

HISTORICAL ANALYSIS: OBJECTS TELL STORIES



This lesson will introduce students to the skills of object observation and analysis while considering how historical objects tell stories about people and events from the past.

This activity is excerpted from Unit 1 of the *Through Their Eyes: Major Causes and Events of the American Revolution Teacher Resource Guide*. To see the full lesson and all supporting materials, visit: www.amrevmuseum.org/teacher-resource-guides

CONTEXT

Museum curators are responsible for choosing historical objects to display that help them tell stories about people and events from long ago. They conduct careful observations and analysis of these objects to learn more about them and to help others understand them through contemporary connections.

AIMS/OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to:

- Observe and analyze a historical object
- Draw comparisons between historical objects and contemporary ones

MATERIALS

Primary Sources:

Photograph: Triphena Bowl
(Museum of the American Revolution)

Other Resources:

Student Response Worksheet

PROCEDURES

- First, instruct students to examine the image of the Triphena Bowl on the Primary Source Card, working individually, with a classmate or with an adult. While conducting their examination and analysis, students should use the Student Response Worksheet to gather information and guide their thinking, answering questions such as: What material is this object made of? What markings or decorations are on it? Does this object remind you of anything from your own life? Etc.
- Next, if working in pairs or with an adult, have students share their responses, discussing the reasoning that informed their analysis of the object.
- Using the Student Response Worksheet, ask students to reflect on why they think the object was put into the Museum's collection. What sorts of stories might this object tell about the past?
- After completing their reflection on the Triphena Bowl, have students read the description accompanying it on the Primary Source Card and record responses to the following questions on their worksheet: What other sorts of objects might you expect to see at the Museum of the American Revolution? What kinds of stories do you think the Museum tells?
- Finally, have students submit their Student Response Worksheets for review.

ART EXTENSION

Students can use the Museum's [Coloring book](#) to color in an image of the Triphena Bowl. They can attempt to recreate this interesting object with the same color scheme or use their own creativity to give it a colorful make-over.

RESEARCH EXTENSION

Students can be instructed to select a different object from the Museum of the American Revolution's [Digital Museum Collection](#) or [Virtual Museum](#) for observation and analysis. The Object Analysis Guide incorporated into the Student Response Worksheet can be utilized again to guide their investigation. Students can then share their findings with an adult or classmates and discuss both how it connects to the Triphena Bowl and the story of the American Revolution, and what, if any, connections this object has to their lives today.