

Thinking about Exhibits

Analysis of an Exhibit

Study the exhibit, then jot down your thoughts about the following questions:

What has been included?

What can you think of that has not been included?

How do you think the items were selected?

How does their placement create an emphasis? Look at where your eyes are drawn in the exhibit.

What narratives are created? What narratives are present, but not emphasized?
Whose stories are being told?

How might different groups display the artifacts or items differently?

What relationships do you see to institutions of power?

A museum for my community – after a visit to a museum

Aim of the activity: To plan a museum that represents your local community, including selecting the most important objects and stories, and deciding how to group them.

This is a classroom activity, which takes place after a visit to a museum. Summarize as a group some of the things you have already discussed:

- Why families value special objects
 - How objects can have different meanings
 - Why objects are important to a community
 - How objects can be divided into different categories
 - How museums collect and preserve objects
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- In small groups, learners will design their own museum for their community.
 - Give each group a 'museum layout' worksheet showing four display cases
They need to decide what will go in each of these cases.
 - First decide on your definition of 'local community'. Will your museum be about your town, your local area, your street, your road? Will it focus on a particular ethnic group?
 - Think about categories for your cases. Remember, you could divide the objects into categories based on time period, material, type of object, event, subject, or anything else you can think of.
 - Label each of the four cases with the category you have chosen for that case.
 - Now choose some objects for each case. What are the most important objects to tell people about each of your categories? What objects will have a special meaning for local people? Work as a team to draw your objects, or photograph them, or cut images out of magazines and laminate them.
 - What are the stories each object has to tell? What are the most important things you need to say about each object? Work as a team to write labels for each object, giving more information.
 - Finally – what else could you put in each case? For example, pictures, photographs, sound. Use your memories or images of cases at the museum to inspire you.

