

LESSON PLAN: Understanding Dowzers with *Smack Dab in the Middle of Maybe*

In *Smack Dab in the Middle of Maybe*, Miss V. gives Cricket a dowser to help her find the hidden treasure box. Using the book as a starting point, introduce students to the use of dowsing and the explanations as to why dowzers may work.

Learning Objective

- Students will be able to identify a dowser.
- Students will be able to describe how dowzers are used.
- Students will be able to differentiate between personal experience and scientific evidence as it relates to dowzers.
- Students will be able to recognize the use of dowzers in *Smack Dab in the Middle of Maybe*.

Supplies

- Computer
- Projector
- Student Computers for Individual Use

Introduction

In *Smack Dab in the Middle of Maybe*, Cricket uses a dowser to find the treasure box the artist had hidden. In this lesson, students will learn what dowzers are and how they are used today.

1. Instruct the students to read Chapter 41 of *Smack Dab in the Middle of Maybe* again. Based on what they read in the novel, what do they know about dowzers? Make a list on the board.
2. Write the definition of “dowsing” on the board. Definition: Dowsing (also known as divining) is the ancient practice of holding a metal rod or twig that is supposed to move to help find a hidden object.
3. Watch the video on this site of a man demonstrating dowsing with wires.
<http://www.theamericanconservative.com/dreher/dowsing-anomalous-knowing/comment-page-1/>

4. As a class, discuss what you saw and heard. Write this information on the board as well. How does it compare to what the students learned about dowzers from the novel?

Main Lesson

1. Instruct the students to read the article by the Illinois Farm Bureau on this page: <https://farmweeknow.com/story-water-ways-time-tested-tradition-dowsing-continues-0-169224>
2. Discuss the history of water dowsing with the class. Resource: https://pubs.usgs.gov/gip/water_dowsing/pdf/water_dowsing.pdf
3. Draw two columns on the board. Over one, write the word "Experience." Over the other, write the word "Evidence." Discuss what science says about dowsing. As you talk about it, write notes in the appropriate columns explaining either people's experiences with dowzers or the scientific evidence behind their use. Resources: https://pubs.usgs.gov/gip/water_dowsing/pdf/water_dowsing.pdf
<https://www.popularmechanics.com/science/a3199/1281661/>
<https://www.theguardian.com/science/brain-flapping/2017/nov/22/divine-intervention-yes-water-companies-using-dowsing-really-is-that-bad>

Independent Practice

Inform the students that they are going to write an opinion paragraph. Based on what they know about dowsing, do they believe it really works? Why or why not? Instruct the students to provide information to support their opinion. They may refer to the list on the board when writing their paragraphs.

Extension

(Be sure to get parental permission before trying this experiment, as some may view the use of dowzers as a mystical activity.)

Provide the class with dowsing materials, such as twigs or metal rods. Place a bottle of water on the ground. Instruct the students to walk towards the water one at a time holding a dowser. Note if the dowser moves or not. Record your results.

Assessment

Students write an opinion paragraph.

Standards

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.6.1
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.6.2
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.6.3
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.6.4
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.6.7
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.6.8
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.6.1
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.6.4
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.6.1
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.6.2
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.6.3
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.6.1
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.6.2
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.6.3
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RST.6-8.2
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RST.6-8.8
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RST.6-8.9