

Design a Display

Lesson Plan

Grades 5-8

Elementary Cycle 3

Secondary Cycle 1

Pedagogical Intent

Students learn to interpret artifacts, and learn about the history and cultures of aboriginal peoples, by selecting images of objects from the Canadian Museum of Civilization's database, by creating a display that features similar objects from different cultures, and by making a presentation in a format of their choice.

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

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

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, compare, summarize, 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

- Projector and computer with Internet access
- One computer with Internet access for each group of students, needed for 60-90 minutes; if a computer is available, the printouts of the Artifact Collections are not required since students can select their own artifacts.

Student Handouts

One copy per group of two or three students:

- One [Artifact Collection](#) package, consisting of artifact records of three similar artifacts (see Artifact Collections, Step 4, Teacher Preparation)
- *Optional:* For each group of students, a printout of three similar artifacts of your choice from three different cultures to suit the themes you are teaching

Teacher Preparation:

1. Ensure students have been introduced to the history and cultures of aboriginal people 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. Print out two or three copies of each [Artifact Collection](#) from the list below to provide one set of records per group of students.



Whip
(VI-E-48)

Artifact Collections

1: Transportation	2: Clothing	3: Moccasins	4: Baskets and boxes	5: Dolls
				
Kayak (IV-B-1699 a-i)	Coat (IV-B-1931)	Moccasins (III-I-1309 a-b)	Berry basket (VI-N-52 a,b)	Doll parka (III-DD-17)
				
Saddle (II-A-156)	Cape (II-C-347)	Moccasins (VI-N-14 a,b)	Basket (VII-F-490 a-b)	Doll (III-B-418)
				
Whip (VI-E-48)	Coat (III-B-632)	Boot (VI-E-56)	Storage box (VII-B-324 a,b)	Doll (III-I-1188)

Procedure

- Begin with a classroom discussion about museum exhibitions.** Ask if any students have visited a museum recently. What exhibitions did they see? Ask them to describe a favourite exhibition. Do they remember what was in the exhibition? Were there any artifacts on display? Ask students if they know what artifacts are. Artifacts are objects that belong to a museum collection. How were the artifacts displayed?
 - Explore some of the main techniques for displaying artifacts.** Referring back to the student description of a museum exhibition, explain that artifacts are displayed in museums in various ways. Some of the most common techniques are inside a display case, on a platform, on a mannequin, on a wall, or in a diorama.
- Ask students to describe each display technique, and the type of artifact you would display. Help them out as necessary.
- In a display case**
Description: a glassed-in case, often with shelves, either free-standing on the floor or against a wall. What would you display in a display case? Display cases are usually used to display small or medium-sized artifacts that require maximum protection. Larger artifacts are also displayed inside cases if they are very delicate and require the maximum protection from visitors and the environment.

- **On a platform**

Description: a raised floor, often on small pedestals, beyond the reach of visitors.

What would you display on a platform? You would choose this technique for single artifacts or groups of artifacts that do not require protection from the environment.

- **On a wall**

Description: objects hang on or are fastened to a wall.

What would you display on a wall? Framed images, such as paintings and photographs, or flat objects, such as tools, are often displayed on walls.

- **In a diorama or a period setting**

Description: a recreated environment that combines reproduction objects with real artifacts displayed as part of the environment; for example, a kitchen from a 1930s Saskatchewan house with artifacts from that period displayed on the floor and on the counter. What would you display in a diorama? You would choose this for objects like furniture and household objects.

- **On a mannequin**

Description: a human-like form.

What would you display on a mannequin? You would choose this for displaying clothing. A mannequin can appear in a display case, on a platform or in a diorama.

Many of these techniques can be combined. For example, a display case can appear inside a diorama, and a mannequin can appear on a platform.

3. Introduce the small group work.

Form groups of two or three students. Explain that students will decide how to display three similar artifacts from three different cultural groups, using records from the Canadian Museum of Civilization's database. This database features thousands of artifacts that were made and used by aboriginals in Canada.

Hand out one Artifact Collection per group. Ask students to review the information on each artifact record.

Notice that the artifacts belong to different cultural groups, but that they are similar in function.

Optional, if computers are available: Each group chooses an artifact category. Take 10 minutes to review the artifacts within the category. Ask students to select three artifacts from three different cultures that show how different cultures fulfilled similar needs.

4. Brainstorm about the artifacts.

Ask each group to brainstorm about their three artifacts. What do you know about the artifacts? Ask students to locate the place of origin of each artifact on a map. Look at the materials used to make each artifact. Look for wear marks to give you hints about how an object was used. What does each artifact tell you about the people who made it or owned it? Ask them to think about how these objects helped each group fulfill the same needs, such as eating, clothing, making shelter or expressing their culture.

5. Decide how to display the artifacts.

Ask students to think about how they might display these objects: in a display case, on the wall, on a mannequin, in a diorama. What do they have to think about before they can decide on a technique? How can the technique emphasize both the similarity of functions and distinctiveness of cultures?

Often, graphics, such as maps, drawings or photographs, accompany objects. Suggest a graphic that could appear behind or beside the objects.

Suggest a brief heading to appear with the objects. A heading is usually 3 to 6 words long and says, at a glance, what is most important about the objects.

6. Apply mathematics to the design challenge.

How much space would be required to display the artifacts? Using the dimensions on the artifact records, ask students to calculate how much space each artifact requires and how much all three artifacts together require. What size of display case, wall space, platform space or surface in a diorama is required to display the artifacts?

7. Students present their three artifacts.

Groups can choose how to present their display to the class, such as verbally, using full-scale drawings or with the assistance of mock-ups. Information they need to convey about the artifact includes: the name of each artifact, the function of each artifact, and the materials from which it was made. Information to convey about the design includes: how they would present the artifacts and why they chose this technique,

the background graphics they might use, the heading they would use, how much space they would require for the objects, and how this display would emphasize that different cultural groups used the artifacts for a similar function.

Encourage students to ask questions and share impressions about each display idea.

Extension Ideas

Hold a Display Fair: Ask students to set up their displays in your classroom. Invite other classes to visit the displays and ask questions to your students about the artifacts and the displays.

Follow this lesson plan with the [Discovering Objects Lesson Plan](#): This lesson plan delves more deeply into interpreting artifacts.

English Language Arts: Students write a caption for each object. Captions should be short, no more than 25 words, and should convey both the similarities between the objects and the distinctiveness of each culture.

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 from the record to assist them.

English as a Second Language: Ask students to identify an object they use at home that is similar to an artifact from the database. Invite them to present their object by describing or showing a picture of it and explaining what it is, what it is used for, how it is used, what it is made from, and who uses it. Then, they can present the artifact from the database, and answer the same questions. The class can ask questions and compare the old and new artifacts.