



You Be the Curator

Duration: 1-2 hours | **Overview:** Students will practice curating their own museum exhibit using objects from a museum catalogue or another public history site.

Materials:

- [You Be the Curator](#) student activity handout
 - An online museum catalogue or artifacts that connect to a specific [topic](#) or [time period](#) that are accessible on a public history site's website or database.
- OR
- Use the [images and descriptions](#) of artifacts from the Virginia Museum of History & Culture's You Be the Curator activity on the American Revolution

Steps:

Before the Activity:

1. Identify the topic and collection of artifacts students will use for this activity.
2. Distribute the [You Be the Curator handout](#) and divide students into small groups, or ask students to work on this activity individually. Tell them the topic they will be working on today, and ask them to write it on the activity doc.
3. Ask students to "Think, Pair, Share" Part 1 of the activity
 - a. Note: A curator tells stories through the objects and artifacts they choose to display and write about in museum exhibitions. The art of curation is inherently inquiry-driven and argumentative, which is why practicing the art of curation in social studies courses teaches students authentic historical thinking skills!
 - b. Ask students to share questions that they have about the topic you'll be working with today.

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**During the Activity:**

1. Direct students to the online object/artifact collection you will be working with for the activity, and tell students that today they will practice curating and exhibit on the collection's topic using Part 2 of the You Be the Curator handout.
2. Their exhibit should include:
 - a. A specific topic or focus, i.e. if the artifact collection contains items from the American Revolution, students might choose to make their exhibit about the experiences of people of color in the Revolution.
 - b. An exhibition overview that describes the exhibit's focus & includes a thesis/claim that is based on the exhibit's chosen artifacts.
 - c. Only 5 objects/artifacts from the larger collection.
 - d. Images of the objects.
 - e. Object labels that describe the object and explain how it connects to the exhibit's central thesis/claim.
3. For students who need a little more support or want an idea of what their final product should look like, direct them to [the example](#) created by the Virginia Museum of History & Culture.

After the Activity:

1. Ask students to present their exhibits or print them and post them around the room, so that students can take a gallery walk tour of the exhibits.
2. Reflect:
 - a. What was difficult about this activity?
 - b. Each group/person had a different set of artifacts and claims for their exhibits, but we all used the same collection of objects. What does this tell you about the curation process?

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