Creating a Time Capsule

Grade Level: 5 - 8

Time Required: 30 - 45 minutes

Countdown: Writing paper

Pencils

Ignition:

For decades, space colonies have been the creation of science fiction writers. However, with world population growing at an alarming rate, the concept of a second home in space could very likely become a stark reality.

Already, a number of visionary scientists have drawn up plans for off-earth habitats. Biosphere II near Tucson, Arizona is an example. Additionally, NASA has future plans for a mission to Mars in the next 20 years. It certainly appears that earth will not always be our home. With this in mind, ask the students to consider the scenario suggested next in "Liftoff."

Liftoff:

You will have the opportunity to bury a time capsule, a sealed and durable box, which will be opened after one hundred years. Future discoverers of the box will be able to guess from the contents what your life was like 100 years before their time.

Below are six different categories. For each category, choose an object that would best represent it. Keep in mind that you may choose items like photographs, scrapbooks, films or videos, books, newspapers, miniature models, and other favorite mementos.

Describe your object in detail, and tell why you think it would be a good choice for a time capsule.

The categories are yourself, your school, your city, your country, transportation, and communication.

Once students have completed their lists, ask them to share their favorite items. Discuss the categories of transportation and communication. Compare and contrast today's means of transportation and communication with what could be possible in the future.

Time Capsule

Countdown:
Photos, Newspaper, Miniature Models, Etc.
Coffee Can or Box

Suggested TEKS
Language Arts - 5.15  6.15  7.15  8.15
Social Studies - 5.18  6.20  7.20  8.20
Art -  5.2  6.2  7.2  8.2
Computer -  5.2  6.2  7.2  8.2

Suggested SCANS
Interpersonal. Interprets and Communicates Information
National Science and Math Standards
Science as Inquiry, Physical Science, Earth & Space
Science, Science & Technology, History & Nature of Science, Measurement, Observing, Communicating
Have students make their own "time capsules" with the items they collected to represent each category. Students may use additional items collected to "collage" the outside of the box or can. When completed, place on display. See if students can identify the owner of each time capsule.

**Word Processing and Internet or Library Research**

Students will research Biosphere II, Mission to Mars, or the International Space Station. Students will choose one of the following projects:
- write a three page report describing the project
- design a travel brochure to the chosen destination
- using computer graphics, draw the layout of the project selected
- write a persuasive paper about the project and whether it is feasible

**More Ideas…**

1. Extend the list of categories to include the following:
   - famous person
   - important past event
   - best movie
   - favorite television program
   - most widely read book
   - funny comic strip
   - favorite music
   - most delicious food
   - important invention
   - most useful appliance
   - favorite electronic equipment
   - best-liked game or sport
   - most interesting clothes or hair fashion

2. Discuss the variations and similarities in responses.
3. Talk about how the responses from this geographic area would vary from another geographic area and even another country.
4. E-mail someone from another state or country to get responses to the above categories.
5. Have each student contact their grandparents for responses to the above categories.
6. Discuss variations and similarities.
7. Research whether a time capsule has ever been found in your community? If so, how old was it? What was in it?