



LESSON

Odes to Ordinary Objects

Grades 3–6

TYPE

POETRY

COMMITMENT

1 Session

Session:

HOW TO BEGIN ()

Begin with a class reading of the example ode on the “Odes to Ordinary Objects” handout. As students read an example of an ode to an ordinary object, they can highlight and note key elements from the poem on the same handout.

Ask students:

- *What can you picture in your mind when you read this?*
- *What is surprising about this poem?*
- *How does the author give thanks to this object?*
- *What do you notice about who the poem is speaking to?*
- *Are any lines repeated?*
- *What images are particularly strong?*
- *How does the poet use the 5 senses?*
- *What can you picture smelling, touching, seeing, tasting, hearing, or feeling when you hear this?*

Step 1

From here, have students choose an ordinary object to focus on in an ode of their own. To help students choose an object from their everyday life, ask:

- *What do they think is an underappreciated object?*
- *What is something they use every day and take for granted?*
- *How could they thank this object?*
- *How does it help them in their everyday life?*
- *How could they describe this object?*
- *Can they use their 5 senses to describe it?*

Once students have chosen an object, they should brainstorm ideas and do some preliminary planning using the second portion of the “Odes to Ordinary Objects” handout.

Step 2

Time for drafting! Students then write a draft of an ode to their object. Students’ odes should have at least 4 stanzas, with 4 lines in each stanza. Remind students that an ode should thank the object, and encourage students to be as specific and descriptive as possible, employing all 5 senses to describe the sights, sounds, textures, smells, and even tastes, of their chosen object.

Next, review the definition of personification (giving human characteristics to nonhuman objects). Ask your students: *What is something that humans can do that your object doesn’t do? How could we pretend this object was a person? What might this object do if it was human? Could it wear clothes? Could it say something? Could it jump up and down? How would it move? How would it feel? What more information can you give your reader by making a comparison?*

As an additional challenge, have students review the definition of similes (comparisons using “like” or “as”).

Students will practice writing examples of personification and similes for their ordinary objects using their “Revision and Editing” handout.

Students should add 3-5 different lines to their odes using their examples of similes and personification, or other descriptive details they can come up with. Some questions to help students come up with other descriptive details include: *Can you give more details about this item? What can you compare this to? Is it as loud as something? Bright as something? Quiet like what? Crazy like what? Are there nouns that could be more precise (for example, pirate versus man)? Can you add adjectives? Can you use more active verbs? Can you picture what is happening throughout your piece? Where can we add more details?*

Step 3 (Conclusion)

Students should share their odes to ordinary objects if time allows. If they finish early, students can publish another ode, decorate their ode, or practice reading their ode aloud before sharing.

Gratitude can be everywhere!