

Teaching with Objects Lessons

Objects can be used in a variety of ways in the history classroom. Below you will find lesson activities incorporating objects into history lessons.

Lesson Activity 1: Reading Objects

Preparation:

1. Gather a selection of objects representing the same time period or from across several time periods (See the Historical Objects Purchasing guide)
2. Divide class into groups of two or three and copy the Reading Objects worksheet for each group.
3. Number each table or station.

Lesson:

1. Give each group a copy of the worksheet and review the directions **before** handing out the objects.
2. Give each group an object and circulate among the groups while they work on answering the questions. Give the students no more than 15 minutes to complete the worksheet.
3. Have the student groups circulate among the stations and examine each object briefly. Student groups should note what they believe each object is on the back of their worksheet or a separate sheet of paper.
4. Students return to their original stations and report on their object. You may choose to have them share the answers to all the questions or simply summarize for their classmates.
5. After each group reports, poll the other groups to see if they agreed with the identification of the object. Discuss any differences.
6. Repeat until all groups have reported.

Lesson Extension: Have each group create an advertisement or commercial for the object they identified in the lesson

Lesson Activity 2: Test Review with Objects

This lesson may be completed at any time after the initial lesson, but works well as test review.

Preparation:

1. Set up 6 or 7 stations around the classroom. Each station should have one of the historical objects that students have previously identified. Each station should also have a sheet or poster paper or notebook paper. If you are using poster paper, it is helpful to have a different colored marker for each group.
2. Either display directions on whiteboard or post at each station.
3. Divide the students into groups of 2 or 3.

Lesson:

1. Students groups will travel to each station and write one fact that they know about the object or the time period it comes from. They cannot repeat facts from other groups.

2. Have student groups travel to each station at least twice.
3. Display the fact sheets for each artifact by taping them to a wall or using a document camera to project the fact sheet.
4. Discuss the fact sheets as a class. Student groups should be prepared to offer support for any statements that are disputed by the other students.

Lesson Extension: Assign each group an artifact and fact sheet. Student should use the information on the fact sheet as the basis for a caption that might appear along with the artifact in a museum.

Lesson Activity 3: Curate a Museum Exhibit

Preparation:

1. Set out artifacts on table or counter so that all students can see and access the artifacts.
2. Identify 6 or 7 themes found throughout your curriculum such as Technological Innovations, Courage, Conflict and Compromise, The Role of Individuals in History etc.
3. Divide students into groups of two or three students.

Lesson:

1. Explain to students that each group is going to create a museum exhibit that reflects one of the themes in the curriculum.
2. Students will select 2 or 3 objects that they believe are the best examples of the theme.
3. Students will explain their theme in 2 to 3 sentences and then explain how each object relates to the theme in 2 to 3 sentences.
4. Allow students 15-20 minutes to select their objects and write their explanations.
5. Have each student group present their exhibit.

Lesson Activity 4: Combining Objects with Documents.

Preparation:

1. Select the objects that students will utilize in this activity. You may allow students to select an object, you may assign objects or have all groups investigate the same object.
2. Create a list of websites that have digitized primary source documents. You may wish to include: Teaching with Primary Sources MTSU <http://library.mtsu.edu/tps/>
Tennessee State Library and Archives Education Outreach
<http://sos.tn.gov/tsla/education-outreach-primary-sources>
Library of Congress <https://www.loc.gov/>

Lesson:

1. Students will work in groups to locate one or two primary source documents that pair with their object.
2. Students will print or project the documents so that the class can see the documents and explain why they selected those documents.