

Art & Activities / The Pocket Project



Overview:

Students create a photocopied or scanned image of the contents of their pockets, purses or backpacks to create a portrait of themselves and of their culture. This activity can be used on its own or as a warm-up for the collecting lessons.

Grades: 6 to 12

Subjects: Art, Aesthetics, Philosophy, Psychology, Cultural Studies

Objectives:

- Students will choose 5-10 items from their pockets, purses or backpacks
- Students will arrange these items into a composition
- Students will create a copy of their composition using a scanner or photocopier
- Students will analyze and evaluate their objects
- Students will draw conclusions about their class based upon the objects

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Point of View:

When I think about poetry, I often think of pockets. Places where we keep things we need—pockets hide things, yet they also keep them close to us. Poems tend to expose the hidden things we carry with us—emotional things. And poets often find the emotional in the mundane, like the contents of pockets, or purses. Pockets also hide the talismans we keep with us out of superstition, or to provide us comfort. Often, we have difficulty explaining to others why certain things carry such emotional weight, why when we empty the pockets of one pair of pants, those same contents end up in the next pair we wear. Separated from their owners, these things carry their own mystery. They illustrate choices made. The small choices that add up, that create a secret snapshot of a life. Who knows what power or meaning these things hold for these individuals? All we know is that one day, they were in a pocket or purse, and here they are, spilled out from their dark homes especially for us. Can they be arranged into something meaningful like words of magnetic poetry? What interests me beyond the formal i.d. cards are the more subtle forms of identification—the choice of stamps, pens, drugs, cigarettes, mints, the receipts, ticket stubs, sunglasses, the snatches of personal notes. What’s more revealing, a condom or a Subway coupon? It’s a medley of the unrehearsed, the spontaneous revealed. One pocket includes a boarding pass from Tajikistan Airlines. I want to read that as Talisman Airlines. These photocopies take me on a magical flight.

--Jim Daniels, Talisman Airlines

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Materials:

Xerox machine or scanner with printer
Writing utensils
Place to hang up images
Pocket Project Handout (page 4 of this PDF)



Project Procedure:

1. Empty out the contents of your pocket, purse or backpack.
2. Select and place items that you think are interesting on a sheet of white paper.
3. Transfer objects to scanner or xerox to create a copy. White paper should be placed over the objects to block light as they are scanned.
4. Hang up Xeroxed or scanned images.
5. Use the Pocket Project Handout to analyze the objects as a group
6. Draw conclusions about your class based upon the objects.

Assessment and Wrap-up:

While looking at the image of objects answer the following prompts:

- Describe what these objects are.
- If someone came across this paper and didn't know you, what could they tell about you or your class?
- If someone 100 years from now came across your class' collection of objects, what could they tell about you as a group?
- What would they learn about this current year?
- What important stories would they be able to tell?

Handout: *What's In Your Pocket?*

What's in your pocket?

1) List items:

2) Make categories and list items under appropriate categories:

Category:	Category:	Category:	Category:

3) Evaluate: Discuss with your partners, "What does this collection tell me about this class or group?"