Even the densest rock has moving molecules within it! If you cannot hear anything emanating from your object, then imagine, if you could hear it, what sound it might make!

B: Listen to the world around your object. What do you hear?

Can you hear insects scurrying in the leaves?

Can you hear an occasional acorn dropping?

Can you hear squirrels arguing?

There is a whole world out there! Listen carefully and discover not less than 5 other sounds.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

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SHEET 2: Creating A Hypothesis

You are only experiencing one point in the objects growth pattern, please create a hypothesis about its full cycle in terms of how it's texture, colors, size, and viability changes through its life cycle. What was it like in it earliest growth phase? How did it

develop? What was it like at the height of its' strength or potency? Use authentic resources, human and written, to help you. You can draw a chart, create an artistic rendition of the life cycle of your object, or use words exclusively. Tell the story of the life of your object from its inception or birth to its rotting or death.

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SHEET 3: Making A Story

It is now time to combine your observations and research with your imagination and the intense drama that the natural world offers to create an original story.

Stage 1

Your main character is well known to you. You have observed it from many angles. Now is the time to give it life. Begin by naming it. Choose a name that reflects the characteristics you have observed. For instance if I had been observing a fierce stream of water that was determinedly surging towards an outlet, I might choose the name Minerva, for no other reason than that sounds like a name befitting such a body of water. If I was observing a leaf on the forest floor, beginning its drying process among many other fallen leaves in early autumn, I might name it Tish. Why did I name it Tish? It felt like a throw away name to me. As you can guess by now this process is completely subjective! Now you have options for the shaping of a tale.

A. Team Work:

1. If you did your observations of objects that were near one another and would like to create a story about their lives together, then you will now do **role playing**. This is when each of you takes on the character of your object and you create a dialogue around a conflict, or issues in your lives. (I will demonstrate and help you with this process. It is great fun, but you must stay focused on the task and on track!) As a final project you can choose to write a little play about your interaction or present the dialogue to the group.

2. If you are less theatrically inclined, but enjoy working with a partner, this might be the choice for you. **Our Story** will involve you and your partner in an interview process. You will help them flesh out the finer details of their characters' (objects) life, history, thoughts and feelings. You will have an interview sheet to help you generate relevant questions. Once this process is completed then you may choose to write or create an individual or tandem tale story about your character/s in a specific situation, or overcoming a specific obstacle. (I will model how this is done.)

B. Solo Work

If you feel close to the object you have been studying and would like to create an original story about either its life cycle or how it over came an obstacle in it life then your next task is to create a story board showing the sequence of events in that story.

A piece of paper divided into large blocks will provide your board. You will create a picture in each block illustrating the sequence of events in your characters story. Then you will find another solo artist and share a verbal version of your tale from the story board. (All of this will happen in the first person, you taking on the persona of your object.)