



# Artifacts Tell Stories: Creating a First World War Museum in the Classroom

## Lesson Plan

### Description

Students will examine an artifact from the Canadian War Museum's *Canada and the First World War* Web site and analyze it for historical information. Using this and additional information gained from further research, students will write an exhibition label for their artifact. The class will then create a First World War exhibition by posting labeled pictures of their artifacts around the room.

### Recommended Grade Range

All provinces and territories except Quebec: Grades 7 to 12  
Quebec: Secondary 1 to 5

### Key Themes:

Historical thinking (analyzing, evaluating, extrapolating, inferring)

### Prerequisites

This lesson should follow previous discussions and lessons on the First World War.

### Objectives

Students will:

- Select an image of an artifact from the Canadian War Museum's *Canada and the First World War* Web site;
- Analyze their artifact using the Artifact Analysis Worksheet;
- Conduct further research on the artifact and its historical significance;
- Combine their analysis and research to create a label for their artifact. These will be displayed in a First World War exhibition created by the class.

### Estimated Time

5-6 class periods

### Materials Required

- Overhead transparencies of two artifacts from the Canadian War Museum's *Canada and the First World War* Web site – Objects and Photographs section (if you have the equipment, you could project these from the web site), or printouts of the artifacts to distribute to the class;
- Overhead projector (if not using printouts);
- Internet/computer lab access for 1-2 class periods;

## Artifacts Tell Stories: Creating a First World War Museum in the Classroom Lesson Plan

- Copies of the Artifact Analysis Worksheet.

### Lesson

#### **Introduction**

Show students an artifact from the First World War collection. Explain to students that historical artifacts are one of the ‘tools’ historians use to help us deepen our understanding of the past. Using the Artifact Analysis Worksheet as a guide, model an artifact analysis for the class using one of the artifacts you have chosen. You may want to repeat this with a second artifact, this time asking students to contribute ideas.

Now, tell students that they will be selecting an artifact for analysis as part of a First World War exhibit to be created by the class. Have students visit the Canadian War Museum’s *Canada and the First World War* Web site and select an artifact **or** distribute printouts of artifacts that you have selected. Each student should have a different artifact. Once students have their artifacts, hand out one copy of the Artifact Analysis Worksheet to each student.

*Think, Pair, Share:* Ask students to work individually to examine their artifacts and fill in the worksheet. Then pair up students and have them discuss their findings with each other. Students can add new insight about the artifact to their responses on the worksheet.

Once students have discussed their findings with their partner, ask each student to present their partner’s artifact and findings to the class. Encourage the class to ask questions and offer new ideas or insights about the artifact being presented.

Once students have analyzed their artifacts, have them conduct additional internet and library research on their artifact. Information on *Canada and the First World War* Web module can provide a starting point for students as they investigate the role their artifact played in Canada’s participation during the First World War. While they conduct their research, students should consider such questions as: *What role did my artifact play during the First World War? Was there any controversy surrounding it? Was it used at the front, or at home? Was this artifact new technology during the FWW? Is my artifact, or a similar one, still used today? Why has this artifact been kept?*

Once students have conducted their research, explain that they are now going to write a

## Artifacts Tell Stories: Creating a First World War Museum in the Classroom Lesson Plan

label for their artifact so that it can be displayed in the class museum. Have the class brainstorm a list of characteristics they think should be included in their labels. The list may include:

- *no grammar or spelling errors*
- *short sentences*
- *quick and easy to read*
- *answers questions the viewer might have about the artifact*
- *explains the historical context of the artifact*

If students require more guidance for writing their labels, provide them with the following guidelines:

### Label Content

1. Answers questions to viewer might have about the artifact;
2. Draws the viewer's attention to one interesting detail about the artifact;
3. Explains the historical context of the artifact;
4. Explains how the artifact might be useful (or not) today.

### Label Format

1. Include a short title to identify your artifact;
2. Write a short paragraph about your artifact;
3. Make sure your sentences are short and clear;
4. Make your label quick and easy to read;
5. Make sure that there are no grammar or spelling errors.

Have students write labels for their artifacts. Students should incorporate information they have gathered from examining the artifact and conducting further research on its role in the First World War. Have students post their artifacts and labels around the classroom, and invite another class to view the exhibit. Students should stand beside their artifacts and be prepared to answer questions from museum visitors.

### Conclusion

Once students have wrapped up their exhibit, ask the class to consider what they have learned by examining historical artifacts. What can artifacts tell us that other artifacts cannot?



## **Artifacts Tell Stories: Creating a First World War Museum in the Classroom Lesson Plan**

### **Assessment:**

- Collect the analysis worksheets completed by students. Assign marks based on the student's ability to provide detailed analyses of their artifact.
- Mark the labels attached to the artifacts selected by students. Labels should follow the format agreed upon by the class, and should utilize the information the student has gathered through both examining the artifact and conducting further research.

### **Extension Activities:**

- Students could expand their museum exhibit by incorporating photographs and archival documents. Students could analyze these documents by completing the Primary Sources Worksheet and the Photograph Analysis Worksheet available in the lesson plan section.
- Ask students to write a story about the person who owned their artifact. Students should incorporate information they have gathered through their close analysis of the artifact and their research.
- Have students bring an artifact from home. Ask them to consider what someone 90 years from now could learn from the artifact. Would they know what it was for? What would they be able to tell about its owner?