



Remnants of Language: Shrinky Dink Activity

Standards Alignment

This lesson plan aligns with the following standards:

- **Mississippi College and Career Readiness Arts Learning Standards:**
 - **VA:Cr1.2.4a:** Students will apply personal choices while creating art.
 - **VA:Cr2.1.4a:** Students will collaborate with peers in the art room to achieve a common art goal.
 - **VA:Re8.1.4a:** Students will interpret meaning from art, using both their observations and prior knowledge.
 - **Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts (ELA):**
 - **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.4.4.A:** Use context (e.g., definitions, examples, or restatements in text) as a clue to the meaning of a word or phrase.
 - **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.4.1:** Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions with diverse partners on grade 4 topics and texts.
 - **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.4.4:** Report on a topic or text, tell a story, or recount an experience in an organized manner, using appropriate facts and relevant descriptive details to support main ideas or themes.
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Theme Song

Play a short snippet of "**A Million Dreams**" by **P!nk and The Greatest Showman Ensemble**. Introduce the song by explaining that it is about a person who uses their imagination to turn ordinary things into something extraordinary, much like the artists they will be studying.

Lyrics: *I close my eyes and I can see The world that's waiting up for me That I call my own
Through the dark, through the door Through where no one's been before But it feels like
home*

*They can say, they can say it all sounds crazy They can say, they can say I've lost my mind I
don't care, I don't care, so call me crazy We can live in a world that we design*

Supply List for Teacher



- **Shrinky Dink sheets:** Look for "Shrinky Dinks" or "Shrinkable Plastic" at craft stores. A multi-pack is recommended for a class.
 - **Sharpie markers:** A set of brightly colored markers and a separate pack of black Sharpies.
 - **Scissors:** One pair per student or enough to share.
 - **Toaster oven:** This is for the shrinking process.
 - **Hot glue gun:** One for the teacher to use, along with a supply of glue sticks.
 - **Heat gun:** For a more unpredictable shrinking effect on the second piece of plastic.
 - Tongs or spatula: To safely remove the hot plastic from the oven.
 - Cookie sheet or aluminum foil: To place the Shrinky Dinks on in the oven.
 - Printed images of Cecelia Moseley's "Remnants of Language" exhibit.
 - A speaker or device to play the song.
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Introduction (15 minutes)

Begin by reading the students a short excerpt from Frances Hodgson Burnett's classic story, *The Secret Garden*, and a poem by the famous Japanese poet Matsuo Bashō. These works show how small, seemingly forgotten things can hold great meaning.

Short Story Excerpt: *Mary Lennox, a lonely girl, was walking in a forgotten corner of an old garden. She noticed a small, round spot in the earth. It was a metal ring, and attached to it was a rusty, old key. "I wonder," she thought, "what this key could possibly open? It must have a story." This tiny, forgotten remnant held a mystery that would change everything.*

Short Poem: An old silent pond... A frog jumps into the pond, splash! Silence again.

Explain to the students that the poem is about a small moment—a frog's jump—that leaves a **remnant**, the sound. It shows how even the smallest things can have a big impact or a hidden story.

After the story and poem, show the students images of Cecelia Moseley's "Remnants of Language" exhibit. Ask them what they see. Before you dive into the discussion, define two key terms for them:

- **Remnant:** A small remaining part of something. Think of it like a clue or a piece left behind from a bigger story.
- **Language:** A way to communicate. We use words and sounds to talk, but symbols, signs, and even objects can also be a type of language.



Guide the discussion to help them notice that the artwork is made from found objects—like old, broken pieces of metal that look like letters or symbols.

Ask the students:

- What do you think the artist means by "remnants of language"?
- How are these old pieces of metal like a "remnant"?
- Do you think these objects are telling a story? What kind of story might they tell?

Explain that the artist finds beauty and meaning in old, discarded things. Today, you will become artists just like her, creating your own "remnants of language" using vibrant Sharpie colors and bold black outlines to make your stories stand out.

Activity: Creating with Shrinky Dinks (45–60 minutes)

Part 1: The Design

1. Distribute the Shrinky Dink sheets, brightly colored Sharpie markers, and black Sharpie markers.
2. Instruct each student to draw or write a "remnant of language" that is meaningful to them. This could be a symbol, an initial, a word from another language, or an abstract mark that represents something important.
3. Remind them to use the bright Sharpie colors to fill in their designs and then use the black Sharpie marker to outline all their shapes and lines. This will help the design "pop" and look like a finished art piece once it shrinks.
4. Once their design is complete, have them carefully cut out the shape.

Part 2: The Shrinking

1. **Adult supervision is required for this step.**
2. Preheat the toaster oven according to the Shrinky Dink instructions.
3. Place the students' designs on a baking sheet. Students can watch as their pieces are placed in the oven to shrink and curl up. The heat makes the plastic shrink to about one-third of its original size.
4. Use tongs to remove the shrunken, flattened pieces and set them aside to cool.

Part 3: Final Assembly

1. With a new piece of Shrinky Dink plastic, have students write a single word that represents the meaning of their chosen "remnant." After the word is written, the



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teacher will use a heat gun to shrink the word right in front of the students. The hot air from the heat gun will cause the plastic to curl up and shrink. This method is a bit more unpredictable and can make the letters twist, creating a truly "remnant-like" feel.

2. Once all the pieces are cooled, the teacher will use the hot glue gun to attach the newly-shrunk word to the shrunk art piece.
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Conclusion (15 minutes)

Have students share their final creations with the class. Ask them to explain what their "remnant" represents and why they chose that specific language or symbol. Encourage them to talk about how the process of shrinking the plastic felt like making a piece of history or a memory.

Assessment (by observation):

- **Participation:** Did the student engage in the discussion and art activity?
- **Creativity:** Did the student create a unique design that reflects a personal "remnant," using both bright colors and black outlines?
- **Explanation:** Can the student articulate the meaning behind their artwork?