

TRAVELER'S TRUNK

Grade Level: 3 to 5

IN THIS LESSON

Students will analyze and interpret artifacts from the 1920s to learn about life during the Great Migration and will construct their own meaning and ideas about the history that surrounds us.

OBJECTIVES

- To develop habits of historical inquiry by analyzing visual evidence
- To learn how to interpret visual information and improve visual literacy
- To develop language skills and thought processes while working with objects

ILLINOIS LEARNING STANDARDS

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

Goal 3: Write to communicate for a variety of purposes.

Goal 4: Listen and speak effectively in a variety of situations.

Goal 5: Use the language arts to acquire, assess, and communicate information.

SOCIAL SCIENCE

Goal 16: Understand events, trends, individuals, and movements shaping the history of Illinois, the United States, and other nations.

SUGGESTED ARTIFACTS

Marcel hair iron, c. 1918

Trunk, c. 1920s

Feather hair pin, c. 1920s

Faux pearls or other costume jewelry

Tin Christmas ornament

Diary, c. 1920s

ADDITIONAL MATERIALS

Artifact Analysis worksheets (<http://www.greatchicagostories.com/classroom/artifact.php>)

A *Bronzeville Story* background information (<http://www.greatchicagostories.com/bronzeville/background.php>)

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ACTIVITY

1. Review with students background information about the Great Migration from the Chicago History Museum's *Great Chicago Stories* website.
2. Explain to students that they will use artifacts to study the history of Chicago. Discuss how artifacts can inform people today about life in the past.
3. Present the artifact kit to students, ideally in some kind of fun container such as an old trunk or suitcase.
4. Divide students into small groups and give each of them an artifact. Discuss a historian's job and tell students that this is their opportunity to be a historian.
5. Model the process of "reading" the artifact with students. First describe the physical qualities of the object. What is it made of? Who made the object and why? Are objects like this still used today? If so, how have they changed or stayed the same? Lead students in the practice of using good descriptive adjectives.
6. Distribute Artifact Analysis worksheets for each group to complete.
7. When the worksheets are complete, have students share their analysis with the class and make a prediction about who owned the object.

EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

Have students explore the paintings of Jacob Lawrence in his book *The Great Migration*.

Essay assignment: Have students imagine they are moving to a new city and can only bring five things with them. What would they bring and why?