

Education Collection and Artifact Activity

The education collection at the Museum of World Treasures integrates natural history and historical artifacts from the main collection into an accessible programming format. These artifacts are overflow from our main collection. These objects are used in the described Artifact Activity below. They are selected for the education collection based on the following criteria:

- Duplicates of better quality exist in the main collection
 - o If there are multiples of identical or nearly identical objects, the main collection keeps the highest-quality objects and the education collection receives the lower-quality objects.
- Broken and repaired
 - o One of the sad realities about artifacts is that they break. When they are in such poor condition that they cannot ever be displayed on exhibit but still offer worthwhile educational opportunities, they are transferred to the education collection.
- Lack of provenance
 - o Provenance is the story behind the object. If an object is given to the museum with very little background, often the item will go to the education collection. The item is still useful for teaching tools, but because it comes from unknown or questionable origins, it cannot be put on display. This is particularly useful for identifiable objects (we know what it is, where it came from in the world, and approximately how old it is just based on appearances) that don't have a clear ownership history.
- Special donations
 - o Sometimes people donate objects to the education department simply so they can be used and seen by children. We love these objects.
- Little connection to exhibits
 - o If the objects in the collection have no clear place in our exhibits, they are often given to the education collection. For example, Polynesian masks are in the education collection and do not fit anywhere in the museum's exhibit schedule or plan. The best place for them is where they can be studied and appreciated, versus leaving them in storage.

Artifact Activity

Instructions: The students need to break into small groups and choose a scribe to be their writer. They will examine ancient artifacts to see if they can figure out what they are. Questions are on their tables. They must answer every question to get to the answer, and they may be surprised about what these things actually are. You can help them along as you will have the answer key. They will rotate after **5 minutes** and go to another table where a different artifact rests. The students need to use utmost care to protect these artifacts. At the end you will reveal to them what these items are and what they were used for. The items are numbered on your key and on the tables, and students should write their answers in the corresponding spot. For example, students may start at station 4 and move to station 1, but they need to write their answers on their worksheets in the corresponding spaces. There are five artifacts. They will most likely only get one or two of them right!

Read to the students:

You will get to handle real ancient artifacts today. This is an opportunity for you to be archaeologists and detectives. Most archaeologists have clues about the items they find because they find them in the place where they were originally from. You, however, have to use only the items to give you clues. Your goal is to figure out what this item is by answering the following questions:

What civilization is this item from?

How old is this item?

Was this item used for a purpose or decoration?

If it was used for a purpose, what was that purpose?

Then, you are to give your best educated guess about what this is.

You must wear white gloves when handling these delicate items because the oil on our hands and fingers can damage them. You must always use two hands when handling these objects because they are not replaceable if they break. When handing off the item to your classmate, you must use two hands and utmost care.

Look at the color, shape, materials, details, and any other clues to let you know what this item is. The numbers on the items should not influence your answers as they were put on the items by the Museum to help identify them in records.

Answer key: (Note: Some objects may change).

Item #1: This is a Herodian (Roman) clay oil lamp from around 50BC-50AD meaning it is around 2000 years old. It was used to light homes and businesses. The black marks around the smaller hole show where it was lit. People would fill these with olive oil, place a wick in it, and usually use a small lamp like this on a tray with several others.

Item #2: This is an Egyptian Ushabti (you-shob-tee). It is around 2000-3000 years old and was used for a spiritual purpose. It was placed in a tomb with a mummified person and it was said that in the afterlife, when Osiris asked that person to join him for a day of work, the mummified person could wake these little figures up to go do the work for them. It is covered in faience (fay-anse), which is made from lime juice and salt.

Item #3: This is a Persian spear head from around the first millennium BC, so it could be up to 3,000 years old. The lack of decoration suggests this item was made quickly and for warfare purposes. The notch on the end of the handle may have been where it was held in place with a wooden handle.

Item #4: This is from a South American civilization called the Nicoya. This is a female effigy doll from around 800 to 1000 years ago. She had a spiritual purpose and was used in a home to promote large families. She is pregnant and her hat gives her jaguar ears, suggesting she was a shaman or medicine woman.

Item #5: This is an Egyptian Situla or bucket from around 2,500 years ago. This had a spiritual purpose as a priest or holy person would fill it full of water or milk and swing the bucket on a chain to bless a person or place. The inside reveals the effects of liquid on bronze, and the outside reveals the carvings may have been gilded with gold leaf at one time.

This document was created with Win2PDF available at <http://www.win2pdf.com>.
The unregistered version of Win2PDF is for evaluation or non-commercial use only.
This page will not be added after purchasing Win2PDF.