

Student Sleuth Project:
Investigating Your School's Artifacts

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Table of Contents

Student Sleuth Project: Investigating Your School's Artifacts	1
Acknowledgements	3
Educator's Note and Program Overview	4
Logistics Planning Chart	6
Logistics Planning Sheet	8
Student Sleuth Project Flyer	11
Parent Permission Form	12
Artifact Fact Finding Sheet	13
Interviewing Dos and Don'ts	16
What Is It? Mystery Artifact Investigation	17
What Is It? Mystery Artifact Investigation Example	18
What Is It? School Artifact Investigation	19
What Is It? School Artifact Investigation Example	21
Artifact Inventory Worksheet	23
Cataloging School Artifacts	24
Artifact Preservation Checklist	27
Artifact Storage Checklist	30
Exhibition Tips and Checklist	31
Washington, DC Resources	322

Student Sleuth Project: Investigating Your School's Artifacts



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Educator's Note and Program Overview



PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The Student Sleuth Project: Investigating Your School's Artifacts was an enrichment program that involved ten students from Washington, DC's John Eaton Elementary School. They met once a week to examine their school's history by investigating its artifacts---books, costumes, trophies, documents, photographs, and more. This program was a complement to an earlier one offered at the school entitled *Student Sleuth Project: Investigating Your School's History* (<http://eatondc.org/student-sleuth-history-project>).

The overarching goal of the project was for students to gain a greater understanding of their school's history through its artifacts and to learn how to interpret meaning from them. To do this, students developed a variety of skills. The program activities were designed to accommodate a range of learners and help students acquire new information.



Please note that the use of object and artifact are interchangeable throughout this booklet.

SKILLS GAINED

Examining and locating school artifacts; working in teams; researching; locating historical resources; public speaking; cataloging school artifacts; creating a preservation/storage plan; and designing an exhibition.

PROGRAM ORGANIZATION

The program was divided into five modules:



Identifying and Interpreting Artifacts: Students learned how to interpret or “read” objects by examining their physical characteristics. They investigated everyday items making note of their shape, size, material, and weight. This often sparked lively discussions among the students to discover an object’s use and function. Students also learned how to determine an object’s importance for their school. They visited a local museum where artifacts were exhibited and stored. Curators explained that guidelines are used to decide which artifacts are amassed and added to a museum’s collection. Similarly, they explained how a specific criterion impacts the selection artifacts for exhibitions.



Conducting Research Using Primary and Secondary Sources: Students learned about research--how to do it and where to find the best information about artifacts associated with their school. Students visited the city’s public school archive where

they handled objects relating directly to their school and conducted primary research from original documents such as newspaper articles, photographs, and sports uniforms.



Collecting and Cataloging Artifacts: While visiting a museum and the city’s public school archive, students discovered the importance of collecting, cataloging, and labeling artifacts so there are records of them. Students learned that without documentation, artifacts can be misplaced, lost, or stolen. Moreover, objects without records may be difficult to locate for display, research, or loan purposes.



Preserving and Storing Artifacts: An archivist visited our school and demonstrated to students how to properly handle and store different types of objects using mylar (protective polyester) and acid free paper, folders, and boxes. Students also learned that it’s best to store artifacts in dark, climate-controlled areas.






Designing an Exhibition with Artifacts: Students examined two exhibitions at a local museum to see how artifacts were displayed. Talking with curators, students learned that exhibitions can take many forms, but the key to designing a good one is asking and answering a series of questions. Students began to understand that choosing a theme would help guide the selection of artifacts and the message being delivered.



Please use this project to guide your own. Pick and choose activities as you see fit. Make use of the worksheets, student project tips, parent letter, student recruitment flyer --- anything that helps you and your students research their school’s artifacts.



Logistics Planning Chart

Please use this chart to guide your own project. Also, make use of the worksheets, student project tips, parent letter, student recruitment flyer --- anything that helps you and your students research your school's artifacts.

Program Module	Participants	Activities	Outcomes
 Identifying and Interpreting Artifacts	Students Guest Speakers Teachers Volunteers	Examining everyday objects Recording physical characteristics, NOT object identity—"it's a pencil" Theorizing about an artifact's function if not readily apparent	Learning observation, record keeping, and hypothesizing skills
 Conducting Research Using Primary and Secondary Sources	Student Groups Guest Speakers Teachers Volunteers	Looking for, gathering, and reviewing artifacts Conducting interviews Developing timelines, charts, and graphs Compiling and organizing data	Learning how to seek, sieve, and synthesize data from books, the Internet, artifacts, interviews, and timelines
 Collecting and Cataloging Artifacts	Student Groups Guest Speakers Teachers Volunteers	Locating objects Selecting artifacts of interest or meaning Sorting and documenting artifacts Establishing a record and loan system	Learning to sort and identify artifact types and categories Understanding the value of written records and loan systems

Program Module	Participants	Activities	Outcomes
 Preserving and Storing Artifacts	Students Guest Speakers Teachers Volunteers	Meeting an archivist to learn the basic principles of artifact preservation and storage Visiting a local library, archive, or museum to witness storage facilities firsthand Developing a storage plan	Learning how to preserve artifacts from harmful elements and systematically storing them
 Designing an Exhibition with Artifacts	Students Guest Speakers Field Trip Chaperones Teachers Volunteers	Visiting a local museum to view exhibitions and learn about exhibition design Organizing data and findings into an exhibition	Learning how to display artifacts and present accompanying research Designing an exhibition

Logistics Planning Sheet



During the **Student Sleuth Project: Investigating Your School's Artifacts**, students (3rd grade or older) explore their school's history by examining its artifacts. In conjunction with this project, students learn how to: locate historical resources; conduct primary research; work in teams; address a group; catalog school artifacts; create a preservation/storage plan; and design an exhibition. The program is divided into five parts: (a) identifying and interpreting objects; (b) conducting research using primary and secondary sources; (c) collecting and cataloging school artifacts; (d) preserving and storing important school relics; and (e) designing an exhibition.



This form is designed to help organize the program and plan for student meetings. Meetings should ideally occur at least once a week and last an hour. They can easily occur outside of class time.

Meeting Time

Establish a regular meeting time and location, possibly during lunch and/or recess to minimize disruption to in-class instructional time. After-school meetings are also an option.

Logistics

Find a space in the school where students can gather as a group and spread out while working on projects. Table and floor space in a classroom, school library, hallway, or cafeteria will work well. If you plan on meeting professionals and visiting other sites, you will need permission slips and money to cover transportation costs. Parent carpools are also a possibility. Points of interests may include your school library, a trip to local libraries, town/city archives, museums showcasing history exhibitions, and more. If leaving school proves difficult, invite local professionals into your building. Guest speakers can talk about what they do professionally. Students should have ample time to converse with them, and these conversations, should reinforce student learning.

Assistance

Recruit a few skillful parents or volunteers to assist with the project. High school students eager to earn community service hours may also be a resource. Ideally students will work in small groups and it is helpful to have one adult per group or at least an adult to float between 1-2 groups.

Materials

Students will need composition books for writing assignments that may include journal entries, jotting notes, sketching objects, posing questions, or organizing project ideas. They may also need boxes of varying sizes to store objects and documents they locate at school.

Vocabulary

The words listed here are often used during this program and therefore should be introduced and defined. They include: acidic, acid-free, acquisition, archive, archivist, artifact, cataloging, curator, documentation, ephemera, exhibition, historian, interpret, inventory, investigate, museum, mylar, preservation, provenance, relic, and sleuth.

Introductions

Have students introduce themselves and explain what they hope to gain from the program.

Expectations

Students are expected to work hard, participate, listen, pay attention, and stay on-topic. They should be respectful, patient, and cooperative.

Student Review of Program

Provide a project overview to the students. Explain that they will be locating artifacts throughout their school that will reveal different aspects of its history. They will use their findings to conduct research, catalog objects, create an archive, and design an exhibition. **Mention that the program is divided into five parts:** (a) identifying and interpreting objects; (b) conducting research using primary and secondary sources; (c) collecting and cataloging school artifacts; (d) preserving and storing important school relics; and (e) designing an exhibition. Outline upcoming field trips and their intended purpose. Explain to the students what their responsibilities will be for the project which will include:



Journaling and Sketching

Educators may have students write a journal entry at the end of each session and after field trips to reflect on their experiences. A paragraph of four-to-five sentences is sufficient. Students may pick objects of interest from home, school, or a field trip site to describe and sketch.



Assignments Related to Experiences

Educators may ask students to locate family objects and describe their meaning and value. Educators may also ask students to select an artist or objects of interest (dinosaur bones or old fashioned cars) and write a report.



Final Projects

Students may present their inventory of artifacts and information based on in-depth research. They may also share their plans for cataloging and storing artifacts at school. Lastly, students might design an exhibition using school artifacts and create a plan for monthly, quarterly, or yearly exhibitions centered on different themes.

Student Sleuth Project Flyer



Have you ever wondered about a school banner, photograph, trophy, or plaque?



Do you believe that artifacts tell important stories?



Do you like solving puzzles and examining objects to find out tidbits about the past?

If you answered “yes!” to these questions, become a Student Sleuth and investigate your school’s history by uncovering its artifacts.



Visit local archives and museums to learn about artifacts and conduct research;



Examine your school’s artifacts---documents, trophies, costumes, and photographs;



Catalog your school’s objects for safe keeping;



Preserve and store artifacts in a safe place so future students can learn from them; and



Work on selecting artifacts and information for an exhibition.



This project requires regular meetings that will take place:

Where:

When:






Sponsor:

Parent Permission Form



The school is excited that your child is interested in participating in the Student Sleuth Artifact Project. He/she will work with other students, teachers, and professionals to investigate and research his/her school's treasure trove of artifacts. Your child will act as an historian as he/she identifies and reviews objects such as documents, photographs, books, trophies, and other items that are connected to his/her school's history.

During this project, students will likely:

-  Learn how to examine school artifacts and collect data related to their physical characteristics;
-  Work with librarians, archivists, and curators to identify important school objects and interpret their meaning;
-  Conduct research on artifacts and catalog them so there is a record;
-  Preserve school objects using acid-free materials and storing them in a secure location; and
-  Select artifacts and information for an exhibition.

This project is under the supervision of _____ and begins
_____. It will require meetings with
_____ during
_____.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact the school or me/us at

_____.



Artifact Fact Finding Sheet

Name(s): _____

Date: _____

Location: _____



Walk around your school. Locate and list two artifacts that you find interesting.

1.

2.



Draw your artifacts in the designated spaces.



ARTIFACT ONE

Front View

Back or Side View



ARTIFACT TWO

Front View

Back or Side View



List two questions relating to your artifacts that you want to learn more about.

Question about Artifact One.

Question about Artifact Two.



List where you found each artifact at your school.

Artifact One.

Artifact Two.



Write four facts about your artifacts (two per object). For example, my artifact is made out of metal and wood. Feel free to note your artifact's size, shape, color, or use.

Artifact One

Fact 1

Fact 2

Artifact Two

Fact 1

Fact 2






















Using the information you gathered, write a paragraph to a museum curator about using your artifacts in an exhibition. Explain why you think he/she should display them. Be sure to include interesting, unique, or unusual information about your artifacts and how they relate to your school.



Interviewing Dos and Don'ts

You might find artifacts that have no written record establishing their connection to your school. One way of obtaining information about these artifacts is to interview past students, parents, or teachers. Interviewing is a skill, and the guidelines below help you develop this skill and acquire useful information. You should always document your interview using paper and pencil, a computer, or a tape recorder. After the interview is complete, select key facts about the artifact that can be useful when cataloging it.

DO	DO NOT
<ul style="list-style-type: none">  Set up a quiet space.  Ask permission to record.  Set up the interview: mention names, dates, and topic.  Prepare your questions.  Think before speaking.  Stay still: no fidgeting means quiet hands, feet, and body.  “Listen” with your eyes.  Show respect for any topic.  Respect silence.  Stay on topic. Help interviewee return to your question by gently guiding them back.  Say “THANK YOU”!! 	<ul style="list-style-type: none">  Do not talk about yourself.  Do not rush.  Do not interrupt.  Do not appear bored, even if an answer is off topic and of little interest.  Do not bring anything that might be a distraction.  Do not make any noises (no tapping, clicking). These noises will be heard on recordings.  Do not be afraid of silence. Long pauses are okay.
 Notes:	

What Is It? Mystery Artifact Investigation



You have been given a “mystery” artifact, an everyday object that is unfamiliar. Additionally, it is unclear what it is used for or why it’s important. Examine it closely and carefully.

Fill out this form. Do not leave any questions blank. If there are questions that cannot be answered, put a question mark to indicate that further research needs to be completed. Remember, you are examining the artifact objectively--- you are **NOT** writing what **YOU THINK** it is or used for, you are simply recording the facts. Good Luck!

Record Artifact’s Physical Characteristics

Measurement/Size	
Shape	
Color	
Material	
Weight: Is it easy or difficult to pick up?	

Notes, Comments, Questions:

Sketch Artifact:

What Is It? Mystery Artifact Investigation Example



This example shows the work one student produced when investigating an unknown object, a 1970's-era potato masher.

Silver
pentagon and a circle
Metal & Wood
holes on the bottom
9/4 in. - height
3/4 in. - width
Made in the USA
Old

Who would use it?
What is it made of?
How does it feel? (Soft, Rough, Mushy ect.)
When was it invented?
Why was it invented?
How was it helpful?
Where is it used?

What Is It? School Artifact Investigation



You have been given a school artifact. Examine it closely and carefully.

Fill out this form. Do not leave any questions blank. If you cannot answer some questions, write a question mark to indicate that further research needs to be completed.

Remember, in the *artifact description* section, you are examining the artifact objectively--- you are **NOT** writing what **YOU THINK** it is or used for, you are simply recording the facts. The same is largely true for the section *questions about your school artifact*. Look at your artifact to answer the questions. Good Luck!

Artifact Description

Measurement/Size	
Shape	
Color	
Material	
Weight: Is it easy or difficult to pick up?	

Questions About Your School Artifact

WHO: Who may have used the artifact?	
WHAT: What is the artifact made of?	
WHERE: Where was the artifact found?	
WHY: Why is the artifact at school---why is it important?	
WHEN: When was the artifact made or manufactured? When was it used—date, time period, or time of day, month, year?	
HOW: How was the artifact used?	

Condition Rating



The condition of this artifact is (please circle)?

Poor

Fair

Good

Very Good

Excellent



Is the artifact in usable condition?

Yes

No



Use the space below to record comments describing your artifact. Please record scratches, rips, tears, broken pieces, smell, discoloration, or anything else noteworthy.

Comments



In the space below, discuss whether or not the artifact is important to your school. Also, mention whether or not you find the artifact interesting and state your reasons.

What Is It? School Artifact Investigation Example



The following example comes from a fourth grade student investigating a clarinet carrying case found at John Eaton Elementary School. This investigation process allowed the student to study the artifact critically and systematically, leading to further questions about it that the student could research through other resources, such as Washington DC's public schools' museum and archives (the Sumner School) or the Washingtoniana section of the DC Public Library.

Who: Music or other special teacher

What: Tattered, stained, 24 written everywhere, P.S.D.C. fabric gone in some places, handle, keyholes on possible latch.

Condition: 1 being top shape 10 being pic of dut: $6\frac{3}{4}$ latch is: 2 in case, opens, velvet, inside, spaces for parts of something, wooden flat piece, $2\frac{1}{2}$ in length 2 millimeters into flat as paper

Where: In John Eaton's Music or some special room

When: ??? really long time ago ???

Why: to hold ^{and protect} an instrument, to add sound for instrument

How: to hold and store instruments

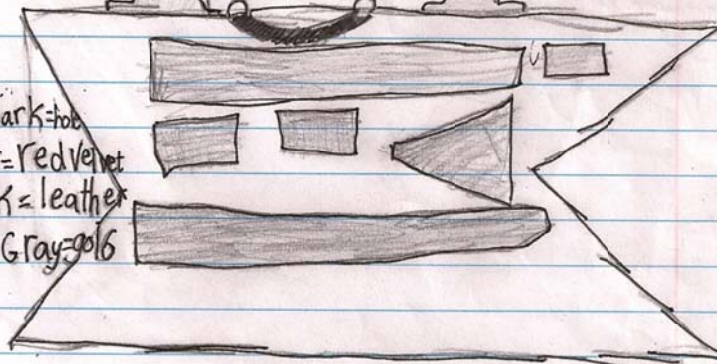
Rico royal

outside front



inside

Key: Park=too
light=red velvet
Black=leather
Right Gray=gold



Artifact Inventory Worksheet






School artifacts such as banners, photographs, costumes, plaques, trophies, and student artwork are important tools for helping understand the past. Using this worksheet, walk around your school and record objects, paying particular attention to their condition, location, and importance.

OBJECT	CONDITION	LOCATION	IMPORTANCE

Cataloging School Artifacts



Artifacts associated with your school relate to its history and should be preserved for future generations. To keep track of these artifacts, record or catalog them. Cataloging is a systematic way of creating an inventory of artifacts. It involves labeling and storing objects so they are safe and can be easily retrieved. Cataloging school artifacts is important because it:

-  organizes and establishes a collection;
-  makes locating objects easy; and
-  provides future access for research and display purposes.

Basic Principles for Cataloging

Cataloging artifacts is the process of assigning a unique number to each object that coincides with a written (electronic or paper) record. This record, also known as documentation, links the artifact with information about its size, shape, color, weight, condition, provenance (where it came from), and location (where it is stored). Written documentation should also include a photograph of each artifact.

Getting Started: Locating and Organizing Artifacts

Before cataloging artifacts, you need to complete the following activities:

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Survey artifacts at school using the School Inventory Worksheet;
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Cull storage closets, offices, and hallways for hidden objects;
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Sort artifacts by type, i.e. trophies, textiles, glass, paper, etc.; and
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Determine if artifacts are on loan to another organization.

Cataloging School Artifacts

A system or code for cataloging school artifacts should be simple and well-organized. Keep in mind that you will be cataloging objects currently at your school, but any system will have to take into account items acquired or donated in the future. Try your hand at devising a cataloging system tailored specifically for your school or adopt the four-part system outlined here.

1 Use upper case letters to establish artifact categories. For example, C=Ceramics, F=Furniture, G=Glass, M=Metal, ME=Media, P=Paper, PA=Painting, PH=Photograph, PL=Plastic, S=Scrapbook, SL=Slides, T=Textiles, and W=Wood.

2 Use lower case letters to establish artifact types. For example, under the ceramic category, you would create a subcategory in which v=vase, p=pitcher, b=bowl, c=cup, etc. You would catalog a ceramic vase as Cv or ceramic cup as Cc.

3 Use numbers to track each artifact. For example, your school has 43 trophies. The artifact category would likely be M for metal, the artifact subcategory might be tb=trophy/basketball or td=trophy/debate, and a number would go to each of the 43 trophies. A record of a trophy might be M, t/d, 1 or M, t/b, 2.

4 Use four digit numbers to track artifact acquisitions. For example, a school trophy is dated 2005 so the object's record would state M, t/d, 1, 2005. Another example is a trophy has no date but is donated to the school in 2012. The trophy's catalog record would state M, t/b, 2, 2012.

For cataloging purposes, artifacts can be labeled several ways. They can be tagged or kept with an artifact slip. They can also have their codes written directly onto the artifact (bottom or underside), with the exception of artifacts too small to have numbers. Use either a quill or steel-nib pen and India ink to label the artifact. Do not use felt-tipped pens, self-stick labels, typing correction fluid, rubber cement, or tape since they will damage the artifact or are impermanent. Consult a local museum or archive for further guidance.

Establishing a Written Record for Artifacts






Once a cataloging system is in place and artifacts are labeled, a written record needs to accompany them. This documentation has the same cataloging system as the artifacts. Each artifact has a code and its corresponding description contains the same code.

The written record can take many forms. You can document an artifact's information in a notebook or database, on index cards or spread sheets. No matter which type of record keeping format, choose one that is easy to use and affordable. For each artifact, be sure to note its cataloging code, include a general description of the object including use or function, and record its condition---jot down scratches, tears, smell, discoloration or anything else noteworthy. Also, include the artifact's photograph which serves as a visual record.

Guidelines for Checking Out Artifacts

Artifacts can be used for study, display, and loaned to other institutions. As a result, a system needs to be in place to keep track of them when they leave storage.

Here are guidelines for this purpose:

-  designate a staff member at school in charge of the artifacts;
-  provide each artifact with a “sign out” card or add the information to the artifact’s catalog record;
-  sign out each artifact as it leaves storage and be sure to include the date it left, who signed it out, where it went, and the reason it left;
-  record the condition of the artifact; and
-  determine the terms of the loan if goes to another institution, specifically where the artifact will be displayed and for how long.



Artifact Preservation Checklist

School artifacts are likely made of a variety of materials and therefore need different types of care. Since artifacts tell stories, preserving and warehousing them for the future keeps those stories alive. Here are tips on how to properly store distinct types of artifacts.

Photographs/Slides

- ☆ Store in a cool, dry place with minimum light
- ☆ Store in acid-free envelopes or folders inside acid-free boxes
- ☆ Display copies of photographs while keeping originals safely stored
- ☆ Wear clean, cotton gloves when working with prints, negatives, or slides
- ☆ Handle photographs, negatives, and slides by the edges
- ☆ Display photographs behind UV filtering glass; use acid-free mats

Paper

- ☆ Keep paper at a constant, moderate temperature and relative humidity
- ☆ Store papers in darkness
- ☆ Store documents and letters unfolded in acid-free or polyester folders
- ☆ Separate acidic paper like newspaper clippings from other materials
- ☆ Photocopy contents from acidic documents onto acid-free paper
- ☆ Do not use staples, paper clips, rubber bands, or glue on important papers

Scrapbooks/Albums

- ☆ Handle old scrapbooks and albums gently, never repair with tape
- ☆ Shelf scrapbooks and albums upright; store flat if they contain loose items
- ☆ Interleave acid-free paper if pages are acidic
- ☆ Remove acidic items such as newspaper clippings

Metal

- ☆ Wear cotton gloves when handling metal
- ☆ Store objects with 50% moderate temperature and relative humidity

- ☆ Dust with clean brush or cotton cloth
- ☆ Do not use commercial cleaners or polishes on artifacts
- ☆ Bronze, brass, copper, and gold-plated metal with original patina or lacquer should be wiped with a damp cloth; pewter items should be dusted

Textiles

- ☆ Keep fabrics out of sun and artificial light; limit display time
- ☆ Keep fabric where temperatures and humidity are moderate, no basements or attics
- ☆ Never wash or dry clean fragile textiles; blot spills
- ☆ Sturdy fabrics can be cleaned by low suction vacuuming with brush attachment covered with cotton cheesecloth
- ☆ Store folded textiles in acid-free boxes with white sheeting between layers
- ☆ Display textiles flat or hung at an angle to reduce pull
- ☆ Support costumes on well-padded plastic hangers the width of the garment's shoulders

Paintings

- ☆ Hang paintings away from heat, airborne pollutants, and direct sunlight
- ☆ Do not store paintings in basements or attics
- ☆ Use picture or mirror hangers and not nails or self-adhesive hooks
- ☆ Inspect painting surface regularly for cracks or flaking
- ☆ Dust paintings and frames top down with a soft, clean, dry brush (no cloths)
- ☆ Never use cleaning agents, sprays, waxes, polishes, or oils on paintings
- ☆ If a painting is reframed, label and keep the original frame

Wood/Furniture

- ☆ Use paste wax once a year to make dusting easier; avoid damaged areas
- ☆ Do not use silicone sprays or oils
- ☆ Vacuum upholstery with brush attachment covered with cotton cheesecloth
- ☆ Move furniture with care and attention to detail
- ☆ Keep furniture out of direct sunlight, hot spotlights, and lamps
- ☆ Keep furniture out of basements and attics

- ☆ Check regularly for insect and mold damage
- ☆ Do not remove original finish or upholstery from antique pieces

Ceramics/Glass

- ☆ Handle objects carefully with clean, dry hands
- ☆ Wash glazed and glass objects by hand, no dishwashers
- ☆ Avoid commercial cleaners
- ☆ Display objects on level shelves, out of sunlight, in moderate temperatures
- ☆ Use paper toweling or flannel to wrap objects; avoid newspaper

Media

- ☆ Never touch tapes, especially the surfaces
- ☆ Keep tapes in cool, dry, dust free area, away from sunlight and magnetic fields
- ☆ Rewind tapes soon after playing; remove them from players after use
- ☆ Enlist an expert to reformat or copy tapes or obsolete media
- ☆ Store reels and cassettes standing on end in protective plastic containers
- ☆ Handle Compact Discs by the outer edge or center hole; shelve vertically
- ☆ Touch grooved discs (records) only on their edges or label area. Shelf them vertically. Most record jackets should be replaced with high density polyethylene. LPs can be cleaned with water-based record cleaning fluid but 78rpm records should only be dusted.



Notes:

Artifact Storage Checklist



The safe and careful storage of artifacts will greatly determine whether they last for twenty-five, fifty, or one hundred years. Objects that are not stored properly may deteriorate due to environmental factors such as sunlight, bugs, mold, or fluctuations in temperature.

The first step in preserving school artifacts is finding a secure storage area for them. Recognizing that school space and storage is often limited, follow these simple guidelines as best as possible.



Find a secure space for school artifacts. Ideally it's not be a classroom which experiences a lot of use and change from year to year but rather a closet, office, or section of a library or resource center.



Locate a space that is dark or void of direct light since it can greatly damage photographs, textiles, paper, paintings, and wood. Secure a space that has metal shelving or the potential for installing it.



Secure shelving since it will provide space to store objects and cluster them together. Factor in that artifact size will affect shelf length and width. Shelving can be readily built or bought. Metal shelving is ideal and is easily obtained at hardware stores, Home Depot, Lowes, or Ikea.



Group artifacts according to category and type. Note that different artifacts require different kinds of storage.



Secure proper storage containers for artifacts. Acid-free materials are ideal for storing artifacts long-term. Acid in standard paper, cardboard boxes, or folders generally cause materials housed in them to deteriorate. Museum quality acid-free storage materials are readily available and can be purchased via catalogs or the Internet. They include an assortment of acid-free boxes, folders, paper, and matt materials. Polyester products such as mylar or melinex are also sold and safe for artifacts.

Exhibition Tips and Checklist



Showcasing artifacts in an exhibition is a great way for students to learn more about their school's history. An exhibition is a systematic display of information and objects. Exhibitions can take many forms, but the key to designing a good one is asking and answering a series of questions. For example, what theme will you choose? Which artifacts will you select and how many should be displayed? Will you provide labels describing each artifact or one information panel listing them all? Whichever method you choose, make your exhibition interesting. Be sure to include objects, images, words, materials, and anything else you believe will engage others.

Exhibitions can be installed anywhere at school—in a glass case, on a table in the library, or mounted on a bulletin board. They can be displayed for a day, week, month, or year. ***To protect artifacts while exhibited, read carefully the Artifact Preservation Checklist.***

Below is a checklist to guide you through the exhibition process. Create a draft or mock-up of your ideas before tackling your final project.



Remember, no matter which design style you choose, be sure your exhibition is clear, neat, colorful, and easy to read.

Exhibition Checklist	Yes	No
Do I have a theme/title and is it well-defined?		
Did I take into account key points I want visitors to learn?		
Did I include an assortment of artifacts?		
Did I properly check-out my artifacts?		
Do I have enough information?		
Do I have too much information?		
Did I include clear text that is large enough for people of all ages to read?		
Did I include drawings, pictures, or photographs?		
Did I include objects to touch, smell, or taste? If so, are they located where young people can see and reach them?		
Is my display colorful?		
Did I document my sources and list the names of students and staff involved?		

Washington, DC Resources



The following chart provides contacts for anyone seeking more information specifically about John Eaton Elementary School's artifact project. It also provides contact information for Washington, DC educators, individuals, and institutions that were instrumental to the Investigating Your School's Artifacts Project.

Institution	Address	Contact Name	Contact Information
John Eaton Elementary School	3301 Lowell Street, NW, Washington, DC 20008	Eileen Langholtz and Michelle Koerner, Eaton Enrichment Coordinators	davideileen@verizon.net and mishboni@aol.com
The Sumner School, Washington, DC Public School Museum and Archive	1201 17 th Street, NW Washington, DC 20036 Farragut North, Metro Red Line	Kimberly Springle, Director/Archivist/ Curator	kimberly.springle@dc.gov
The Washingtoniana Collection of the Washington, DC Public Library (located within the Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Library)	901 G Street, NW, Washington, DC 20001 Gallery Place, Metro Red Line		

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