

Historica Canada Education Portal

Artifact Creation Activity

Overview

Students will pursue research in an area of their choice (or within teacher set guidelines) to create a pseudo-historical artifact.

Aims

- For students to gain an appreciation of the value of historical artifacts and documents
- For students to gain familiarity with primary sources
- For students to learn how to read various visual texts including historical artifacts
- For students to pursue a large scale, kinaesthetic project
- To bring history alive and have students develop a deeper understanding of a historical event or era

Background

This activity could be used to culminate a unit on any era in history. Please note, students require significant prior knowledge to be successful in creating a high quality pseudo-historical artifact.

Activities

1. Define what constitutes primary and secondary sources and discuss the importance of primary sources to the work of a historian.
2. If possible, take students to a museum or order a museum kit filled with original or replica artifacts. Have students observe, analyse, and where possible, interact with historical artifacts. Encourage students to seek meaning in what they see and touch, and to develop a connection with to the past through physical objects. Analysing these historical artifacts may require guidance in the form of large group analysis, small group discussion, guide questions, or a graphic organizer.
3. Instruct students to choose a particular event, topic or era in history from a list provided by the teacher or brainstormed by students. For example, if the group is studying the First World War, a list of potential topics may include Vimy Ridge, chlorine gas, shell shock, etc.
4. Students then research the topic of their choice. Teachers may require that students record/present their research in a graphic organizer, poster, essay, website, PowerPoint presentation or alternative format.
5. Once research has been completed, students can be instructed to identify and create/replicate a historical artifact that sums up the knowledge they have gathered in the previous step. For example, students might choose to create a war diary, write letters from the trenches, create a form of trench art, sew a replica of an early gas mask, create a propaganda poster, find a recipe for and cook bully beef or hard tack, carve graffiti similar to that found in tunnels, etc.

6. After submitting their artifact and a brief explanation with it, consider creating a classroom museum where students view each other's work.

Resources

- Local museums
 - Virtual museums and exhibits
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- o <http://www.warmuseum.ca/cwm/exhibitions/guerre/objects-photographs-e.aspx>
 - o <http://www.royalalbertamuseum.ca/vexhibit/warpost/english/exhibit.htm>
 - o <http://www.museevirtuel-virtualmuseum.ca/Search.do?ig=on&lang=en>

Materials:

- Digital images, replicas or original historical documents and artifacts (treaties, propaganda posters, trench art, diaries, etc.)
- Specific materials required for this activity depend on the type of artifacts that students will create. Students may be required to create a project proposal in advance of the project itself that requires them to consider the materials necessary in advance
- Access to computers

[The Canadian Encyclopedia](#)

