

Interview with a Mummy
Imaginative poetry that describes the life of a mummy

Poetry Lesson Plan for Middle School Grades



Subject areas addressed: Creative writing, history, archaeology

Objectives:

- Conduct a bit of research into the field of archaeology so students understand what may be learned from studying a mummy.
- Develop creative thinking skills.
- Use the written word to describe an unknown person who lived thousands of years ago.

Activities:

- Use resource materials (library and Internet if available) to give students background information on mummies, the types of things found with mummies and how archaeologists use the clues to date the mummies and draw assumptions about the mummy's identity and life.
- Have students list questions they would ask the person who has been mummified, if they could go back in time to talk with that person while he or she was alive.
- Develop a vocabulary list that can be used to describe elements of a life lived thousands of years ago – foods, daily activities, where they lived, how they dressed and adorned themselves.
- Use the teacher's desired format to compose a poem that describes the mummy and his or her life.

Procedures and Ideas:

- Since most students know about King Tutankhamun, and there is a wealth of information about the discovery of his tomb, this may be a good place to start the discussion about mummies. Ask students what is known about King Tut's life (very little is known) and what was found in 1922 when his tomb was opened.

- Discuss other mummy finds outside of Egypt, in places like Central and South America. National Geographic and Smithsonian may be good resources for this information.
- Show students a few mummy photos from books or magazines, or use the ones with this lesson plan to help focus a discussion on what kind of life a mummy may have lived. You may want to have students focus on a mummy found in a certain geographic area of the world to focus their thinking. Consider telling your students that the mummy they're interviewing died of natural causes, so they'll be focused on the life rather than death of the mummified person.
- Have students develop creative answers to their interview questions and use that framework to write their poem.
- Another approach would be to write the poem about the clues found with the mummy.
- Once your students' poems are written, remember that the Anthology of Poetry would love to have poems submitted for consideration in our forum for young writers. Visit www.anthologyofpoetry.com for more information, or to electronically submit individual poems.