

Minnesota Writing Project

---Demonstration Lesson---

Title of lesson: *This I Believe* Prewriting Lesson

Suggested grade/age: 11th or 12th grade

Approximate time needed to complete lesson: The entire unit takes 4-5 weeks. The parts I demonstrated take about 2-3 48 minute class periods

Learning objective(s) and significance of lesson:

- Often as teachers, we forget the importance of frontloading, and prewriting is overlooked. This lesson is designed to help students really think about what is meant by the word “belief” and to allow them to start exploring their own beliefs before writing their *This I Believe* essay

Brief summary/outline of lesson:

- We do this unit late in semester 1, once students have had an opportunity to get to know each other and get comfortable in the classroom community.
- I start with putting the word BELIEF on the board and working on defining it: What does it mean? What adjectives describe beliefs? Where do beliefs come from? How do you know when you believe something?
- Students then free-write on two prompts of their choosing from a list of six.
- Students share their writing with one another, and engage in a peer response protocol

Related Resources:

- thisibelieve.org
- <http://thisibelieve.org/educators/>

Possible extensions or adaptations for different purposes/student needs:

- Essays could easily be turned into digital stories
- A yearly anthology of essays could be created

For additional information, contact:

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