HISTORY CONTENT

BEST PRACTICES

TEACHING MATERIALS

ISSUES AND RESEARCH

TAH GRANTS

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

featuring Material Culture
O B J E C T  L E S S O N S

History is not just about words. Teacups, houses, bedsteads, toys, paintings, clothing, and thousands of other objects provide insight into the past. Commonly referred to as material culture, these objects provide a fascinating way for students of all ages to sharpen their ability to think like a historian. Furthermore, studying objects and other types of visual evidence opens up exciting new fields in history to students, from historic preservation and archaeology to work in museums and historical societies. In this issue of History Education News, we highlight just a few of the many resources that feature material culture and encourage you to visit teachinghistory.org to explore these and other resources that will help you teach with objects.

The National History Education Clearinghouse has plenty of valuable resources to help you engage and challenge your students. Along with History Education News, the Clearinghouse at teachinghistory.org is a free resource. Visit today and let us know what you think!
History Content

“Biographies of things can make salient what otherwise might remain obscure.” —Igor Kopytoff

The Internet offers unprecedented opportunities to explore material culture. Many websites provide direct access to exhibitions and collections, giving educators and students access to museums all over the country or a special collection that is not usually on display. At teachinghistory.org you can search for online archives. In addition, many of these resources have special sections for teachers that include lesson plans, interactive activities, or teaching guides.

WEBSITE REVIEWS

DIGITAL VAULTS
digitalvaults.org

This interactive website from the National Archives presents more than 1,200 items, including official documents, personal accounts, images, maps, and ephemera. Browsing is easy from the main page which presents a rotating cast of eight archival items, such as an early engraving of the Declaration of Independence, a top secret document on dropping the atomic bomb, and an image of Navajo code talkers. Each item is accompanied by a brief annotation providing historical context and related tags, further facilitating browsing. All items can be zoomed for highly detailed viewing and rendered printer-friendly for classrooms without computer access. The website also provides a variety of tools allowing users to collect and manipulate items. “Create” presents the opportunity to make individualized posters and movies out of any item or group of items from the website. After a free login, users can save and email these creations for future use.

BUILDING COMMUNITY: MEDIEVAL TECHNOLOGY AND AMERICAN HISTORY
www.engr.psu.edu/mtah

Mills and ironworks played an important role in colonial America. This website explores some of the core medieval technologies that built the American colonies into an industrial powerhouse, giving students the chance to explore industrial architecture, craftsmanship, and trade. In-depth articles, short essays, photo archives, videos, comparative timelines,
and class projects all seek to demonstrate how these technologies impacted American history. In addition, the website offers instructions and plans for projects that help students understand the material culture related to these technologies. For example, students can create their own clay oven, quern, or waterwheel testing device.

**THE OBJECT OF HISTORY**
objectofhistory.org

*The Object of History* features an abundance of materials designed to improve students’ content knowledge of standard topics in U.S. History and to improve their ability to understand material culture objects as types of historical evidence. Educators can use the teaching materials on the website to teach about featured objects, such as Jefferson’s desk and the Greensboro Woolworth lunch counter. Students can then create their own virtual exhibit, putting these objects into historical context. Students can also download audiocasts of curators and historians answering questions about the featured objects.

**ONLINE HISTORY LECTURES**

Using objects as teaching tools is a great way to explore African American history month in February and year round. Explore the featured lectures below for ideas and discover many other online audio and video lectures on history and history education from public historians, educators, authors, and university professors through a searchable database at teachinghistory.org.

**AFRICAN AMERICAN LIFE IN COLONIAL MONTICELLO: OBJECTS**

anacostia.si.edu/online_academy/academy/scholars/scholarsframe.htm

Dianne Swann-Wright, Director of African-American and Special Programs at the Thomas Jefferson Foundation, looks at what artifacts found at Monticello reveal about the personal lives of slaves on the estate. She demonstrates how objects such as gravestone carvings and tin cups found outside of slave dwellings show the agency of those who were enslaved.

**INTERPRETING HOODOO ARTIFACTS: THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SEARCH**

anacostia.si.edu/online_academy/academy/scholars/scholarsframe.htm

Historian Mark P. Leone looks at the hoodoo artifacts found at the Annapolis, Maryland, home of Charles Carroll,
one of the signers of the Declaration of Independence. He discusses how the lives of founding fathers and their African and African American slaves were intertwined and how these connections are represented by artifacts. Leone also talks about the significance of the artifacts, as the first discovery of a hoodoo cache in the area, and the later discovery of caches elsewhere dating up to the 1920s.

PERFECT FOR YOUNGER STUDENTS!

LIFE OF AN APPRENTICE
winterthur.org/special_programs/school_programs.asp?

Visit the Winterthur Museum website to explore an interactive story on apprenticeship and craftsmanship in colonial America. Students decide what type of apprentice they would like to become and how to spend their allotted shillings. The story is illustrated with pictures and objects from the collection at Winterthur.

HISTORY CONTENT IN YOUR BACKYARD

Museums and historical societies are a great way to become familiar with material culture. While there is nothing like a trip to a local museum for a hands-on, inquiry based field trip, there are other ways to bring objects into your classroom. Check with your local museum to see if they offer similar programs! You can search for museums and historical societies at teachinghistory.org.

HISTORIC LANDMARKS FOUNDATION OF INDIANA: TRAVELING TRUNKS
historiclandmarks.org

The Historic Landmarks Foundation of Indiana offers two education resource kits that can be mailed to educators. The kits, Stories Buildings Tell and Study Outdoor Sculpture, include activities, games, and lessons designed to open students’ eyes and minds to their environment. Each kit comes equipped with two activity books for teachers and hands-on materials for students. Traveling Trunks are available on loan free of charge for one month, although borrowers pay for return shipping.

AUTRY NATIONAL CENTER: COMMUNITY STORIES OUTREACH KITS
autynationalcenter.org

Each kit offered by the Autry National Center in Los Angeles profiles a community through the eyes of an actual person. Their stories, traditions, challenges, and opportunities come to life through carefully chosen resource materials and lesson plans, encouraging students to investigate their own family and community histories. The Center offers kits on various topics, including African Americans in the West, Chinese Americans in the West, migration, ranching, the Gold Rush, and immigration. Two-week rental is $25.
Best Practices

Material Culture (n.): in a given community or society, the material objects that people make, collect, and use, which give insight into the beliefs and customs held by that community.

The content on teachinghistory.org draws on the latest historical scholarship and research in the teaching and learning of history. Visit Best Practices at teachinghistory.org to explore tools that teach students how to read different kinds of primary sources, including objects, in addition to examples of historical thinking and teaching.

USING PRIMARY SOURCES

ANTIQUES ROADSHOW TEACHER’S GUIDE
pbs.org/wgbh/roadshow/teachers.html

The creators of the Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) series, Antiques Roadshow developed this guide to help educators integrate material culture into the classroom. Using artifacts from the show, such as late-nineteenth-century American Indian clothing, a napkin drawing by Andy Warhol, and a Pioneer Packard toy pedal car, it presents strategies for teaching with material culture and questions to ask about how people make, collect, and use material objects.

SCHOLARS IN ACTION: ANALYZING AN 1804 INVENTORY
historymatters.gmu.edu/mse/sia/inventory.htm

Scholars in Action presents case studies that demonstrate how scholars interpret different kinds of historical evidence. This 1804 inventory lists the possessions of Thomas Springer of New Castle County, Delaware. Legal documents, such as tax records or probate inventories, often provide our only information about the lifestyles of people during the colonial and early national periods. Such listings of household possessions, from a time when household goods were not widely mass produced, can illuminate a fair amount about a family’s routines, rituals, and social relations, as well as about a region’s economy and its connections to larger markets. This inventory also contains items that suggest attitudes and policies toward slavery in the mid-Atlantic states.

EXAMPLES OF TEACHING

EXPLORING HISTORICAL TEXTS IN A DISCUSSION-BASED CLASS
learner.org/resources/series172.html#program_descriptions

Trying to promote more productive and engaging discussions? Watch this high school teacher cultivate dialogue in the classroom while keeping his students focused on a set of primary sources.
Learning from Others: Learning in a Social Context is a video made up of two sections, the second half of which documents the practice of Avram Barlowe, a high school history teacher at the Urban Academy in New York City. The twelve-minute clip shows a mixed-ability group of high school students discussing a set of primary source documents. The video also includes comments from the instructor, who details his approach to promoting student understanding in the history classroom through discussion.

TEACHING WITH TEXTBOOKS

OPENING UP THE TEXTBOOK
historicalthinkingmatters.org/ted/lessons/

If you’re interested in teaching your students historical analysis, the textbook seems an unlikely resource. This strategy of Opening Up the Textbook (OUT), developed at Stanford University, is one method of using the textbook to help students learn how to think historically and read critically. OUT moves the textbook from its position as the one true story about the past to one historical account among many. It is designed to help students slow down, read closely, and critically evaluate their textbook.

Read more at teachinghistory.org.

“This lesson structure portrays history as more complex than a single, sacrosanct story.”

—OPENING UP THE TEXTBOOK
Teaching Materials

Explore teachinghistory.org for ideas on how to teach a particular topic or for innovative ways to improve your lesson plans. Teaching Materials contains examples encompassing a range of time periods, topics, and grade levels that are ready for immediate classroom use.

LESSON PLAN REVIEWS

Classroom teachers have reviewed and critiqued these lesson plans according to the National History Education Clearinghouse rubric (available at http://teachinghistory.org/teaching-materials/lesson-plan-reviews/19230).

DWELLINGS: THE MESSAGE OF HOUSES AND THEIR CONTENTS, 1780-1820
americancenturies.mass.edu/classroom

Elementary
Drawing on the extensive collection of artifacts, photographs, and primary sources at the Massachusetts Memorial Hall Museum, this engaging lesson invites students to look at the homes and material possessions of people living in colonial America. Students pay particular attention to how the growing peace and prosperity of the later colonial period are reflected in changes of furnishing and lifestyles. The lesson encourages close observation of artifacts and guides students to write interpretive paragraphs about the steady increase in the quantity and quality of possessions in early American homes. It provides ample background material for teachers and clear suggestions for guiding discussion.

LINCOLN HOME NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE: A PLACE OF GROWTH AND MEMORY
nps.gov/history/nr/whhp/wwwlps/lessons/127liha/

High School
This lesson provides an opportunity for students to see how Lincoln’s home and life in Springfield, Illinois, influenced the way he thought about the important issues of the time. Students answer questions about photographs and maps to develop a context for thinking about documents related to Lincoln and the Civil War. An engaging set of vintage photographs and maps show Lincoln’s world and help students better understand the spirit of the times. But the real strength of this lesson is in the excellent text resources and accompanying questions provided for students.
COMING SOON TO TEACHING MATERIALS

TEACHING GUIDES
These guides, written for K–12 history teachers, provide concise summaries that address ways to use particular teaching resources and methods or address specific instructional challenges. Initial guides address using film and biography in the classroom. Future guides focus on teaching students how to analyze political cartoons, write thesis statements, or use the “structured academic controversy” instructional approach.

ASK A MASTER TEACHER
Are you facing a challenge in your classroom? Login to teachinghistory.org and send your question to experienced teachers ready to help you find a solution.

NEWS

Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Commission
Celebrate the 200th anniversary of Abraham Lincoln’s birth this February with the Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Commission’s free classroom poster! The front side, suitable for classroom display, is a portrait of Lincoln, while the reverse contains resources for educators, offering suggestions for incorporating Lincoln’s legacy into the classroom. To request this poster, please call (202) 707-6998 or visit www.abrahamlincoln200.org, where you can also explore other valuable resources.

ACHP Announces Nationwide Youth Service Learning Effort
The Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP) urges historic preservation organizations to create local service learning and/or community service opportunities for students and school systems across the United States in an effort to more widely share and increase public awareness of the benefits of historic preservation. To learn how service learning can benefit preservation organizations and local communities and understand how to create such opportunities with local schools, visit http://www.servicelearning.org/instant_info/historic_preservation/index.php.
Issues & Research

Stay up to date with current issues and research that affect history education.

RESEARCH BRIEFS

FIFTH GRADERS AS HISTORICAL DETECTIVES: READING, ANALYZING, AND CRITIQUING DOCUMENTS TO SOLVE HISTORICAL PUZZLES

Who says that elementary students can’t think historically? A researcher from the University of Maryland, College Park, challenged that assumption in a recent study. VanSeldright spent four months teaching fifth-grade American history in a diverse urban elementary school that included several English Language Learners. For his study sample, he chose eight students of different skill levels. He closely followed students’ development as historical thinkers, and conducted before-and-after evaluations assessing their ability to analyze historical documents. Through direct instruction in historical analysis skills, Bruce VanSeldright’s students not only showed marked improvements in their work but also became excited about a subject in which they had previously expressed little interest.

For their work on the American Revolution, students studied possible causes of the conflict. They were encouraged to consider point of view and understand the role of perspective in making sense of evidence.

—FIFTH GRADERS AS HISTORICAL DETECTIVES

TEACHING HISTORICAL REASONING AND WRITING: A CLASSROOM INTERVENTION

In 2005, Susan de la Paz published one of the few experimental studies that investigated teaching for historical thinking in real classrooms. The study was part of a Teaching American History grant and involved seventy eighth grade students, including eleven with learning disabilities. De La Paz’s materials focused on nineteenth-century westward expansion and six topics in the middle
school curriculum: the Indian Removal Act, the Whitman massacre of white missionaries, the Mountain Meadows massacre, Texas independence, women’s suffrage, and the Mexican-American War. Students received twelve days of instruction in historical reasoning and ten days of instruction in writing arguments. Their final essays were significantly better than those of sixty-two control students who were not exposed to these materials.

TELL US WHAT YOU THINK

We are grateful to our users who have let us know what they think about teachinghistory.org and History Education News!

The National History Education Clearinghouse is a new resource. We want to know what we can do to make the site more useful to you. Please take a moment and let us know what you think of the newsletter and the website at teachinghistory.org. Use the feedback form on the site, email comments to info@teachinghistory.org, or call us at 1-866-539-8381. We appreciate your time and all that you do for history education!
TAH Grants

Explore resources related to Teaching American History (TAH) grants to learn from current and past projects and to plan for future grant applications.

LESSONS LEARNED

HISTORICAL EVIDENCE IN THE MATERIAL WORLD: ART HISTORY, MATERIAL CULTURE, AND HISTORICAL THINKING

“On more than one occasion, teachers participating in our Teaching American History (TAH) project have speculated that one reason their middle school students often have trouble understanding historical texts may be because they have not yet developed the ability to imagine the past. Because they are young their experience is limited and many have yet to discover museums, historic houses or other places of historical interest. In addition, the historical past is not immediately evident on the surface in New York City, where it is often difficult to see through the many layers of changes in the landscape and the built environment.”

—Carolyn Halpin-Healy (New York, NY)

HEY! DON’T I KNOW YOU? MAKING CONNECTIONS TO THE PAST AND IN THE PRESENT

“In the fall of 2007, I had the good fortune to be invited by Alex Stein of the U.S. Department of Education to speak at the Teaching American History (TAH) Grant Project Coordinators’ Conference in New Orleans, LA. To the audience of more than 750 participants, I told a story about an intriguing personal research experience inspired by a vague reference in an old annual report. My talk began with a suggestion for making connections to information through documentary research; it concluded with a plea for making connections to people. In many ways, the transformation of my message in that presentation is reflective of my experience with the TAH program. Since the program began, my team at the National Archives in Washington, DC, and I have enjoyed being involved with dozens of grant-supported initiatives—colleagues
from urban, rural, large, and small districts, and everywhere in between.”
—Lee Ann Potter (Washington, DC)

Read more at teachinghistory.org.

PROJECT SPOTLIGHTS

CONSTITUTIONAL CONNECTIONS

esd112.org/history/overview.cfm

Now in its fourth year in Washington State, the Teaching American History (TAH) grant, Constitutional Connections, has challenged teachers to teach U.S. history through the lens of the U.S. Constitution. To deepen their content knowledge, teachers have attended Constitutional Academies with nationally renowned scholars and summer Constitutional Institutes organized by the Constitutional Rights Foundation and they have traveled to James Madison’s Montpelier for seminars held at the home of the father of the Constitution. Teachers worked in History Professional Learning Teams (HPLTs), and over one hundred elementary, middle, and high school teachers representing fifty-six schools have participated in the program. One participant described it as “the best and most important professional development program in (her) thirty-five-year career.”
—Washington

TEACHING AMERICAN HISTORY IN SOUTH CAROLINA

teachingUShistory.org

South Carolina tackled professional development through two Teaching American History (TAH) grants and from a statewide perspective. Teaching American History in South Carolina (TAHSC) emphasizes developing relationships between educators and local community resources in order to teach and learn history. From a pedagogical essay to virtual tours of selected local cultural and historical sites, TAHSC helps teachers develop innovative teaching techniques to connect national history to local and regional events, people, and places. The TAHSC website incorporates a variety of teaching tools with an emphasis on virtual tours and links to South Carolina cultural and historic sites to encourage the use of community resources to teach history.
—South Carolina

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

FOURTH ANNUAL TEACHING AMERICAN HISTORY (TAH) SYMPOSIUM


This symposium, which will take place before the Organization of American Historians Annual Meeting, will include Professor Sam Wineburg of Stanford University as keynote speaker, discussing the impact that the TAH program is having on the larger fields of history and history education. Everyone involved in TAH grants (directors, evaluators, teachers, consultants) is invited to attend and participate.
As part of the Lincoln Bicentennial celebrations, Harvard University’s Houghton Library will cosponsor (with the Lincoln Forum and the Lincoln Group of Boston) a symposium on “Abraham Lincoln at 200: New Perspectives on His Life and Legacy.” The symposium, to be held at Houghton Library and other Harvard University venues, will coincide with a major exhibition featuring books, manuscripts, ephemera, and artifacts from Houghton Library’s Abraham Lincoln Collection. The symposium will examine or reexamine several aspects of Lincoln’s career, including his views on race and slavery, his role as Commander-in-Chief, his use of the press to shape public opinion, his relationship with Congress and influence on the legislative process, and his role as a politician and a party leader.

**CONFERENCE ON EMANCIPATION AND RACE**

April 16–18, in Washington, DC
abrahamlincoln200.org

The Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Commission and Howard University in Washington will co-produce a conference on “Emancipation and Race in the Age of Lincoln.” The conference will focus on the international dimension of emancipation and will compare different nations’ approaches to the issue of emancipation. The conference coincides with the District of Columbia’s Emancipation Day and will feature public evening events.

**GRANTS AND FELLOWSHIPS**

**HORACE MANN ABRAHAM LINCOLN FELLOWSHIP**

February 12th Deadline!
https://www.horacemann.com/resources/fellowships/default.aspx

This fellowship features a five-day institute in June and July 2009, at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum in Springfield, Illinois, featuring a curriculum designed by the ALPLM Foundation. Round-trip transportation, lodging, and most meals are covered. The fellowship is open to full-time K-12 teachers from any discipline in the U.S. Applications are accepted online.
WORKSHOPS

LINCOLN SUMMER SEMINAR, GILDER LEHRMAN INSTITUTE OF AMERICAN HISTORY

February 15th Deadline!
July 5–11, 2009, at Gettysburg College
gilderlehrman.org/teachers/seminars1.html

Professors Gabor Boritt and Matthew Pinsker examine the War President Abraham Lincoln and the transformation of the United States during and after the Civil War. The seminar focuses on the central role of Gettysburg. Lecture topics include battlefields and soldiers; slavery and race; and Lincoln’s transition to a resolute war leader. The seminar is open to public, parochial, and independent school teachers and National Park Service rangers.

COMMUNITY IN AFRICAN AMERICAN CULTURE: 1917–1968

Online Workshop begins on February 12
Apply Now! Deadline to Register is January 16, 2009.
nationalhumanitiescenter.org/ows/index.htm

This online workshop by the National Humanities Center explores African American identity and community from 1917 to 1968. Led by distinguished scholars, each workshop is conducted through lecture and discussion using conferencing software and runs sixty to ninety minutes. A resource workshop identifies central themes within a topic and explores ways to teach them through the close analysis of primary texts, including works of art and the use of discussion questions. Texts are drawn from anthologies in the Center’s Toolbox Library. Participants need only a computer with an Internet connection, a speaker, and a microphone.