

How to Analyze an Artifact

What is an artifact?

Artifacts are objects that are of historical or cultural interest. The artifacts tell us something about the time, place or society from which they emerged or are connected.

Some artifacts are important because they are **rare or unique**, like a painting or sculpture. Others are important because they are **common** and speak to the daily lives of ordinary people. And sometimes a seemingly common object takes on **special meaning** because of who used it, like the Prime Minister's desk or a famous general's uniform.

Museums collect different kinds of artifacts as evidence of past deeds, actions, and history. The **Canadian War Museum** collects artifacts that help people understand Canada's military history.

Part A - Understanding the Artifact

Consider **only the image of the artifact** when answering.

I See

Look at the artifact. What do you see? What stands out?

I Think

What is the artifact? Who used it? What makes you think that?

I Wonder

What questions do you have about the artifact? Where could you find answers to your questions?

Part B - Researching the Artifact

Consider the **complete Artifact Resource page** (photograph and text) when answering.

Look at the artifact and read the information about the artifact.

Why do you think this artifact is part of the collection at the Canadian War Museum?

What does this artifact tell you about military history?

Part B - Researching the Artifact

Consider the **relevant Historical Overview** and the **complete Artifact Resource page** when answering.

Look at the artifact and read the historical overview.

Sometimes artifacts **support** our understanding of history by providing evidence that aligns with what we expect to see. Sometimes artifacts cause of to **reexamine** our understanding of history by providing evidence that goes against our expectations or opens our eyes to new perspectives.

Does the artifact support the backgrounder, or does it raise new questions not covered in the historical overview?

How does the artifact help you understand the act of commemoration and remembrance in Canada?