



Visual Impairment: Privileged Hands (Book) Est. Time: 2 Weeks Reading/45 Minutes Class Time

Synopsis

Geerat Vermeij, a biologist and paleontologist, had a passion for shells. As a result of his blindness, he used his fingers instead of his eyes to “see” the shells. *Privileged Hands* gives a detailed account of Vermeij’s life and his rise as one of the leading authorities in his field.

Activity

Read the following book and be prepared to discuss the questions below in class:

Title: *Privileged Hands: A Remarkable Scientific Life* (1997)

Author: Geerat Vermeij

Publisher: W. H. Freeman and Company • New York

Questions/Discussion Topics

1. How did Geerat Vermeij lose his sight?
2. What advice did Dr. Wave give to Geerat’s parents?
3. What was his mother trying to teach him by sending him to the store alone?
4. What kind of assistance did Geerat utilize to help him in the classroom?
5. The National Science Foundation (NSF) agreed to fund all of Geerat’s proposal except for the fieldwork portion. Why did NSF reject the fieldwork portion and how did he respond?
6. Do you think Geerat lived his life regarding his blindness “as a nuisance”? If so, give examples to support your opinion.



The contents of this case study were developed under a grant from the U.S. Department of Education, #H325F060003. However, those contents do not necessarily represent the policy of the U.S. Department of Education, and you should not assume endorsement by the Federal Government. Project Officer, Shedeh Hajghassemali.