

Pre-visit Materials

Interpreting California: The Art of History

June 10 – October 2, 1999



These pre-trip materials were designed to support the exhibition *Interpreting California: The Art of History*. When used in conjunction with the exhibit, this guide can provide a meaningful experience for students studying California History. This guide does not, however, provide a comprehensive historical and cultural overview. It is designed as a supplementary tool to enhance your visit to the California Historical Society.

The *Interpreting California* Pre-visit Materials were written and compiled by Janelle Wise Graves, Director of Education, and Larisa Somsel, Education and Outreach Coordinator at the California Historical Society, 1999.

Table of Contents

Introduction to the Exhibition	1
School & Youth Group Guidelines	2
Preparing for Your Tour	3
II Future Historians	7
Future Historians Check List	8
Creating a Classroom Museum	9



Introduction to the Exhibition

California's history, topography, and people can be studied through an abundance of visual and written material. They can be interpreted through visual art, revealed by photographs, read about in books and manuscripts, and discovered in artifacts. The California Historical Society preserves significant collections in each of these areas that together illuminate not only California's rich history, but also the state's distinctiveness and diversity. These collections ensure that the history of California will be kept alive and accessible as the process of interpretation continues to evolve with each new generation.

Interpreting California aims to examine California's history entirely through the Society's permanent collection. The exhibition showcases a wide variety of objects ranging from celebrated paintings, texts, and photographs by nationally recognized individuals, to the commercial illustrations, snapshots, and diaries created and written by ordinary Californians. When viewed together, these objects may serve to be contradictory—or mutually reinforcing.

While the exhibition aims to provide an overview of nineteenth-century California history, it is also meant to offer a survey of the Society's collections. Founded in 1871, the Society has collected for well over a century, and, as with any collection, there are areas of particular strength, and areas of weakness. Therefore, there may be places, people, and events that receive undo attention, while others are given limited consideration.

The exhibition is loosely divided into three sections. These sections include the state's early inhabitants and settlers, its industry and commerce, and its glorious landscape. The personalities that shaped these areas are interspersed throughout the exhibition. The objects in each section offer interpretations of history, and of California, and together they help us tell the story of an earlier time and a remarkable place.

By Scott Shields, Fine Arts Curator

School & Youth Group Guidelines

In order to insure that all visitors have a pleasant experience in the galleries and to protect the safety of our objects, the following rules have been established for school and youth groups. We want you to enjoy your visit to the California Historical Society, so please carefully review these guidelines with your students and chaperones before your scheduled visit.

Our galleries are open for tours by reservation Tuesday through Saturday, from 9:00am- 3:00pm.

Students should be accompanied by the recommended number of chaperones:

Grades K-5, 1 chaperone per 5 students

Grades 6-12, 1 chaperone per 10 students

If possible, please have your students wear nametags.

Students must be accompanied by a chaperone at all times.

The preferred maximum number of students and chaperones per tour is 30.

No gum, food, or drinks are allowed in the galleries.

No photography is allowed in the galleries.

Backpacks, large handbags, and bags from the Bookstore must be checked in at the front reception area.

Due to its size, only five students are allowed into the Bookstore at a time.

Pencils are the only writing instruments allowed in the galleries.

Please do not touch works of art. Remember, pointing can cause an accident.

There is no running allowed in the galleries.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation!

Preparing for Your Tour

To prepare your class for their visit to the California Historical Society, it will be helpful to introduce them to the following material.

What is CHS?

The California Historical Society (CHS), the State's official historical society, is a non-profit educational institution committed to serving the public at large. Knowledge of the past enables people to understand the present and to make informed decisions that will affect the future. The mission of the Society is to ensure that the history of California and the West is kept alive and made accessible for the enlightenment of everyone. To fulfill this mission, the organization is a resource for people who seek to know about California's past: the Society preserves, collects, interprets, publishes and, exhibits materials about the history of California and the West.

What will you do there?

At the museum your class will take part in a one-hour docent-led tour of the exhibition. During this tour your Docent, or guide, will show you art works, objects, and artifacts and teach you all about them and the role they played in California's history. It is okay to ask questions, in fact we encourage it! The best part about history, is that we are all a part of it. We encourage your group to share their stories as well. After the tour your class will participate in a hands-on activity or a creative writing project that is related to the exhibition.

What is a museum?

A museum is a place where objects, artifacts, and art works are stored, collected, and cared for. It is also a place where you can go to learn about history, art, science, and the world. Because we are trying to preserve our objects for future generations, we ask that you don't touch them.



Why do we ask that you do not touch?

Although we all wish we could appreciate the objects through the experience of touch, there are many reasons why it is important that we do not.

- Many of the objects in our collections are one-of-a-kind originals that cannot be replaced. If something happened, we could lose an important part of history.
- Everyone, students, teachers, and museum employees alike, has oils and acids on their skin that can damage works of art. Think about the fingerprints you leave behind when you touch a window. Imagine what hundreds of years of fingerprints could do to a piece of art or an object.

What is an historian?

Webster's Dictionary defines the word historian as: 1. A writer of history; a chronicler; an annalist. 2. a writer or compiler of a chronicle. An historian, however, can be described in even more ways:

- A reader
- A recorder
- A writer
- A psychologist
- A detective
- A mind reader
- A fortune teller
- An economist
- A scientist
- An environmentalist
- A propagandist
- An archeologist
- A geologist

What does an historian need to do the job?

- Written records (primary sources)
- Artifacts
- Oral histories
- Images drawn or photographed
- Film
- An open mind
- Dialog with others

What stands in an historian's way?

- His or her perspective
- Lack or loss of information
- Conflicting information
- Altered information

What is history?

- A record, background.
- An account of past events and developments.
- The past.
- The academic discipline of understanding and interpreting past events.

One cannot live without history. It is part of our everyday lives and is happening all around us. Some history is recorded for remembrance. Some passes by unnoticed and is therefore forgotten. Some historical events achieve widespread notice. Others stay within a small circle of community, family, or the individual.

With modern technologies such as film, video, sound recording, the World Wide Web, etc., the amount of "history" lost has certainly diminished, adding the complication of determining what knowledge is truly important from what is trivial.

A person would be hard-pressed to say they don't like history. Initially they may moan about formal, textbook history, but once they understand that they too are part of history, and how close they are really linked to the past, history truly comes alive!

Writing letters to friends, hanging certificates on walls, learning about family members, keeping family photos, videos, family trees – each is an action involving history. By recreating, understanding, accepting, and making your own history and memories (a beautiful piece of art, a memorable performance on the playing fields), these actions become part of your own personal history.

Gossip, discussion of sports, news events, etc. are all about history. What happened, what should have happened, what may happen next? What makes history interesting for most is that there is immediacy to the issue, a personal connection to the events.

The history learned in school may be removed from your immediate, personal history, but it can also be fun because you can:

- participate with your imagination.
- investigate like a detective, analyze the clues, discover the "real" story after all these years.
- dream/fantasize about the adventures, the noble deeds, the breakthroughs.
- imagine yourself back in time. Where would you be? What would you be doing? How would it be different from today?
- link events from the past to events in your everyday life.
- understand history as a resource for making informed decisions about the future.

History classes will help you to gain insight as to why something that happened hundreds of years ago still effects us today, or plays a role in our everyday lives. For example, why is San Francisco's football team call the 49ers?

History is not an exact science. No matter how hard we try and distance ourselves from the personal, we still will view history with our own perspective, our own prejudices. As hard as we may try, we will still be inflicting our viewpoint of history on others. That is why the *Interpreting California* exhibit is so interesting. You and your students will view objects that recorded California's history many years ago. Do you think everything in the exhibit will accurately record history as we know it today? If two artists were asked to record the same event, would their art works or stories be the same? *Interpreting California* is a unique way to look at history through the eyes or lenses of individuals who may or may not share the same views of California's past.



Future Historians

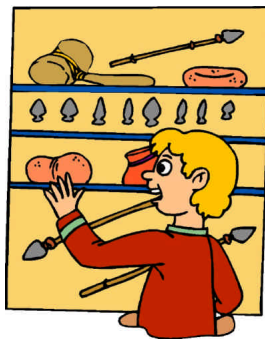
The California Historical Society invites your class or group to be Future Historians in a special exhibition you'll help create.

For the past year, California has been celebrating the sesquicentennial (the 150th Anniversary) of the Gold Rush, and next year we will be celebrating the sesquicentennial of California's statehood.

We would like your students to imagine that they are working at the California Historical Society 150 years in the future, and that they are creating an exhibit on the 300th anniversary of California. Have your class brainstorm and decide what single object – a painting, a book, a photograph, an object – best represents California. Be creative! If your class chooses a famous painting, have them paint their own version. Perhaps they'll choose a pair of Mickey Mouse ears, or even a mouse pad! They are the historians.

Once your class has chosen its object, have them write a short label (on the provided note card, or any 4x6 note card) describing the object and why they think it best represents California. Bring your object and label to your Docent tour, and we will display it in the CHS Education Gallery during the *Interpreting California* exhibit (along with a Polaroid of your class taken during the tour).

Unless otherwise arranged, your object and label will be returned at the close of the *Interpreting California* exhibit (October 2, 1999). So, put our heads together, and become Future Historians at CHS!



Future Historians

Check List

1. Have your students imagine that they are working at the California Historical Society 150 years in the future, and that they are creating an exhibit on the 300th anniversary of California.
2. Have your class brainstorm and decide what **single** object – a painting, a book, a thing - best represents California.
 - + One object per class please.
 - + Objects can stand no taller than 12 inches, and be no wider than 15 inches on one side. (The object case is 7'10"x15"x12", and will display several objects.)
 - + Please be sure to mark the bottom of your object with the teacher's name, school, and the date of your tour.
3. Write a label describing the object and why they think it best represents California.
 - + You may use the provided 4x6 note card, or create your own.
 - + Labels must be 4x6 in size.
 - + Students may hand write, type, or use a computer to create their labels.
 - + Typical museum labels include the artist or maker's name; the title, or name of the object; the date it was made (if known); and an explanation of the significance of the object.
4. Bring your object and label to the California Historical Society on your scheduled visit.
5. Have your class picture taken and become a part of the California Historical Society's *Interpreting California* exhibition – a part of history!

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Creating a Classroom Museum

If you would like to take the “Future Historian” project one step further, try using this wonderful activity created by the Smithsonian Office of Education. You may also find this activity on the World Wide Web at: <http://educate.si.edu/resources/lessons/collect/beymus/beymus0a.htm>

Credits and Acknowledgments

This lesson was based on the writing workshops developed by Thomas E. Lowderbaugh, Ph.D., formerly Assistant Director, Administration, Smithsonian Office of Education, Smithsonian Institution

Writers

Jody Marshall
Michelle Smith
Leslie O'Flahavan

By planning, designing, and building their own museum exhibition, your students can bring the educational resources that museums offer to others in your school. They'll sharpen their information-gathering, organizational, and problem-solving skills by writing labels and other documentation for the objects in the exhibition.

About the Activity

This activity comes from the curriculum guide *Collecting Their Thoughts: Using Museums as Resources for Student Writing*. That publication offers practical ways for teachers to use museums--in particular, the works of art, artifacts, collections, and other materials they contain--as a basis for student writing. Emphasizing the process of writing rather than simply the end product, this and other activities in the booklet invite students to look, explore, and think.

The approaches put forth here will work in any community. Local museums, historic houses, and nature centers contain primary-source objects that you and your students can use to stimulate descriptive and creative writing. For more ideas on how to use local non-museum institutions as a basis for writing activities, visit the *Using Community Resources to Enrich Your Curriculum* lesson plan on the World Wide Web at: <http://educate.si.edu/resources/lessons/collect/beymus/beymus0a.htm>.

If taking students to such a site isn't feasible, you can adapt the lesson for use in the classroom. For example, display prints or postcards of paintings about which students can write original stories. You can also use online resources such as museum Web sites to find images of and information about works of art and other objects. For a more animated, "real-time" lesson, you can arrange to have a museum educator or art historian give a presentation to your classroom.

Do Your Homework

If you plan to include a field trip as part of this activity, try to visit the museum yourself a few weeks before you take your class. Familiarize yourself with its layout by locating restrooms, shops, cafeterias, and classrooms. Note which exhibitions are in which galleries and obtain a

floor plan and background information to study. Also pick up copies of the floor plan for your students or reproduce and distribute your copy. Shortly before the trip, go over the floor plan with the group so they'll be somewhat familiar with how the museum is laid out.

Talk with the museum's outreach, education, or public programs staff well before your trip. Tell them about your class writing project and ask if visitors are allowed to carry backpacks, bring pens or pencils into the galleries, or sit on the floor while they write. The staff members can help by notifying guards about the students' visit, and some may even be able to assist you during the activity. Staff members can also make sure that the exhibition you wish to visit will be open when you bring your class.

If parents or volunteers will be helping to chaperon your visit, prepare them ahead of time. Let them know which parts of the museum you plan to use and familiarize them with the steps in the lesson and kinds of questions that students might ask. Make sure that they understand the purpose of the visit and the activity you have planned.

Model the activity in the classroom before going to the museum. If students are familiar with the process ahead of time, they will be able to concentrate better on the objects and exhibitions.

Once you and your group are at the museum, review its layout and features. You may also want to walk through the museum with your students before starting the activity.

Write with your students! By working on the writing assignment alongside your students, you can demonstrate that you value writing and that everyone must work to produce good results. In addition, you will learn from firsthand experience how much of a challenge the activity presents.

Designing Your Own Activities

If you like the approaches used in this activity and would like to design similar exercises tailored to your own communities' strengths, the following tips should help you get started.

Assess Your Community's Resources

Not every community has a large museum with extensive collections on a variety of topics, but almost all communities have valuable resources that can inspire your students to write. Statues, memorials, landmarks, and other objects have stories to tell, and they'll serve as excellent resources for writing activities similar to the one presented here. Opportunities for writing are also available in local parks, nature centers, historic buildings, and other community locations.

If your budget does not allow for field trips, you can bring objects into the classroom or have students bring them in. You may also arrange to have another important community "resource" come into the classroom. Many hobbyists, artisans, writers, and collectors are happy to share their knowledge with young people. Does someone in your community make musical instruments? Collect Japanese prints? Do historical dramatizations? Such people can often stimulate students with their enthusiasm.

When arranging to have speakers or demonstrators come into the classroom, keep in mind that such guests appreciate a clear idea of what you would like them to do and how long you would like their program to last. Also let your guests know how their presentation fits into the class's lessons. Such guidelines will help them fit their program to your needs.

Work with Museum Educators

If you decide to build the activity based on exhibitions at a local museum, staff there may be able to help you. At the very least, a staff member should be able to help your students become

familiar with the museum by leading them on a tour. In addition, there may be education specialists who can help you develop your activity. (Many museums also offer activity sheets and other materials that you may find useful as supplements to the activity.) Museum staff might also be on hand during the activity to answer questions or provide interesting background information that students could incorporate into their writing.

Work with Other Teachers

Developing activities that draw upon museums and other community resources can take time and effort, so you may want to consider collaborating with at least one other teacher. Besides being able to share the workload, working with other teachers will allow you to share information about community resources. As part of such a cooperative venture, you could have your students work with children from another class. For example, students in the two classes could critique and edit each other's writing.

Involve Your Students

Invite students to participate in designing writing activities. One way to do this is to ask them what they would like to learn about their community and then use their ideas as a basis for developing one or more activities. Another way to get students involved is to help them choose an audience. Knowing ahead of time who they will be writing for will help students communicate more effectively.

Use Online Resources

Last but certainly not least, tap into the resources available online from countless museums and historical sites around the world. Many of these institutions offer high-resolution images of their collections, which you and your students can study without having to leave the classroom. For a list of useful online sites, see the Additional Resources section.

ACTIVITY OVERVIEW

Students create a museum exhibition based on a theme of their choosing using items they've brought to the classroom.

Objectives

Students will be able to:

- choose a theme for a museum exhibition
- select appropriate objects and other materials for the exhibition
- devise a plan for laying out and building the exhibition
- write concise interpretive materials for the exhibition
- determine which of the exhibition's elements would attract an audience and compose promotional pieces or brochures for the exhibition

Materials

Paper and pens or pencils; objects for the exhibition; poster board; other materials as needed for building the exhibition.

Subjects

- Mathematics
- History
- Language Arts
- The Arts
- Life Skills

PREPARATION

Assess the space available for a student exhibition.

Your exhibition can be as big or small as you and your students want it to be. If you prefer to keep it small, you could limit the exhibition to an area inside the classroom itself or to a display case in the hallway. A common area in the school will work for more elaborate exhibitions. You might also want to consider having the students set up their exhibition in a community center, library, or other area outside the school. If you choose this option, you may need to make arrangements some time in advance.

If students will be bringing objects from home, write a note explaining the project to parents.

Tell parents that the students will be bringing objects from home. Be sure to explain that you can't guarantee the objects' safety. (Students needn't be limited to bringing objects from home; they can also make crafts or other objects.)

If possible, arrange to have a museum staff person available to answer questions at the museum.

The students will be visiting the museum to get a feeling for how exhibitions are put together and to get ideas for their own exhibition. A museum staff person, docent, or other person who is very familiar with the exhibition and how it was created can answer students' questions and shed light on the process of planning an exhibition. Such a person can also discuss ways objects and information are presented in exhibitions, such as in dioramas (three-dimensional representations of particular scenes), case exhibits (objects arranged inside a glass-fronted case), period rooms (actual or recreated rooms using authentic objects from a certain time period), and other types of displays.

If possible, set up a behind-the-scenes tour.

A tour of an exhibition in the process of being built can help students see the steps that go into bringing an exhibition to life.

Ask for an exhibition script and photos.

Ask if the museum will lend you a copy of an exhibition script. Many museums make scripts available upon request. (Since scripts can be hundreds of pages long, you may want to ask for just a few pages.) A script will provide students with examples of the way people create an exhibition's written material.

Also ask if you can borrow photos of the exhibition. Photos will be useful in helping students see how an exhibition's written material is arranged in relation to the objects on display.

Develop a questionnaire for students to fill out while at the museum.

To help students think about how exhibitions impart information to visitors, create a questionnaire that they can fill out while at the museum. Include questions such as the following:

- Does the exhibition seem to be effective at presenting information to visitors? (Keep in mind that whether or not you personally like the subject matter isn't the point. What is important is whether or not the exhibition is successful at getting its information across.)
- What do you like or dislike about how the exhibition is presented? How are the objects positioned? Does lighting play a role in the exhibition?
- How are the objects protected from damage?
- What might be other ways to protect objects?

IN THE CLASSROOM

Clarify what is meant by the terms "museum" and "exhibition."

Ask students what constitutes a museum and present the definition of a museum as a place in which objects--often those of a historical, scientific, or artistic nature--are displayed. Next ask for their ideas about how museum objects are arranged in their displays. Explain that they are usually tied together thematically into an exhibition. Ask the students for examples of exhibitions they've seen and the themes or subjects on which the exhibitions were based.

Have students brainstorm ideas for an exhibition.

Divide the class into groups of four or five and have them suggest possible themes for an exhibition of their own creation. To help the students get started, you might want to suggest possible themes, such as When We Were Babies, Who We Are, Where We Live, Our Ancestors, Our Neighborhood, The History of Our School, Hobbies, and Friends.

Tell the students to think about objects they could bring from home that would support the themes they suggest. Such objects should be capable of conveying information about the theme to the audience. Explain that students can bring in many different kinds of objects, such as books, photographs, cassette tapes, clothing, letters, items that symbolize an important event, and even worn or broken items. If students can't think of appropriate items for a particular theme, that's a good sign that the theme may not work as the subject of an exhibition.

Have the groups present their ideas.

Give the groups time to present briefly their exhibition themes. For each theme, have the students point out why it would translate into a good exhibition. Then have the class vote on the top two or three themes. Tell the students to write down these themes, leaving a few inches of space between each one. They'll be taking this list with them when they go to the museum.

AT THE MUSEUM**Walk through one or more museum exhibitions with the students.**

Explain that the main purpose of your walk-through is to get the students thinking about ways they can approach their own exhibition. Tell them to observe the exhibition with an eye toward how the information is presented. Hand out the questionnaires you made in step 6 of the Preparation section and have students fill them out as they go through the exhibition.

Also tell the students to think about whether some of the techniques in the exhibition would lend themselves to the themes they chose. For example, if the exhibition uses recorded music, the students may want to consider whether or not music would work (and be appropriate) in their exhibition. Have them write down any ideas the exhibition inspires under the appropriate themes on their list of the top two or three that the class came up with.

Give students time to talk with a museum staff person.

If you have been able to make arrangements to have a staff person on hand, encourage the students to ask any questions they might have about how an exhibition is put together. A staff person might also be able to provide specific ideas about how your students can approach their own exhibition.

BACK IN THE CLASSROOM**Have students vote on a final exhibition theme.**

Ask students to share any exhibition ideas that their trip to the museum inspired. Discuss the pros and possible cons of each of the top exhibition themes, and then have students vote on a final theme. Also have them suggest exhibition titles.

Have each student bring in one or more objects for the exhibition.

Put the students' objects on a table. Give everyone a chance to observe the goods, then have the students break into groups of four or five to find ways of organizing the objects for display. Have the groups address the following questions:

- Based on the objects students brought in, should the theme be revised or changed in any way?
- Which objects are similar, and how are they similar? (Also consider any similarities among the reasons people chose certain objects.)
- Which objects should be the first ones viewers see? Why?
- Which objects should be the last ones viewers see? Why?

Based on their answers to these questions, and on any other ideas that they discuss, have the groups write up a list of recommendations of how the exhibition should be set up.

Have students write labels for their objects.

Explain that, in museums, the word "label" refers to the panels of printed information in an exhibition. Then tell the students that they'll be responsible for writing labels for their own objects. List the following guidelines where everyone can see them. (If you were able to get a copy of an exhibition script, put it where the students can refer to it for ideas.)

- Identify the object. (You might also want to state when it was created, if you know this information.)
- Explain what it's made of.
- State who owns the object. (You can also include why the object is important to the owner or to other people.)
- Point out any particular parts that the viewer should pay attention to and explain why they matter.
- Keep your label short. (Remember that exhibition visitors don't want to spend all their time reading. Also keep in mind that exhibition space is limited.)

Explain that research is often an important part of setting up an exhibition. Curators try to find out as much as they can about the objects they're working with, in part so they can effectively interpret the objects (in the form of written labels, lectures, and so on) to exhibition visitors. Encourage the students to do any additional research, as necessary, on their objects. For example, if the object a student brings in belongs to a grandparent, perhaps the student could talk to the grandparent to find out more about the object.

Have students revise their labels.

After the students finish writing, divide them into pairs or small groups and have them exchange the labels they've written. Tell them to try to read each others' work from the point of view of someone visiting the future exhibition and, if necessary, to comment on how the labels could be made clearer, more informative, and livelier. Then have the students revise their labels and copy them onto poster board for the exhibition. (Remind the students to write neatly or, if they are using computer-generated labels, to use clear fonts. Have them make their type large enough to be seen from several feet away.)

Have students work in groups to set up the exhibition.

Assign each group a different task to complete in getting the exhibition ready for visitors. (Explain that in museums, exhibitions are usually the result of teamwork.) Here are some suggestions for group tasks:

- **Floor Plan Group** Designs the overall plan for the exhibition. Point out that traffic flow is one of the most crucial elements to keep in mind. Have students give the recommendations

they generated in step 2 to the members of this group. Encourage the group to consider the recommendations as they design the floor plan.

- **Graphics Group** Makes all the large signs for the exhibition; writes final copy for introductory label (telling visitors what to expect) and final label (summarizing the entire exhibition) as well as any additional labels for various areas within the exhibit.
- **Construction Group** Arranges tables and shelves and puts all objects into place. To provide ideas for how to arrange labels and objects, place any photos you were able to get from the museum exhibition in an area where everyone can refer to them. (Depending on time and materials, you might also want to suggest that the students build simple display cases.)
- **Publicity Group** Writes, edits, and distributes announcements and brochures about exhibition. If the exhibition is accessible to the public, have the students write announcements and send them to local newspapers or radio stations.
- **Exhibition Guide Group** Writes, edits, and illustrates a brochure describing the exhibition's objects and theme. Provides any additional information that isn't included in panels. (Provide students with examples of such brochures, which many museums produce.) Have students put completed brochures in a prominent location near the beginning of the exhibition.

Invite visitors to come to the exhibition.

In addition to parents, school staff, and other students, you might want to consider inviting people from a local museum or historical society. Also consider having the students give tours of the exhibition, using narrations they've written themselves.

Revise the exhibition, as necessary.

Give students time to observe visitors in the exhibition. Explain that, while they're observing, they should try to keep in mind whether the exhibition seems to be serving visitors' needs and getting across the information students intended. For example, can visitors easily see displayed objects? Are labels positioned so that, to the extent possible, people who are reading them aren't obstructing other people's views? Suggest that students ask visitors for their feedback on the exhibition, then have the students work in groups to come up with any recommendations for improving the exhibition. If such improvements are feasible, have the students make the necessary changes.

GET CONNECTED

Even if your class cannot visit a museum or historical society, most of this activity takes place in the classroom, and the Internet can offer many of the resources that cultural institutions might offer. For example, after students have completed step 3 of the In the Classroom section of this activity, have them browse through some of the museum sites listed in the Additional Resources section. If you find a lot of exhibitions on subjects similar to one or more of the preliminary themes that the students have chosen, odds are good that they will be able to construct an exhibition based on those topics. Use this method of online canvassing to help students narrow down their available choices of

Exhibition themes.

Once they have chosen their topic, students can call upon the expertise of museum professionals to help them display and create labels for their objects, even if your class does not have access to a nearby cultural institution. From the research in step 1, choose one or several museums that have presented exhibitions similar in theme to the one your students wish to create. Next, have students send electronic mail (e-mail) to the curators of these exhibitions (or to the museums'

general mailbox, if individual addresses are not available) asking these people if they would be willing to serve as advisors on the construction of the class exhibition. Establish a group of volunteers to write and track this correspondence.

Students can call upon these museum professionals at key points in the development of their exhibition to offer advice. (Emphasize that questions must be specific and clear, out of respect for the curators' time and to ensure the usefulness of their comments.)

Follow the construction of the exhibition as outlined in the Back in the Classroom section. Have students invite each of their "e-mail advisors" to view the exhibition, even if none will likely attend. The students should also send a formal letter of thanks to each advisor, including photographs of the finished exhibition, if possible.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Books

Atwell, Nancie, ed. *Coming to Know: Writing to Learn in the Intermediate Grades*. Portsmouth, N.J.: Boynton/Cook, 1989.

A set of articles written by teachers about approaches to writing in different content areas. Discusses ways to help children produce report writing that is as immediate as their personal writing. Chapter titles include "Letters to a Math Teacher" and "A Puffin is a Bird, I Think."

Calkins, Lucy McCormick, with Shelley Harwayne. *Living Between the Lines*. Portsmouth, N.H.: Boynton/Cook, 1990.

Written in collaboration with Teachers College Writing Project staff, this book offers new ideas for reading and writing workshops. Also discusses "notebooking," an updated version of journal writing.

Elbow, Peter. *Embracing Contraries: Explorations in Learning and Teaching*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1986.

A collection of essays that explore the conflicting pressures of teaching writing and how to resolve them. Discusses teachers' and students' ideas about authority, instruction, and evaluation.

Elbow, Peter. *Writing Without Teachers*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1973.

Elbow disputes the idea that writers compose linearly from outline to final draft. He offers another model of the composing process, beginning with free writing and ending with peer review.

Gillis, Candida. *The Community as Classroom: Integrating School and Community Through Language Arts*. Portsmouth, N.H.: Boynton/Cook, 1991.

This activity-filled book suggests ways that students can develop their language skills through community-based learning experiences.

Macrorie, Ken. *The I-Search Paper: Revised Edition of Searching Writing*. Portsmouth, N.H.: Boynton/Cook, 1988.

Macrorie shows students and teachers how to do an I-Search research project: a primary-source research method reported in a narrative style.

Moffett, James. *Active Voice: A Writing Program Across the Curriculum*, 2nd ed. Portsmouth, N.H.: Boynton/Cook, 1992.

The first edition of *Active Voice* can be credited with helping establish the process approach to teaching writing. The new edition, with student writing samples, continues to offer useful suggestions at both the writing-program and writing-topic levels.

Moffett, James, and Betty Jane Wagner. *Student-Centered Language Arts, K-12*, 4th ed. Portsmouth, N.H.: Boynton/Cook, 1991.

One of the most comprehensive texts on language arts teaching, this 460-page book discusses such topics as "Individualization, Interaction, Integration: Making Schooling More Effective"; "Labels and Captions: Signs, Exhibits, Maps, Charts"; and "True Stories: Writing from Recollection, Writing from Investigation."

Ponsot, Marie, and Rosemary Deen. *Beat Not the Poor Desk, Writing: What to Teach, How to Teach It, and Why*. Portsmouth, N.H.: Boynton/Cook, 1982.

Offers an inductive approach to teaching writing. Students develop an understanding of rhetorical structures inductively and apply them to different writing forms, especially the essay.

Routman, Regie. *Invitations: Changing as Teachers and Learners K-12*. Portsmouth, N.H.: Boynton/Cook, 1991.

A specific and warmly written book on the practical aspects of the whole-language classroom. Contains an extensive, annotated list of teacher resources.

World Wide Web

Museums on the Internet (<http://www.museumca.org/usa/>)

A great starting point for visiting museum sites around the world. Includes links to almost 400 museums and galleries in the United States as well as a hyperlinked list of cultural institutions worldwide, organized by country. Hosted by the Oakland Museum of California.

The Smithsonian Institution (<http://www.si.edu>)

Home page of sixteen museums and research institutes, including the National Air and Space Museum, the National Museum of American Art, the National Museum of American History, the National Museum of Natural History, and the National Portrait Gallery. For Spanish-speaking or bilingual students, check out "¡del Corazón!," an electronic magazine that offers images of Latino artwork from the National Museum of American Art as well as lessons and activities based on these works.

Yahoo! Museum and Gallery index (http://www.yahoo.com/Arts/Museums_and_Galleries)

One of the most thorough and up-to-date lists of museums and galleries around the world. If the institution that you are looking for does not appear on the list, you can search for it by name.

Other Sources of Information

Bizzell, Patricia, and Bruce Herzberg, eds. *The Bedford Bibliography for Teachers of Writing*. 3d ed. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1991.

An extensive bibliography of materials that the editors describe as "helpful to practicing writing teachers." Also includes a 1992 catalog of Bedford books of composition. Write to St. Martin's Press, Department GS, 175 Fifth Avenue, New York, New York 10010, or call 800-446-8923.

AskERIC http://www.indiana.edu/~eric_rec/ieo/askeric.html

(the Educational Resources Information Center) is a database of educational materials collected by the U.S. Department of Education from 1966 to the present. It consists of two sub files: Resources in Education (RIE), which offers access to current research findings, unpublished manuscripts, books, and technical reports; and Current Index to Journals in Education (CJIE), which includes 750 journals and serial publications.

Heinemann/Boynton-Cook

is a leading publisher of books for English teachers. Its catalog continues to expand, including "books that extend the approach to teaching and learning in the language arts into the areas of math, science, art, music, and drama..." as well as social studies. The company publishes a separate catalog for high school and college English teachers. For more information, contact Heinemann/Boynton-Cook, 361 Hanover Street, Portsmouth, NH 03801-3959. Telephone: 800-541-2086; FAX: 800-847-0938.

The National Council of Teachers of English

offers books, audiocassettes, videotapes, and position statements on all aspects of English teaching and publishes the following professional journals: *Language Arts*, *English Journal*, and *College English* for elementary, secondary, and college teachers respectively. It also publishes four other periodicals: *Research in the Teaching of English*, *Teaching English in the Two-Year College*, *The SLATE (Support for the Learning and Teaching of English) Newsletter*, and *The Quarterly Review of Doublespeak*. For more information contact the National Council of Teachers of English, 1111 West Kenyon Road, Urbana, IL 61801. Telephone: 800-369-6283; FAX: 217-328-9645.

The National Writing Project

is a nationwide program designed to improve student writing and the teaching of writing. Offers workshops, seminars, research programs, and other opportunities. For more information contact The National Writing Project, University of California, 5511 Tolman Hall, #1670, Berkeley, CA 94720-1670. Telephone: 510-642-0963; FAX: 510-642-4545.