



Lesson Plan: Understanding the Civil War through Museum Artifacts

Grade Level: All Ages

Subject: U.S. History

Duration: Pre-Tour, Tour, & Post-Tour

Iowa Core Standards:

High School: SS.H.1.9-12: Analyze how historical events and developments have shaped the present and future., **SS.H.2.9-12:** Analyze the historical significance of key individuals and groups., **SS.H.4.9-12:** Analyze how historical events have influenced and been influenced by societal values and beliefs.

Middle School: SS.H.1.6-8: Analyze how historical events and developments have shaped the present and future., **SS.H.2.6-8:** Identify and describe the significance of key individuals and events., **SS.H.4.6-8:** Explain how historical events have influenced and been influenced by societal values and beliefs.

Upper Elementary: SS.H.1.3-5: Understand how historical events and people shape the present., **SS.H.2.3-5:** Identify important people, places, and events from the past., **SS.H.4.3-5:** Describe how historical events and people have influenced and been influenced by societal values.

Objective: Students will examine Civil War artifacts at the museum to understand their historical significance, analyze key figures and events, and evaluate the war's impact on American society and its legacy.

Materials Needed:

- Notebooks and pens/pencils
 - KWL Chart (Know, Want to Know, Learned)
 - Smartphone for taking notes/photos (if permitted)
 - Civil War artifacts
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1. Introduction (15 minutes)

Warm-Up Activity: KWL Chart

- **Objective:** Activate prior knowledge and set learning goals.
- **Instructions:** Begin with a whole-class discussion. Create a KWL chart on the board or a digital platform.
 - **K (Know):** Prompt students to share what they know about the Civil War. Record their responses, encouraging them to think about causes, key figures, battles, and outcomes.
 - **W (Want to Know):** Have students voice questions or topics they are curious about regarding the Civil War artifacts they will see. This could include specific battles, personal stories, or the impact of the war on different communities.

Discuss Objectives: Clearly outline the lesson goals. Explain that students will:

- Explore how Civil War artifacts contribute to our understanding of historical events and figures.
- Analyze the significance of these artifacts in the context of American society during and after the Civil War.

2. Museum Visit and Artifact Exploration (45 minutes)

Tour of Hoyt Sherman Place

- **Objective:** Engage with historical artifacts and deepen understanding through exploration.
- **Instructions:** Divide the class into small groups (3-4 students each) and provide each group with a specific Civil War artifact or a collection of related artifacts (e.g., uniforms, letters, weaponry, photographs).

Artifact Analysis

- **Examine Artifacts:** Instruct groups to explore their assigned artifacts using guided prompts:
 - What is the artifact, and what was its purpose?
 - What does it reveal about the daily life and struggles of people during the Civil War?
 - How does this artifact connect to significant events or notable figures from the war?
 - Encourage students to discuss among themselves and brainstorm insights based on their observations.

Take Notes/Photos

- Each group should document their findings by taking notes and photos (without flash). Encourage them to focus on:
 - Descriptions of the artifacts.
 - Ideas and thoughts sparked by their observations.

3. Group Discussion and Analysis (20 minutes)

Group Discussion

- **Share Findings:** After the museum visit, reconvene as a class. Each group will present their findings, emphasizing the significance of their artifacts.
- **Discuss Key Figures and Events:** Use the artifacts as a springboard to discuss important Civil War figures (e.g., Abraham Lincoln, Ulysses S. Grant, Harriet Tubman) and major events (e.g., the Battle of Gettysburg, the signing of the Emancipation Proclamation).

Analyze Impact

- Facilitate a discussion on how the artifacts illuminate broader historical narratives and societal changes. Questions to consider:
 - How did the war alter perceptions of freedom and rights?
 - What were the economic, social, and political impacts of the Civil War that are reflected in the artifacts?

4. Reflection and Synthesis (10 minutes)

Complete KWL Chart

- **L (Learned):** Have students fill out the "L" section of the KWL chart. Prompt them to reflect on:
 - New insights gained from the museum visit.
 - Specific examples of how artifacts enhance our understanding of the Civil War.

Class Reflection: Summarize key points discussed, emphasizing how examining artifacts provides a tangible connection to history. Encourage students to consider:

- How artifacts serve as a bridge to the past.
- The importance of preserving historical objects for future generations.

5. Extension Activities

Research Project

- Assign students to choose a specific Civil War artifact or figure for a deeper research project. They can present their findings through a written report, digital presentation, or creative project (e.g., a historical diary from the perspective of an artifact).

Activity: Long-Term Effects Discussion

- As a follow-up, lead a class discussion on the long-term effects of the Civil War on American culture, politics, and social structures. Use insights from the museum visit and additional resources to explore:
 - Changes in laws and policies (e.g., Reconstruction, civil rights).
 - Cultural shifts, including art, literature, and public memory of the Civil War.
 - The ongoing legacy of the war in contemporary societies.

Traveling Artifacts:

- Personal Memoirs of Ulysses S. Grant
- Personal Memoirs of General William T. Sherman
- Personal Memoirs of P.H. Sheridan
- Personal Memoirs of Robert E. Lee
- McClellan's Own Story
- Reminiscences of Winfield Scott Hancock
- Discharge Papers
- Recruit Examination Papers
- Letter from Confederate Button Supplier
- 1865 Check
- Photo of Fort McHenry
- Civil War Money
- Breast Plates
- Horace Greeley Article in the New York Tribune
- Scovil Hoe
- Satchel
- Confederate letter

Permanent Artifacts:

- Major SMH Byers Portrait
- Major Hoyt Sherman Portrait
- "The Tinker"
- "Drawing Room at St. James Palace"
- Hoyt Family Photograph
- *The Lincolns: Target for Controversy*
- *Total Peace: What Makes War*
- *Out of the Clouds*
- *The Bells of Capistrano*
- *In Acadia and Other Poems*
- *Twenty Years in Europe*
- *With Fire & Sword*
- *In Memoriam: General William T. Tecumseh Sherman*
- *The Happy Isles and Other Poems*
- *Poems of SMH Byers*
- *The Honeymoon and Other Poems*
- *March to the Sea*