

## Discovering Objects

### Lesson Plan

Grades 5-8  
Elementary Cycle 3  
Secondary Cycle 1

#### Pedagogical Intent

Students learn to interpret museum artifacts, and learn about the history and cultures of aboriginal peoples and French Canadians, by studying objects from the Canadian Museum of Civilization's database, completing a Discovering Objects Activity Sheet, and making a presentation of artifacts.

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

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

**Themes:** Aboriginal history and cultures in Canada, French Canadian and Quebec history, Canadian history, diversity, multiculturalism, cultural groups in Canada, change and continuity, meeting needs, resources, colorful personalities

**Objectives and Competencies:** Use information, use information and communication technology, communicate appropriately; observe, describe, summarize, reason, use critical thinking, use creativity, cooperate with others, listen to others, use oral communication

**Duration:** 120-180 minutes

#### Web Resources:

- Marius Barbeau web module  
[www.civilization.ca/tresors/barbeau/index\\_e.html](http://www.civilization.ca/tresors/barbeau/index_e.html)

#### Optional Technical Equipment

- One computer with Internet access for each pair of students, needed for 60-90 minutes; if computers are available, the artifact information package for each student is not required
- Projector and computer with Internet access

#### Student Handout

For each student:

- An artifact information package from the [Selected Artifacts](#) list (Teacher Preparation, Step 4)
- [Discovering Objects Activity Sheet](#)

#### Teacher Preparation:

1. Ensure students have been introduced to the history and cultures of aboriginals and French-Canadians.
2. Visit the [Marius Barbeau web module](#). Select the Objects tab, and view the available categories of objects.
3. Familiarize yourself with the [Discovering Objects Activity Sheet](#).
4. Print out two or three copies of each artifact information package from the [Selected Artifacts](#) list below, to provide one package per student.



Medicine cabinet  
(78-180)

### Selected Artifacts



Rag rug  
(A-278)



Basket  
(III-H-344)



Maple sugar ladle  
(77-1102)



Medicine cabinet  
(78-180)



Jewelry box  
(79-693)



Scissors case  
(III-H-203)



Hackle  
(72-1309)



Toy worktable  
(77-907)

*Optional:* Consult the Marius Barbeau web module and select artifacts related to a subject you are exploring; make one copy of a record per pair of students, or save the records so that you can project them.

*Optional, if computers with Internet access are available:* Instead of printing out artifact records for students, allow each pair of students to select an artifact from the database.

### Procedure

- 1. Begin with a classroom discussion about museums and artifacts.** Have any students visited museums recently? Have they seen objects on display? Explain that these objects are artifacts. Although any object can be considered an artifact, objects in museum collections are special. Brainstorm with your class about what makes museum artifacts special. Some ideas: museums collect objects that are representative of specific cultures, places or events; they document them, store them in special conditions to preserve them, do research on them, and display them.
- 2. Introduce the artifact collection of the Canadian Museum of Civilization.** Explain that the Canadian Museum of Civilization has thousands of artifacts. They were made and used by aboriginals and French Canadians: everything from clothing to furniture to toys to tools. Surprisingly, most of these artifacts are not on display in the museum; that's because there is not enough space to display all of the museum's artifacts. Fortunately, many of them are available on a database on the museum's web site, and today, students will have the chance to look at some of these objects.
- 3. Introduce the artifact database records.** Provide an artifact information package to each student. Explain that records for eight different artifacts have been distributed. Each artifact is an object that was made and used by aboriginal peoples or French-Canadians. Ask students to look at the first page: the artifact record. Review the information available, and ensure students understand what each term means. Turn to the second page, and explain that it provides a larger view of the artifact as well as additional information.

**4. Introduce the [Discovering Objects Activity Sheet](#).**

Give students the Discovering Objects Activity Sheet and review the questions with them. Ask them to complete it individually, using the artifact information package. Because the database records only include information that was provided to the museum about each object, students won't find all information they need to answer each question. Students will have to use the information available.

**5. Ask students to compare their interpretations of the artifacts.** When students have completed their Activity Sheets, ask students sharing the same artifact to form groups. For example, all students with the jewelry

box form a group. Encourage students to share their answers to each question and to revise their answers if they wish.

**6. Students present their artifacts.** Ask each group to share its artifact with the class. Encourage students to share some of the questions they would like to ask the makers or owners of their artifacts.

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### Extension Ideas

**Object or Artifact?** Show the class an everyday object and a projection or picture of a museum artifact from the database. Ask students to brainstorm about the differences between an everyday object and a museum artifact.

**Create an Artifact Information Record:** Ask students to select a special object they have at home; they can photograph it or draw a picture of it. Using the Canadian Museum of Civilization artifact record as a guide, have them create an artifact information record of this object. Ask them to interview parents and others who have information to share about the object, and have students add the information they feel is necessary to fully convey the importance of the object.

**What Is It?** Assign the [What Is It? Activity Sheet](#) after the completion of this activity. The What Is It? Activity Sheet challenges students to identify unusual objects from the database and builds on their skills at using the database.

**English Language Arts:** Look at the origin of the word artifact: arte from Latin art, factum from facere to make.

**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 on the information card to assist them.

**English as a Second Language:** Ask students to identify an artifact that is similar to an object they use at home. Ask them to describe their household object, and explain what it is used for, how it is used, what it is made from, and who uses it. The class can ask questions and compare the artifact and object.

**Arts Education:** Ask each group to present an artifact and one or more related people in a manner of their choice. Brainstorm with them on the possible formats and subjects.