

The Articulate Object....

Every object has many stories to tell. Knowing a few questions to ask in front of a work of art or artifact is an effective way to begin to unlock these stories. Below are a sequence of introductory questions to focus attention first on the physical object itself. From very careful observation of an object, we can gradually move our attention from objective observation to critical analysis and interpretation.

- To help guide observation, consider the following questions:

What material/s is your object made of?

When was it made?

What details on the object itself suggests this?

Any signs of the technology used in its creation?

Who made this object? How do you know?

Are there physical clues to how it was originally used?

Are there signs of wear? What are they?

How big is your object?

Is size important to you in understanding how this object was originally used or valued?

Any distinguishing details?

Decorative elements?

Is there any evident purpose for these elements?

- Draw on your own knowledge and/or experience and jot down any ideas and or associations you might have with this object.

- What additional information beyond what is physically visible on the work would be helpful to you in understanding this piece?

- Using the Articulate Object in the classroom:

Historical and cultural context: Consider how this object might be used to introduce an economic issue.

A religious and/or cultural question

A political issue

Story telling and narrative: What are the stories that this object might tell?

Analytical thinking and skill building: Sorting, classifying and sequencing the spoons

Creation: Design a spoon to eat a favorite food. How will characteristics of the food determine the materials, design, size, etc. of your spoon?



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