Common Core Debate Traditional vs. Industrial Candle Manufacturing

Objective: To locate evidence within a text that supports a specific claim: Either “It is better to use traditional methods of making crafts” or “It is better to use industrial methods to make crafts.”

Lesson Sequence:

Opener: Ask students to think about all their possessions, for example their own clothes, their sports equipment, or even the food they eat. Choose one example (clothes) and ask “Do you know who made your clothes?” “Do you know where your clothes are from?” Ask students to share where they think their clothing was made, before it got to the store. Ask students whether they think it matters where their things came from. Do we need to know? WOuld it be better if our families or someone we know made all of our things?

Background: Explain to students that most “products” we have now are made somewhere far away (have students look at each other’s shirt labels, then find those locations on the classroom map), usually in a big factory. (Explain that we will be seeing pictures of factories). But, long ago, and in some places still today, small towns/ pueblos of people are still making almost everything they need right where they live. Someone grows corn, someone else keeps cows for meat and milk, someone else weaves cloth, and there’s even a local person to make your sports equipment, and everything you might need for a wedding.

Ask students what is needed for a good wedding. (If no one mentions candles, add it to the list)

Explain lesson objective: To locate evidence within a text that supports a specific claim: Either “It is better to use traditional methods of making crafts” or “It is better to use industrial methods to make crafts.”

During Reading Task: have students create a T chart in their reading journals, label for the two sides. Traditional vs Industrial

Oral Presentation: Show images, explain the different aspects of the traditional candle making process vs. the manufacturing process.

Day 2:

Briefly review the objective. Preview challenging tier 2 vocabulary: procession, bride, groom, wick, mold, manufacture

Read the article together

Meet Sophia Ruiz Lorenzo. Sophia works and lives in the small Zapotec village Teotitlan del Valle, Mexico, where she has learned the art of candle-making from her grandmother. According to Sophia, candles are an important part of traditional culture in Teotitlan. They are never used just for decoration. Instead, they are part of important ceremonies in Zapotec homes, as well as at church. For example, in Teotitlan, when a groom wishes to marry a bride, the townspeople will carry 80 candles in a procession to her parents house. Candles are used to celebrate the important life phases, including birth, marriage and at funerals.

Sophia’s candles are beautiful, often covered with flowers that she makes out of thin sheets of wax. To make the candles, Sophia buys only the purest beeswax, which can be quite expensive. She then heats the wax over a wood fire, and pours the liquid wax over the wick. She must wait twenty minutes, then she can begin again, pouring the wax over the candle. The largest candles that Sophia makes are over six feet tall, and take up to eight months to make! These candles can be very expensive, even as much as $500 per candle. According to Sophia, the cost is worthwhile because the candles are not just decoration, but represent life itself. Sophia claims that because people use the candles at important ceremonies likes births and weddings, they are able to have healthier, better lives. For example, she says, “almost no one in Teotitlan gets a divorce”! Besides this, Sophia explains, “This is the way of our ancestors. It has been this way for hundreds of years, and so it is our job to continue the tradition.”

Sadly, Sophia says that not all Zapotecs agree with her. Some claim that the cost of the candles is too expensive. Especially, Sophia says, families who have spent time living in the U.S. “The see the candles as just another expense that is hard to pay.”

Nowadays, it is possible to buy candles for much less money. These candles are not hand-made out of beeswax, but made in a factory out of a type of petroleum. For example, a person living in Mexico who has internet access can buy candles online for less than $20 that look similar to the candles that Sophia makes. These candles are made in a mold, and can have many designs (<http://www.alibaba.com/product-detail/Candles_11506661.html> )

More pictures of industrial candle production:

<https://www.google.com/search?q=candle+mold&safe=active&espv=2&source=lnms&tbm=isch&sa=X&ei=FCbDU_foHsiV8gGm5YCgBA&ved=0CAcQ_AUoAg&biw=911&bih=422#q=industrial+candle+production&safe=active&tbm=isch&facrc=_&imgdii=_&imgrc=kK--uSa6zBnFtM%253A%3B_Q-oAZ-ym7VQCM%3Bhttp%253A%252F%252Fi01.i.aliimg.com%252Fimg%252Fpb%252F721%252F131%252F560%252F560131721_070.jpg%3Bhttp%253A%252F%252Fwww.alibaba.com%252Fproduct-detail%252FIndustrial-Taper-Candle-Making-Machine-on_625315442.html%3B800%3B600>

Images of molds:

<https://www.google.com/search?q=candle+mold&safe=active&espv=2&source=lnms&tbm=isch&sa=X&ei=FCbDU_foHsiV8gGm5YCgBA&ved=0CAcQ_AUoAg&biw=911&bih=422#q=decorative+flower+mold+candles&safe=active&tbm=isch&imgdii=_>