

Section Guide: Exploring History Through Artifacts



Hey Teachers!

Thanks for making the Wyoming State Museum a part of your classroom! This guide will describe the activities in this section and how to use them with your students!

Introduction:

This stand-alone activity lets your students examine one replica artifact from the museum's Oregon Trail Education Trunk – either a physical education trunk in your classroom or the virtual education trunk on our website. They'll go through a worksheet, hypothesize about what it was used for, and even draw pictures of it.

Preparation:

You'll need to print off a copy of the worksheet for each student. The students will need measuring devices (like rulers or tape measures) and tools to draw pictures; they can just use pencils, or you can give them things like crayons.

You'll also need to submit a request on our website for either the physical Oregon Trail Education Trunk or the virtual education trunk. Both are offered 100% free of charge.

The physical education trunk is chockful of replica artifacts that tell the story of the Oregon Trail. It can be checked out for free, or the museum will ship it to any Wyoming school. More information about shipping can be found on our website.

The virtual education trunks can be accessed through our website. They have 360-degree scans of each item in the trunk, so students can learn about the items from anywhere in the world. When you put in a request form (once again on our website) and choose virtual education trunk – the system will immediately send you log in information for the trunks.

Activity:

Exploring History Through Artifacts Student Activity:

You'll assign one artifact to each student or small group. They will go through the worksheet, examine the artifacts, and fill out the worksheet. If they're using the virtual education trunk, they may need classroom devices.

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Definition of Artifact:

An object that was made or used by humans, and is of cultural or historical interest.

Description of the Artifact:

1. What material(s) is the artifact made from?

- | | | |
|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bone | <input type="checkbox"/> Stone | <input type="checkbox"/> Cardboard |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pottery | <input type="checkbox"/> Leather | <input type="checkbox"/> Fabric |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Metal | <input type="checkbox"/> Glass | <input type="checkbox"/> Plastic |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Wood | <input type="checkbox"/> Paper | <input type="checkbox"/> Other Material |

2. Measure the artifact. What is its length, width, and height?

3. Describe how the artifact looks and feels. For example: What is its shape? What does its texture feel like? What color is it? What does it smell like? How heavy does it feel? Does it have any moving parts? What else is interesting about the artifact?

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4. Is there anything written, printed, or stamped on the artifact?

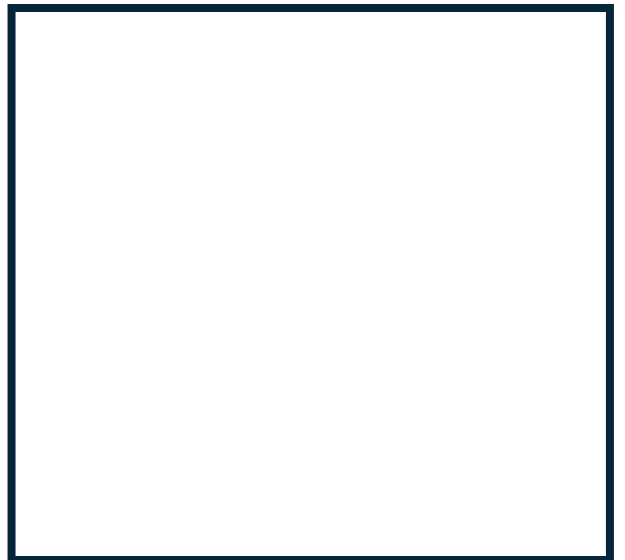
5. Draw and color three pictures of the artifact, one picture for the top, one for the bottom, and one for a side.



Picture of Top of Artifact



Picture of Bottom of Artifact



Picture of Side of Artifact



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Uses of the Artifact:

1. What do you think the artifact was used for?

2. Who do you think might have used the artifact?

3. When do you think the artifact was used?

4. Can you think of a modern item that works in a similar way?



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5. What does the artifact tell you about technology during that time?

6. What does the artifact tell you about the lives of the people who made or used it?

7. What are some questions you have about the artifact or things you want to learn about it?
