

## *Artifacts From Our Future Mavericks*

### **Examining Personal Objects as to How Future Historians May Examine Our Life and Times**

#### **Introduction**

Students need to understand that historical thinking is a process whereby students are challenged to rethink assumptions about the past and to re-imagine both the present and the future. Historical thinking allows students to develop a sense of time and place to help define their identities. It helps students to approach issues with an inquiring mind and exercise sound judgment when presented with new information or a new perspective. What is a primary historical source? How do historians examine primary historical sources? How will I be remembered in the future? How do I want to be remembered?

#### **Project Explanation**

In this project, students will develop an appreciation of critical and creative thinking as they undertake the historical process of examining personal “primary historical sources”. They will bring to school objects, photos, documents or even maps that have a great deal of significance for them or their families. They will then approach their objects in the same manner a Glenbow Museum historian would by conducting an object-based inquiry.

#### **Alberta Social Studies Curriculum Unit Connections**

##### **Grade Four - Alberta: The Land, Histories and Stories**

4.2 The Stories, Histories and People of Alberta  
4.S.2 develop skills of historical thinking

##### **Grade Five - Canada: The Land, Histories and Stories**

5.2 Histories and Stories of Ways of Life in Canada  
5.S.2 develop skills of historical thinking

##### **Grade Six**

6.S.2 develop skills of historical thinking

##### **Grade Seven**

7.S.2 develop skills of historical thinking

## Materials and Resources Needed

- *Mavericks: An Incurable History of Alberta* - Character Biographies and Online Artifacts  
<http://www.glenbow.org/mavericks>
- Personal "Primary Historical Artifacts" each student brings from home
- Artifact-Based Inquiry Process (from *Mavericks: An Incurable History of Alberta*)
- Photograph-Based Inquiry Process (from *Mavericks: An Incurable History of Alberta*)
- Document-Based Inquiry Process (from *Mavericks: An Incurable History of Alberta*)
- Map-Based Inquiry Process (from *Mavericks: An Incurable History of Alberta*)

## Procedures

Students will undertake an object-based inquiry approach based on the scenario that they are historians from 2105 (Alberta's Bi-Centennial) examining primary historical sources left behind by the students in our time period. What will be an artifact / photograph / document / map that would show important aspects about you as a future Alberta Maverick? What would you like to see on display at the Glenbow for future students to see? Why will you be the next Alberta Maverick? What will you accomplish in your lifetime?

A few days before you would like to begin the project, ask students to bring in an object (or a few) that is very important to their family or to themselves and tells a great deal about who they are as a person. It may be an artifact, a photograph, a document, or even a map.

To introduce the project, introduce Eric Harvey, the man who established the Glenbow Museum in Calgary, by using the *Mavericks: An Incurable History of Alberta* site. Why would he act in such a generous manner for the people of Calgary and Alberta? Why would we want to have "collections" of old letters, diaries, and objects in a museum? How would Calgary be different if we did not have the Glenbow museum? The Calgary Zoo? Heritage Park?

Primary sources are materials that view history from a first-hand, up-close perspective. A diary of a person's life that tells their accomplishments, activities, events and feelings is a "primary historical source", whereas a book written by another author that describes their life is referred to as a "secondary historical source". Primary sources can include artifacts such as clothing, tools, weapons, art, pottery, cookware, and other implements. They can be written documents such as letters, diaries, newspaper articles, poetry, and memos. They can also be oral family stories, anecdotes, or interviews, as well as images such as photographs, artworks, and video. Primary sources are often very personal to the historical figure, and may have been mementos, keepsakes, and even family heirlooms that have been passed down from generation to generation. They

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may also be practical objects that were important to the person for day-to-day life, such as a special tool. These primary sources can reveal a great deal about the historical figure, their day-to-day life, their accomplishments, their thoughts, values, and feelings, and even about their culture or society in general. Students will examine the primary sources, asking themselves “Why was this worth saving?” and “What does it tell us?”

In pairs or small groups, the students will use the “primary sources” they have brought to work through the “Primary Sources Inquiry Process Questions” that pertain to that primary source. The questions are included in the following links:

- **Artifact-Based Inquiry**  
Examination of primary resource artifacts using journaling and questioning strategies
- **Photograph-Based Inquiry**  
Examination of primary resource photographs using journaling and questioning strategies
- **Document-Based Inquiry**  
Examination of primary resource documents using journaling and questioning strategies
- **Map-Based Inquiry**  
Examination of historical maps using journaling and questioning strategies

As a large group, use some of the following questions in a discussion to allow students to synthesize some of their thinking around their primary historical sources.

- Many primary historical sources did not survive from Alberta’s history. Why do you think this is so?
- Why do you think your primary historical source survived?
- Would you have saved the same objects as the other students? Why or why not?
- What personal story/memory does it remind the owner of?
- What personal story/memory does it remind other students of?
- How does knowing the “historical context” of the primary historical source affect your appreciation of this artifact?

Student artifacts and artifact inquiries could be displayed in a similar fashion to a museum display. They would write a short biography of themselves and create a “tombstone” for the object that includes the name of the object, a description, date(s), and a transcription of any text.

## Assessment and Evaluation

- In groups or as a class, students may conference and debrief each other after they have presented their projects. Students should be encouraged to share their personal reflections about how it felt to speak in front of their audience.

- Students may use their rubric as a guide for writing a self-assessment of their project work. They will determine their level for each of the categories and use the criteria specified in their rubric to justify them.
- A project journal may be used for information gathering as well as for reflective writing as the process is taking place. Students can pose questions, vent frustrations, synthesize their work, examine their process, and even wonder about what they are missing or what is still needed for their project. This may be completed as a group or individually.

### **Ideas to Enrich this Project**

- Students can ask parents or family members for an artifact that is extremely special to them. Students can examine what this would tell about the owner by using the object-based inquiry processes and compare that study to the real "historical figure. This could even lead into an interview of the person about why that primary historical source has significance for them.
- Have the students select and compare another type of primary historical source that is different from their own. Compare what each reveals as a primary historical source. Do they reveal different things?

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