

Do Objects Talk?

Artifacts can tell us stories about our past. The story behind the artifact can tell us about the people who used it and the society in which they lived. Who owned this item? Who used this item? Who made this item? Questions like these can help us understand the past.

Objectives

In this lesson students learn to analyze an artifact. They will identify an object from their own lives which tells a story about their own past. They will take on the role of the exhibit professional in putting together an exhibit. First, the student will arrange a loan agreement with their family members to bring the object to school. They will coordinate the safe handling of the artifact in transit to their classroom. They will determine how the artifact will be displayed in a class museum. They will create an exhibit label to explain their artifact and its story. Finally, they will publicize their exhibit, open it to visitors and assist in interpreting their display.

Procedure

1. Using the Artifact Analysis Worksheet (page 5), have students examine an artifact from their classroom or one of the artifacts found in the Mr. Lincoln's Attic Flash Cards (page 4). Using their imagination, have students write a creative essay on a possible story behind their selected artifact. Note: You can find out the real story at the ALPLM exhibit *Mr. Lincoln's Attic*.

2. Using the Exhibit Artifact Brainstorming Worksheet (page 6), have students consider objects from home that tell a special, unusual or interesting story about themselves or their family. Students will choose one item from this worksheet to bring to class in order to create an exhibit.

3. Have students take home the Loan Agreement Form (page 7) and fill it out with the person who is loaning them the item for the class exhibit. Students are responsible for arranging and documenting the transport of their item to school.

4. At school, have students create an exhibit label that tells the story behind their object. Remember, a good label should be to the point and no longer than 50 words.

5. Arrange all the students' artifacts in a class exhibit.

6. Create brochures, posters or ads for your class exhibit.

7. Invite parents and school mates to view the exhibit. Students should be on hand to act as interpreters for the exhibit.

"These people may be gone, but they have left their words and possessions. In a mysterious way, these original objects connect us to the people and events of history and make them real."

—Thomas, *Ghosts of the Library*

Vocabulary

Loan

Something given for only a short time and meant to be returned

Exhibitor

Person or people creating and putting on a display for others to see

Exhibit

A display put on for others to see

Lender

Person or people giving something for short term use

Credit

Recognition or approval for something someone did

Insurance

An agreement to protect property against loss.

Mr. Lincoln's Attic Flash Cards



Artifact Analysis Worksheet

Name: _____

1. Describe the physical qualities of the artifact. What material(s) is it made of: bone, pottery, metal, wood, stone, leather, glass, paper, cardboard, cotton, wood, plastic, or other materials.

2. Describe how that artifact looks and feels: shape, color, texture, size, weight, moveable parts, anything printed, stamped or written on the object.

3. Study the artifact.

A. What might it have been used for?

B. Who might have used it?

C. Where might it have been used?

D. When might it have been used?

4. What does this artifact tell us?

A. What does it tell us about technology or the culture of the people who made and used it?

B. Does the artifact tell us anything special about this period in history?

5. What questions do you have about this object that you can't answer?

6. Name a similar item today or an item that has replaced the function of this object?

Exhibit Artifact Brainstorming Worksheet

Name: _____

Artifact	Story it tells	Why I want to share it

I plan on bringing _____ to school for our class exhibit because:

Loan Agreement

Name of Exhibitor: _____

Exhibit Name: _____

Loan Period: From _____ To _____

Lending Institution/Individual: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Telephone: _____

Credit

If the lender chooses, a line of credit, the lender's name, will be appear on the exhibit label, telling all visitors where the object came from.

Do you wish to have a credit line? Yes _____ No _____ OR

Do you wish to remain anonymous? Yes _____ No _____

Credit Line: _____
(credit line as it will appear in the exhibit)

May the exhibitors reproduce the object in brochures, posters, etc. to publicize the exhibit? Yes _____ No _____

Choose one: _____ Insurance to be provided by exhibitor
_____ Insurance to be provided by lender
_____ Insurance waived (no insurance needed)

Please provide special instructions for packing, transporting, and installing the object: _

Description of object: _____

Condition of object (to be completed by lender): _____

I have read and agree to the conditions outlined in this loan agreement. I certify that I am the owner and/or can enter into this agreement.

Signature of Lender(s) _____ Date _____

Signature of Exhibitor _____ Date _____