



National Park Service
Teaching with **MUSEUM** Collections
Management Program
<http://www.cr.nps.gov/museum>

**How to write a
Teaching with Museum Collections
Lesson Plan**
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Draft

The National Park Service [NPS] *Teaching with Museum Collections* provides lesson plans for teachers to use NPS museum collections in student-centered educational activities. The collections tell the story of America; its peoples, cultures, varied habitats, significant events, and ideas that continue to inspire the world. *Teaching with Museum Collections [TMC]* emphasizes the links between the ‘real things,’ the collections, and the sites where those collections were found, collected, or used. NPS collections include cultural objects, natural history specimens, archival documents and photographs. Lesson plans are linked to national education standards.

What’s included in the *Teaching with Museum Collections* Lesson Plan

□ **Header**

Include the following:

- Lesson plan title
- Name, title, school name and location of lesson developer[s]
- Grade Level
- Length of lesson[s]

Indicate the time requirements for the lesson; for example, a single 45-minute session, five 45-minute sessions over a five-day period, etc.

□ **Overview of this Collection-Based Lesson Plan**

Write a short overview of the lesson plan that includes:

- ***Park name.***
 - Enter the full park name, such as Bandelier National Monument or Frederick Douglass National Historic Site.
- ***Description***
 - State the theme of the lesson, and briefly describe what is covered in this lesson plan.
- ***Essential question.***
 - Include an ‘essential question’ to guide student inquiry and to stimulate critical thinking about the lesson theme.
- ***Relevance***

Explain how lesson ties to students’ prior knowledge in order to make it immediately relevant. Relate the theme to the park’s resources, museum exhibits and web features. Personalize the lesson, and relate it to topics of local interest, including family, friends, school, town, region, people, buildings, places, and events.



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❑ **Museum Collections Used in this Lesson Plan**

- List all *park museum collection* [objects, specimens, documents, photographs] that will be used in this lesson plan. Captions must include object name, catalog number, material, and measurements. Additional information such as place of manufacture, who used the item, and how it was used, as well as cultural significance should be provided.
- Include *thumbnails* and *large format images* of all the museum objects used in this lesson plan.
- *Primary documentary sources* including historic photographs, document transcripts such as journals, diaries, letters, receipts, and lists, oral histories, sketches, diagrams, and maps from the park's collections. Search the Library of Congress or National Archives and Records Administration web sites to find documents that are in the public domain.
- URL addresses of the park and the park's museum web exhibit, including the Museum Management Program website at www.cr.nps.gov/museum for downloading collection images from the web.

❑ **National Educational Standards**

Enter the applicable national educational standard by number and title. For example, under the National Standards for US and World History:

Chapter 3, US History Standards for Grades 5 - 12

Era: 4: Expansion and Reform [1800-1861]

Standard 3: The extension, restriction, and reorganization of political democracy after 1800

Standard 4A: The student understands the abolitionist movement

Teaching with Museum Collection lessons are often multidisciplinary; therefore, include standards for all relevant disciplines as appropriate. The standards are available on the web at sites such as <http://cnets.iste.org/currstands>. Tie extension activities to the applicable standards.

❑ **Student Learning Objectives**

Identify student learning objectives for the lesson plan. Write the objectives in terms of what students will have mastered when the lesson is complete, such as; After these lessons, students will be able to:

- Critically analyze objects from
- Use the analysis to develop an understanding of
- Communicate their ideas and hypotheses through an oral presentation of.....;

❑ **Background and Historical Context**

Put the lesson into historical context for teachers and students. Provide relevant historical and social information on the park's history and prehistory, themes, significant individuals, groups, events, and time period. Include excerpts from, and references to NPS park publications: brochures, maps, park interpretive plan documents, and material developed by park staff where possible. Always use material that are in NPS publications or that are in the public domain. Or make sure that you have written permission to include this material on the web.



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❑ **Materials Used in this Lesson Plan**

List the materials to be used in this lesson plan, such as locally obtained objects that can substitute for the museum collection objects, or fill the same function.

- **Similar items.** Identify and find similar objects locally to use in the classroom for this lesson plan. *They are essential to the object-based lesson plan.* Unlike the real museum object, these items can be safely handled by the students. They can also be added to your classroom museum. Instructions for obtaining *similar, substitute objects*, and/or places where similar objects may be acquired or purchased are provided.

Other materials include:

- **Documents and photographs.** Identify and locate photographs, journals, diaries, letters, receipts, and lists, oral histories, sketches, diagrams, and maps from sources other than the park museum collections. Always locate materials that are in the public domain, from institutions such as Library of Congress or National Archives and Records Administration web sites.
- **Writing materials** including special paper varieties, bindings for journals, and special format books.
- **Art-making materials** including varieties of paper, paints, markers, oil pastels, adhesives, and 3-D sculptural materials.
- **Science and math materials.**
- **Technology:** All lessons should include computers with internet connection and printers to access the Web.

❑ **Vocabulary**

Create a word and concept list with students as lesson unfolds. Post the list on large chart in the classroom. Write definitions with student input as words come into use during the lesson.

❑ **Teacher Tips**

Tell teachers what they will need for this lesson plan, including telling them to download and laminate color prints of the museum objects used in the lesson plan. Encourage and incorporate the following into the lesson:

- **Online collections,** objects, documents, maps, and photographs to further student inquiry and to address student learning objectives and incorporate
- **Hands-on activities using similar objects.**
- **Three-dimensional materials** so that students can build their own version of an object and/or drawing materials so that students can make drawings of a similar object-from different perspectives
- **Readings and discussion** of documents [primary sources].
- **Analysis and critique of online catalog cards** [secondary source materials] to show how written information adds to inquiry/knowledge base.
- **Observation and analysis of historic photos** of the objects in use and discussion of how to interpret historic photographs.

❑ **Lesson Implementation Procedures**

Provide a series of activities using museum collections. Include step-by-step instructions for teachers to implement the activities. Number and title each of the activities. Include an introductory warm up activity based on a 'symbolic' object from the park's collection.



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Activity 1: Introduction and Warm Up

Use a ‘*How to Read an Object*’ activity [to be provided] as an “advanced organizer” to engage students and introduce them to the idea of learning through museum collections. Tell students they will be using objects from a National Park Service site as a source of learning and information. Explain that they will learn to look very closely at an object or set of objects to deduce historical, cultural and social information and to draw inferences about people, events, and life then and now. Ask questions that draw on observational skills, and develop activities that exercise powers of deduction, inference, and creativity based on this introductory lesson.

Do the following with the students:

- Pose an overarching or essential question that will guide student interactive learning and research. Post the question on a large banner at the front of the classroom. Identify an object. Incorporate the selected museum object into the question.
- Divide class into small groups; have students use inquiry method to discuss history, material, size, date, function, maker/manufacture, place of origin, function and use, cultural significance of the selected object.
- Have students caption all museum objects identify for this lesson plan. The captions will include park name, catalog number, item name, materials, measurements, date, and significant individuals.
- Have *students go on line to the park site and web exhibit* that the lesson is based on. Ask them to view the objects, specimens, and photographs and read documents.
- Have students compare their responses with the captions online.
- Encourage students to handle objects and examine photographs.
- Record their preliminary answers to the “banner” question on chart paper. Then ask students what additional questions they want to pursue after handling objects, specimens and photographs.

Activity 2:

Activity 3:

Activity 4:

Wrap Up Activity and Discussion

□ **Evaluation/Assessment for Measurable Results**

- Develop and identify assessment tools.
- Identify specific products, including quizzes/tests, creative projects, writing, artwork, and multimedia productions that students will produce for assessment of their learning.
- Provide students with rubric or scoring tools so that they will understand expectations *before* they begin.
- Use rubric to evaluate student products and discuss assessment with student.



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- Products include:
 - Musical, video, multimedia productions
 - Art: painting, printmaking, sculpture, hand-built related objects
 - Language arts: original poetry, plays, short stories, handmade illustrated books, advertising posters, debates, storytelling
 - History/social science: living museum characters
 - Classroom museum exhibits including similar objects, replicas, copies of primary sources documents, historic photographs, maps, with student-written interpretive labels, as well as talks for student docents.
 - Written press releases, brochures and posters for the exhibit
 - Text and graphics for TV and computer spots

□ **Extension and Enrichment Activities**

Develop a menu of extension activities that will further student exploration of the essential question. These activities may be undertaken away from the classroom, such as conducting oral history interviews at home or visiting the local museum or historical society.

□ **Resources**

Maintain an updated of the references such as books, materials and sources you use in developing the lesson to include in the resources section: These include the following:

- Bibliography
- Annotated related web sites with *url* addresses
- Related organizations
- Overheads or power point presentation
- Catalog cards on museum objects used in the lesson plan
- Charts such as ‘Object Attributes: *How to Read an Object*’ and Primary Sources chart [to be launched at www.cr.nps.gov/museum]

□ **Site Visit**

Provide instructions on how to organize an actual park or local museum or historical society.

- *Pre-visit*: Before the visit, have students visit the institution’s website for an overview or provide brochures and other written/visual materials about the site. Have each student come up with 2-3 questions to guide the visit. Work with park interpretive and museum staff to arrange the visit with challenging activities.
- *Site visit*: At the site, have students select at least two objects to analyze. Provide “How to Read an Object” sheets. It also includes an object sketch sheet (white space to make a detailed sketch of the objects). For younger students, develop a “scavenger hunt” object list to encourage close observation skills.
- *Post-visit*: See extension activity list for ideas for post-visit student presentation ideas.
- *Virtual visit*: Assign an activity that requires a *virtual tour* of the park, similar parks and museums.