

Newspapers in Education:

Triumph & Tragedy in History Artifacts Analysis

INTRODUCTION

National History Day is a yearlong program engaging over half a million students in the research, writing, interpretation, and presentation of historical projects at a regional, state, and national level. Each year thousands of Oklahoma students become young historians through participation in this program. Here is one activity that can help you be a historian, too!

Artifacts in Analysis

SUGGESTED GRADES: 2-12

OVERVIEW: Historians use numerous sources to learn about the past. Historic objects, or artifacts, can help us learn about both the item and the individuals who used them. Artifacts can help us to identify the people, culture, and lifestyle of a certain time period.

OBJECTIVES: Through artifacts, historians can learn more about the past. This activity will help students analyze material culture from the past and determine its use and importance.

TIME NEEDED: Artifact discovery: 10 minutes
Discussion: 20 minutes
Follow-up activity: 15 minutes

MATERIALS NEEDED: Images of artifacts from the Oklahomans and Space E-exhibit (<http://www.okhistory.org/kids/space5.php>)
Access to library/internet for research

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Select an item or items for your students to examine.
2. Have students determine what the object is made of. Is it metal, wood, stone, glass, paper, cardboard, cloth, bone, pottery, or another material? Is it made from one material or a combination of materials?
3. Have students describe the qualities of the artifact. What is its size, shape, color, weight? Is it written on or marked? Does it move? Does it seem to have all of its parts? What might be missing?
4. Have students sketch the artifact.
5. Have students describe what it might have been used for. How could it have been used? Who might have used it? How do you know? Where would it be used? Is this item still used today? Why or why not?
6. What does this object tell us about the past? How does this object relate to you today?

To learn more about National History Day in Oklahoma,

you can contact us at 405-522-0785 or visit

<http://www.okhistory.org/historycenter/historyday>