



STILL MAKING HISTORY.

Artifacts Alive! at home

Learning Objectives

- Be able to identify what makes an object an artifact
- Know that objects tell stories and Museums use them to preserve and share stories
- Learn lesser-known stories from Boulder's history

Instructions for Teachers and Parents

Thank you for supporting the Museum of Boulder by using this curriculum! The Artifacts Alive! program was created in conjunction with the Archive 75 exhibit, which opened on October 10, 2019, the 75th anniversary of the Museum's founding. Even though the Museum is closed, we still want people to be able to enjoy this unique and engaging exhibit.

The main activity in this program encourages children to act out the stories behind 5 objects from the exhibit. The objects vary in age, modern use, and historical significance, but they all explore a facet of Boulder's history. We have provided the scripts, but consider them only a starting point. The activity can be as simple as assigning each child a part and having them act it out as they read through, miming the various actions and objects used. Or you can put together the optional costumes and props and make a show out of it. Some scripts may have more parts than there are kids, and so kids will have to play multiple parts. Or there may be too few parts, so some kids will have to play the audience. No matter what, get creative and have fun! This has been one of our most popular school programs, so we're excited to convert it to an at-home activity so more people use it to learn about local history.

After doing the program, we'd love to hear any feedback you have. Go to tinyurl.com/artifactsalive to share it. We also always love to see photos of you doing the activities! Post a pic and tag us @MuseumOfBoulder.

Time Estimate

25 minutes: Read through the material and scripts together.

1 hour: Assign parts, gather costumes and props, and give students time to rehearse before performing.

1.5 hours: Have students create an actual Museum of You (in the Introduction) either by drawing their ideas or gathering items from around the house and presenting their final



STILL MAKING HISTORY.

project. Assign parts and give students time to rehearse before performing.

Longer: Encourage students to make it a full production by memorizing their lines, gathering costumes and props, and then performing the skits for the rest of the household or class.

Introduction

This program is based on the Museum of Boulder's Archive 75 exhibit, open through June 14. This exhibit features 75 artifacts from the Museum's collection, in celebration of our 75th anniversary since the Boulder Historical Society was founded in 1944. Some of these objects are centuries old, while some were made just a few years ago. All of them tell a story about Boulder and the people who have lived here.

What is an artifact?

At the Museum of Boulder, almost every exhibit puts objects on display, and we call them **artifacts**. Have you heard this word before? What is an artifact?

You may have said it's something that's old, something that tells us about history, or something that we found. These are all right, but they're not the only thing that makes an object an artifact. At the Museum, we define an artifact as: **an object that tells us about people**. That's it! Objects can tell us lots of different things about the people who made or used it, and we want to do everything we can to learn the stories that artifacts have to tell. With that in mind, which of the following are artifacts?

An arrowhead

An old shoe on the side of the road

A branch

The answer is...all of them could be artifacts! An **arrowhead** tells us about what kind of tools people had available, what kind of food they ate, where they lived, and potentially how far they roamed. An **old shoe** might seem like trash, but we can actually learn a lot about who wore it. A shoe can tell us how big their feet were, how tall they were, if they were a child or an adult, if they played any sports, and more. A **branch** could just be a branch, which is useful to scientists who study trees, but not as helpful to us at the Museum. But what if the branch was sharpened to a point to make a weapon, or used to build a shelter? Then the branch is part of a larger story and might be able to tell us about the people who shaped it and used it.



STILL MAKING HISTORY.

The Museum of You

The artifacts from the Archive 75 exhibit that you'll learn about in this program all tell a story about Boulder. Curators at the Museum chose them from our collection of many artifacts to highlight different parts of Boulder's history. **If you were making a museum or exhibit all about you, what would you include?** What objects would tell visitors the story of you? Maybe your favorite stuffed animal, a photo of your family, equipment from the sport you play, or a piece of clothing you wear a lot. All of these things may just seem like a normal part of your life to you, but to someone at a museum, they become artifacts that can tell us about you, your life, and what you liked.

Activity #1 - Close Looking

How exactly do artifacts tell us about people? We have to study them to get clues about what the object is made of, its purpose, and what kind of people would have used it. This means we practice something called "close looking." This is just what it sounds like: looking at an object closely so that we notice details that we may not have seen when we first glanced at it.

In a separate download, there are accompanying photos and text panels for the artifacts. For each artifact, start by examining the photo. Answer the following questions to the best of your ability:

What is this object?

What is this made of?

What is it used for?

Who made it?

How was it made?

How old do you think it is?

Is something like this object still used today?

If so, how has it changed?

If not, what has replaced it?

Now, read the text panel that goes along with the artifact. What did you get right? What surprised you? Sometimes it's easy to tell an object's story just from looking at it. Other times, historians have to do research like reading old journals, studying the materials,



STILL MAKING HISTORY.

looking at old photographs, and talking to people who may have used a similar object to figure out the significance of an artifact.

Activity #2 - History Skits

At a museum, we use artifacts to tell stories. But there are lots of ways to tell a story, and one of these ways is through acting in plays. So we're going to act out the stories behind 5 artifacts in the exhibit to learn more about the people who made or used each object.