

Material Culture in the Classroom – Online Examples

You Be the Historian
Smithsonian Institute

<http://americanhistory.si.edu/hohr/springer>

"You Be the Historian" can be an excellent springboard for class discussion about primary and secondary sources and the historical process. The "what about you?" sections of the activity encourage students to think about the study of history at a personal level. What can future historians learn about your students, your school, your class, etc? What evidence are you leaving behind? The activity can also be used as an introduction (or supplemental material) to life in the late 1700s.

Teaching With Objects
Washington State Historical Society *History Lab*

http://www.historylab.org/curriculum/artifacts_toc.htm

"This unit focuses on ways in which teachers can use objects for effective classroom teaching. We examine and analyze artifacts of historical significance to develop an understanding of the artifact as a 'tool of the history trade' - a source of historical information. The methodology presented in this unit is based on the earlier models of material culture analysis presented by E. McClung Fleming (1974) and Jules Prown (1982)." The site includes a bibliographic list of Material Culture Classroom resources.

Material Culture: The Stuff of Life

Louisiana Voices: An Educators Guide to Exploring Our Communities and Traditions

http://www.louisianavoices.org/edu_unit7.html

"Folklorists use the term material culture to describe the vast array of traditionally made 'stuff in our lives, from afghans to Zulu coconuts, boats to whirligigs. Like 'reading' a landscape, 'reading' material culture makes students more aware of their surroundings and the importance of learning, teaching, and preserving traditional skills. They learn the value of traditional things and the worth of learning and passing on skills. They gain a deeper sense of place and of their communities' role in history and culture."

Decoding the Past: Archaeology in the Classroom

Smithsonian Institute

http://educate.si.edu/resources/lessons/art-to-zoo/arch!_cover.html

"Archaeology and its potential to increase our understanding of the distant and the recent human past have long been cornerstones of the research done at the Smithsonian Institution. The photographs of Smithsonian archaeologists and activities that follow encourage your students to think about how human-made objects and other indicators of human life can enrich our understanding of peoples both past and present."

Objects: Teaching in 3D

The Heritage Education Network (THEN)

<http://www.mtsu.edu/~then/Obiects>

"Using 'material culture' - things made by people - helps students to understand the world today and in the past. Objects offer a different kind of knowledge than written and oral sources. Objects, three dimensional forms of color and texture, may be expressions of need, practicality, art, customs, culture, religion, ingenuity, luxury, and humor."

How to Read a Graveyard

DoHistory.org

http://www.dohistory.org/on_your_ownltoolkit/graveyards.html

"Not all writing is on paper and not all written documents are found in libraries or attics. History abounds in graveyards. Peoples who buried their dead said much about themselves and those who had died. Once again, acute observation with the eye of a detective will yield evidence: the names of people buried here, their familial relationships, their religious beliefs, their social standings, their technological knowledge, their cultural symbols, and their artistic ideals."

Teaching With Historic Places

National Park Service

<http://www.cr.nps.gov/nr/twhp/index.htm>

"Teaching with Historic Places (TwHP) uses properties listed in the National Park Service's National Register of Historic Places to enliven history, social studies, geography, civics, and other subjects. TwHP has created a variety of products and activities that help teachers bring historic places into the classroom."