

Middle/High School Standards-Based Lesson Plan

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Content Area: High School Social Studies – World History

Introduction:

Have you ever looked at a description of an artifact in a museum and thought, *how could the archaeologist/historian/museum curator—anyone and everyone involved in the process of preparing the artifact for display—possibly have known that the artifact was used/worn in that way?* And perhaps you also thought *if an object in our current society were to be displayed in a museum in the future, would its description accurately reflect how we see the object today?*

In our current society, we have a tendency to receive the information presented in museums as the truth. If society feels the need to preserve the cultures of the past and the present, what is the appropriate way of doing so? Who gets to decide what information is shared and who holds museums and other culture-preserving institutions accountable? As the unit advances to address the institutional ways that cultural biases affect the lens in which society views other cultures, the politics of museums is a critical point of learning.

Context of Lesson within Unit:

This lesson will be one of many in a comprehensive unit that focuses on the ways in which societies preserve culture, both at the interpersonal level and also at the institutional level. The unit will address the overarching question of “What is the appropriate way of preserving culture?” in a local and cross-cultural context, and will begin by looking at the role of individuals (Tribal Elders, Greek Poets, Cultural Objects), moving to structured traditions (Lullabies, Stories, Textbooks), and concluding with a study of institutions (Museums, Schools, Field of Archaeology and History).

A potential culminating unit project is a display of current-day artifacts, chosen by students, for view in local museums or culture centers (or wherever the students decide will be “appropriate”). The display will showcase to a public audience the intentional decisions students have made to have individual objects both reflect and preserve our current culture.

Learning Outcomes/Standard(s) addressed:

Culturally Responsive Curriculum Standard A: A culturally responsive curriculum reinforces the integrity of the cultural knowledge that students bring with them.

Essential Questions:

Unit-wide EQ: What is the appropriate way of preserving culture?

Lesson-specific EQ: What is the significance of museums in our society?

Learning Goals (Students will be able to):

- Examine the role and purpose of museums in society in the past, present, and future
- See how cultural biases can affect the lens through which other cultures are viewed
- Think critically about the validity of information presented in museums

Assessment of student outcomes:

1. Completion of Worksheet A and Worksheet B.
2. Verbally checking for understanding/opinions
3. Exit Ticket

Student Self-Assessment/Engagement:

- Students will spend time at a museum containing indigenous artifacts, and discuss with group members about interesting observations.
- Students will engage in group/class-wide discussions
- Students will complete an in-class writing assignment

Instructional Strategies, Accommodations, and Student activities:

Time	Activity Description	Materials Needed
Option A: Full Day	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Students will be divided into assigned groups of 4-5 2. Students will go on a field trip to a museum or to an institution that contains a selection of objects in display for the purpose of preserving culture. (i.e. city halls, memorials, parks) 3. Students will walk with their respective groups and will be responsible for filling out Worksheet A that will ask students to observe and record various museum features as well as any areas of interest. Students should be encouraged to take photos/videos. 	Clipboards, Pencils, Cameras for those without cell phone cameras. Worksheet A
Option B: 10-15min.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Each group will be responsible for presenting to the class 1-2 observations they found to be interesting. <p>*Alternative options (time-dependent) include: letting students roam independently (will require more time for class-wide reporting), and assigning specific roles to the groups (scribe/recorder, photographer, guide) If the trip will take a full day, the group reporting will take place the following day and students can e-mail their photos to the instructor.</p>	
10min.	Once the students come together as a full class at a designated location, each group will report to the class 1-2 observations they found to be interesting.	Projector for showing student photographs (if the reporting is being done in a classroom setting on the following day)

<p>10-15min.</p>	<p>1. Instructor will show Image A - <i>Giinaruaq Mask</i> and have students guess its use, function, and potential museum description. Students will explain their responses based on their own background knowledge.</p> <p>2. Instructor will then show Image B – <i>Mask Description</i>. The description will show that there is no correct guess as to what the specific function of the mask was, and that a quote included in the description actually challenges the presence of the masks in the museum.</p> <p>3. Instructor will then show Image C – <i>Confederate Flag</i> and students will discuss how this object may be presented in a museum in the future.</p>	<p>Image A – <i>Giinaruaq Mask</i></p> <p>Image B – <i>Mask Description</i></p> <p>Image C – <i>Confederate Flag</i></p>
<p>20-30min.</p>	<p>1. Instructor will show Image D – <i>Police Baton</i> and students will be asked to fill out Worksheet B as a group (groups that have been assigned during the field trip). Worksheet B will have students come up with an idea for how the object shown in Image D may be presented in a museum, and will also have students come up with a display plaque as well.</p> <p>2. Students will share 1-2 observations with their group members.</p> <p>3. Students will work in their groups to finish Worksheet B.</p> <p>*Working as a group may provide many challenges, especially if there are polarizing opinions from students in the same group. This exercise will show how difficult it may be for groups of people to come to a conclusion on how to display an artifact in a museum in the professional realm.</p>	<p>Image D – <i>Police Baton</i> (be cautious about letting students see the image file name)</p> <p>Worksheet B</p>
<p>15-20min.</p>	<p>Groups will present to a class-wide audience of their display proposal for Image D. Groups will discuss their thought processes, challenges faced, and the intentionality of their decision-making.</p>	
<p>5min.</p>	<p>Students will come up with a title for a description panel of a museum display if the student themselves were to be the object in-display.</p> <p>*This short exit ticket will get students to think about how they might want to label their culminating unit project, as the objects students will choose will have personal significance.</p>	

Total Time:	
Option A: 1 Day + 1.5 hours	Option B: 2 hours

**Note: The museum trip should be split into two days, depending on variables such as size of museum, amount of time given, and classroom dynamics. A full day spent in the museum provides for further engagement.*

Materials & Technology:

Projector, Cameras, Clipboards, Pencils
 Images A, B, C & D
 Worksheets A & B

Additional Resources:

“Museums are Terrifyingly Inaccurate”

Link: <http://modernnotion.com/museums-are-terrifyingly-inaccurate/>

Description: Editorial article on how museums often mislabel their displays.

“Current Biology”

Link: <http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0960982215012282>

Description: Oxford University Study publication that the “Museums are terrifyingly inaccurate” article refers to.

“Museum Meanings”

Link: <https://www.routledge.com/Museum-Meanings/book-series/SE0349>

Description: Series of books that touch upon various subjects on museum politics, such as the affects of colonialism on the artifacts/museums, and museum accessibility issues.