

Discovering Objects

Lesson Plan

Grades 5-8

Elementary Cycle 3

Secondary Cycle 1

Pedagogical Intent

Students learn to interpret museum artifacts, and learn about the history and cultures of aboriginal peoples in Canada, by studying objects from the Canadian Museum of Civilization's database, completing a Discovering Objects Activity Sheet, and making a presentation of artifacts.

Grade: Grade 5-8; Quebec Elementary Cycle 3, Secondary Cycle 1

Subjects: Social Studies, Geography, History and Citizenship Education, Language Arts, Mathematics

Themes: Aboriginal people, aboriginal culture and history in Canada, Canadian history, diversity, change and continuity, meeting needs, resources

Objectives and Competencies: Use information, use information and communication technology, communicate appropriately; observe, describe, summarize, reason, use critical thinking, use creativity, cooperate with others, listen to others, use oral communication

Duration: 120-180 minutes

Web Resources:

- Gateway to Aboriginal Heritage web module
www.civilization.ca/tresors/ethno/index_e.html

Optional Technical Equipment

- One computer with Internet access for each pair of students, needed for 60-90 minutes; if computers are available, the artifact information package for each student is not required
- A projector and computer with Internet access

Student Handout

For each student:

- An artifact information package from the [Selected Artifacts](#) list (Teacher Preparation, Step 4)
- [Discovering Objects Activity Sheet](#)

Teacher Preparation:

1. Ensure students have been introduced to the history and cultures of Aboriginal peoples in Canada.
2. Visit the [Gateway to Aboriginal Heritage web module](#). Select the Objects tab, and By Object Type from the side menu. View the available categories of objects. Select a category. A list of objects is displayed. Select the link for an object to display its artifact record.
3. Familiarize yourself with the [Discovering Objects Activity Sheet](#).
4. Print out two or three copies of each artifact information package from the [Selected Artifacts](#) list below, to provide one package per student.



Shirt
(V-A-503)

Selected Artifacts



Cape
(II-C-347)



Man's parka
(IV-C-1745)



Moccasins
(V-C-207 a-b)



Hunting bag
(VI-Z-248)



Harpoon head
(IV-D-1835 a)



Snowshoes
(II-D-26 a-b)



Shirt
(V-A-503)



Toy toboggan
(III-L-418 a-f)

Optional: Consult the Gateway to Aboriginal Heritage web module and select artifacts related to a subject you are exploring; make one copy of a record per pair of students, or save the records so that you can project them.

Optional, if computers with Internet access are available: Instead of printing out artifact records for students, allow each pair of students to select an artifact from the database.

Procedure

- 1. Begin with a classroom discussion about museums and artifacts.** Have any students visited museums recently? Have they seen objects on display? Explain that these objects are artifacts. Although any object can be considered an artifact, objects in museum collections are special. Brainstorm with your class about what makes museum artifacts special. Some ideas: museums collect objects that are representative of specific cultures, places or events; they document them, store them in special conditions to preserve them, do research on them, and display them.
- 2. Introduce the artifact collection of the Canadian Museum of Civilization.** Explain that the Canadian Museum of Civilization has thousands of artifacts made and used by aboriginal peoples in Canada: everything from clothing to hunting tools to travel equipment.
- 3. Introduce the artifact database records.** Provide an artifact information package to each student. Explain that records for eight different artifacts have been distributed. Each artifact is an object that was made and used by a member of an aboriginal group. Ask students to look at the first page: the artifact record. Review the information available, and ensure students understand what each term means. Turn to the second page, and explain that it provides a larger view of the artifact.

4. Introduce the Discovering Objects Activity Sheet.

Give students the [Discovering Objects Activity Sheet](#) and review the questions with them. Ask them to complete it individually, using the artifact information package. Because the artifact records only include information that was provided to the museum about each object, students may not find all information they need to answer every question.

5. Ask students to compare their interpretations of the artifacts.

When students have completed their Activity Sheets, ask students sharing the same artifact to form groups. For example, all students with the parka form a group. Encourage students to share their answers to each question and to revise their answers if they wish.

6. Students present their artifacts.

Ask each group to share its artifact with the class. Encourage students to share some of the questions they would like to ask the makers or owners of their artifacts.

Extension Ideas

Object or Artifact? Show the class an everyday object and a projection or picture of a museum artifact from the database. Ask students to brainstorm about the differences between an everyday object and a museum artifact.

Create an Artifact Information Record: Ask students to select a special object they have at home; they can photograph it or draw a picture of it. Using the Canadian Museum of Civilization artifact record as a guide, have them create an artifact information record of this object. Ask them to interview parents and others who have information to share about the object, and have students add the information they feel is necessary to fully convey the importance of the object.

What Is It? Assign the [What Is It? Activity Sheet](#) after the completion of this activity. The What Is It? Activity Sheet challenges students to identify unusual objects from the database and builds on their skills at using the database.

English Language Arts: Look at the origin of the word artifact: arte from Latin art, factum from facere to make.

French as a Second Language: Use the French version of the artifact information record. Ask students to describe the artifact in French, using the terms on the information card to assist them.

English as a Second Language: Ask students to identify an artifact that is similar to an object they use at home. Ask them to describe their household object, and explain what it is used for, how it is used, what it is made from, and who uses it. The class can ask questions and compare the artifact and object.

Arts Education: Ask each group to present an artifact and one or more related people in a manner of their choice. Brainstorm with them on the possible formats and subjects.