

Being a Museum Curator

Check out these examples of jobs that museum curators have!

Learning About New Artifacts That Arrive at a Museum

When a museum gets new artifacts, a curator is in charge of learning about them! A curator will look at the artifacts up close. Then, a curator will write take pictures of the artifact and write a report on it. The report will talk about where and when the artifact was found, what materials the artifact is made of, and any other details the curator might know. Examples of other details are what civilization the artifact came from, what it was used for, and how old the artifact is.



Working With Curators At Other Museums

If a curator wants to borrow an artifact from another museum, he or she has to talk with the curator who works there! The curators have to decide together how long the museum can borrow an artifact.



Answering Emails From the Public

Sometimes, people will email a curator with questions about an exhibit!



Checking Labels That Will Go Next To Artifacts

Curators check to make sure labels for artifacts are correct. This means that they check to make sure there aren't any spelling mistakes. They also make sure that the information is correct.



Organizing Special Events and Programs

Museum curators help organize events at a museum for kids and adults. For example, a curator might organize an event called "Unearthing Artifacts." Kids can come to the museum and learn about techniques used to safely remove artifacts from the ground. Kids will even get a chance to practice what they have learned by participating in a fake archaeological dig!



List of Artifacts

Circle two artifacts that you want to include in your exhibit.

Artifact #1

- This is an Apache shield. A shield is an object held by hand to protect a person.
- The shield was used to protect Apache warriors from arrows and sometimes even bullets!
- This shield was made of rawhide. A red flannel border was sewn around it. Blue and black paint were applied with feathers attached towards the bottom of the shield.
- This shield was used during the Indian Wars fought in the Arizona Territory during the period 1862 to 1886.



<https://amhistory.si.edu/militaryhistory/collection/object.asp?ID=684&back=1>

Artifact #2

- This is a metal bucket used to carry copper ore.
- It was used by miners working in the copper mines of Arizona.
- The copper ore was removed by miners using tools to break up the ore into pieces.
- The pieces were then placed in the bucket to be carried out.



<https://www.worthpoint.com/worthopedia/ore-bucket-early-arizona-copper-mine-478730568>

Artifact #3

- These are different tools used by a Mexican seamstress who lived in Tucson. A seamstress is someone who sews and repairs clothing for a living. During this period, most clothing was sewn by hand.
- The items include a pin holder made of animal bone, a thimble and two dressmaker pins.
- The pins would be kept in the pin holder.
- This woman came to the Arizona Territory to work and raise her family.



<https://desert.com/jacome/?search=mexican>

Artifact #4

- This is a pair of cowboy cuffs.
- They are made of leather and have a design stamped into the leather.
- The cuffs fit around the wrists of the cowboy and had laces that tied the cuff together.
- The cuffs helped protect the wrists from being injured when roping cattle.
- They also protected the cowboy's shirt cuffs from being torn.



<http://theantiquesalmanac.com/ridingtherangewithcowboycollectibles.htm>

Artifact #5

- These are ceramic bowls and a spoon discovered by archaeologists.
- These artifacts were discovered in an area where Chinese immigrants lived.
- The bowls and spoon were used for eating and meal preparation.
- Many Chinese came to the Arizona Territory to work as gardeners.
- They also owned restaurants and laundries in the Arizona Territory.



<https://desert.com/chinese-gardeners/?search=mexican>

Information on the Arizona Territory

Apache Wars

- There were a number of conflicts between the United States Army and the Apache Indians. They were fought in the Arizona Territory from 1863 to 1886.
- The event was known as the Apache Wars.
- As more American settlers came into the territory, the Apache Indians tried to stop them.
- This was because Americans were settling on lands that the Apache used for hunting. This made it more difficult for the Apache to live.
- Geronimo was among the most famous Apache warriors who fought against the Army.
- In 1886, the Apache were defeated and many Apache members were moved to reservations in the Arizona Territory.

Copper Mining

- Copper mining continued to grow during the period of the Arizona Territory.
- By 1864, almost 25 percent of the territory population were young men working as miners.
- During the time of the Arizona Territory, copper mining was the most important part of the territorial economy.
- By the 1870s, more metals were being mined in Arizona. Zinc, lead, silver and gold ore were being mined in addition to copper.
- The growth of copper mines helped to grow many new towns and cities in the territory because people came to the area to work in the mines or in businesses that provided services to the miners. For example, general stores sold equipment and supplies to miners, while restaurants provided meals.
- The arrival of railroads to the Arizona Territory also helped the mining industry to grow. This was because it was easier to ship copper to other places in the United States.

Mexican Settlements

- Mexicans had been in the Arizona Territory since the 1700s when the land belonged to Mexico.
- During the early territorial period, there were more Mexicans living in the Arizona Territory than Americans.
- Because there were more Mexicans, the money used in the territory was Mexican!
- Many Mexicans worked in mining and ranching. However the growing threat of Apache attacks forced many Mexicans to leave.
- The city of Tucson had one the largest Mexican communities in southern Arizona.

Cowboys and Ranching

- After the Civil War, Texans came to Arizona to establish ranches.
- From 1873 to 1891, the number of cattle in the territory grew from 40,000 to 1.5 million.
- The invention of the windmill helped cattle ranchers. The windmill provided power to pump water from below ground for cattle to drink.
- The building of the railroad also helped ranching in the territory. The railroads helped carry cattle to markets to be sold as beef to stores and restaurants.

Chinese Immigrants

- The first Chinese immigrants came to the Arizona Territory during the 1870s to work on the railroad.
- Many Chinese immigrants settled in Tucson where they opened restaurants, groceries and laundries.
- Other Chinese immigrants worked in the copper mines.
- Many Chinese and Hispanic people worked together. For example, the Chinese might rent land or a building from a Hispanic to open a business.
- Some Chinese immigrants became gardeners. They grew fresh produce that was sold to restaurants and to people.
- Like the Hispanics, the Chinese were discriminated against by white Americans.

Key to Identify Artifacts

Artifact Number	Artifact Name	Related Battle
1	Shield	Apache Wars
2	Metal Bucket	Copper Mining
3	Sewing Kit	Mexican Settlement
4	Leather Cuffs	Cowboys / Ranching
5	Spoon and Bowls	Chinese Immigrants

Creating Labels

Name of Museum Curator: _____

Name of Artifact: _____

Observations about the artifact (color, shape, texture, etc.):

Part of the time period the artifact is associated with: _____

Why is this artifact important to this time period?

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Name of Artifact: _____

Observations about the artifact (color, shape, texture, etc.):

Part of the time period the artifact is associated with: _____

Why is this artifact important to this time period?

Setting Up an Exhibit

Step 1: Choose artifacts

- Look through the list of artifacts.
 - Choose two you would like to include in your exhibit.
 - Match the artifact up with the part of the time period you think it came from and fill the information out below:
- **Artifact I am choosing:** _____ **Time Period I think it is from:** _____
- **Artifact I am choosing:** _____ **Time Period I think it is from:** _____
- Have your teacher check your work. If you matched the artifacts correctly, move onto the next step. If not, try again.

Step 2: Create Replicas of the Artifacts

- Gather art supplies and building materials from your teacher. Use the supplies to create a replica of each of the artifacts.

Step 3: Create Labels for your Artifacts

- Use the "Creating Labels" handout to create a museum label for each of the artifacts you have created.

Step 4: Create an Exhibit Sign

- Use construction paper and art supplies to create an exhibit sign that will tell museum visitors about your exhibit. The sign should include the following:
 - The name of the exhibit
 - The artifacts that can be found in the exhibit
 - The name of the museum curator(s) that designed the exhibit
 - Color

Step 5: Set Up Your Exhibit

You will now use all of the pieces of your exhibit you have created to arrange a museum exhibit.

- Find a space in the classroom to set up your exhibit.
- Include both artifacts, their labels, and your exhibit sign.
- Extra time? Add decorations or other flair to the exhibit.

Step 6: Visit Another Museum

Once all exhibits are set up, use the "Going to a Museum Handout" to visit another exhibit and evaluate that exhibit.

Going to A Museum

Name of Museum Curator: _____

Rate the exhibit on the following traits: (circle your answer)

- The exhibit had a clear sign that introduced the exhibit.

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

- There were two clearly labeled artifacts in the exhibit.

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

- The information included on the signs was correct.

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

- The exhibit was neat, organized, and interesting to look at.

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

- I learned about the time period from the exhibit.

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

- What was the best part of the exhibit?

- What is one thing that could be improved in the exhibit?