



Pre- and Post-Visit Activities

Mercer Museum Visit

Grade Levels: Grades 2-6

Program Summary:

During your group's visit, you will learn that the Mercer Museum houses a vast collection of pre-Industrial tools that give our visitors a window into life in early America. Students will also learn the history of the man behind the museum, Henry Mercer, the museum itself, and his collections.

The following suggested activities are for students visiting the Mercer Museum. These activities are designed to be supplemental material to help students get the most out of their experience.



Pre-Activity:

Activity 1: A New Perspective

Some of the objects in the Mercer Museum are displayed in an unusual manner, like hanging from the ceiling. Henry Mercer displayed the objects this way for a few reasons, but one important reason was so that guests would look at everyday objects from a new or different perspective.

In your classroom, hang or view an everyday object in an unusual way.

Discuss with your students what they can see different about this object from the new viewpoint. What can they learn about this object from seeing it this way?

Post-Activities:

Activity 2: Preserving the Past

Henry Mercer thought it was important to preserve the past. He started collecting hand tools from pre-Industrial America because he was afraid that these objects would become lost to future generations.

Henry Mercer decided to begin his collection while there were still people around who used the tools he was collecting. This way he could get first-hand accounts as to how and why each tool was used. Mercer documented all of this information in the exhibits on display throughout the museum.

Students can view the following three images from the Mercer Museum collection or recall an object they saw at the Mercer Museum.

Students should consider:

- What is each of these objects?
- Do they tell us anything about the past?
- Do you think it is important to preserve objects like these? Why?
- What would studying these objects tell us?
- In your opinion, which object do you find the most interesting? Why?

Write a short paragraph answering those questions.



Spinning Wheel



Dulcimer (musical instrument)



Colonial School Desks

Activity 2: Archaeologists of the Future

Archaeologists study history through material culture, or things left behind.

Have your students find something in the classroom or bring in an object from home that they can analyze as an archeologist. If students are bringing in an object from home, they could trade their object with a classmate so that the object is more unfamiliar.

Ask your students to imagine that they are an archeologist 100 years into the future and they just discovered this object. Pass out the worksheet below to your students for them to analyze their “finds.”

Students can then share their observations and answers to the following Big Idea questions:

- If this object was discovered on an archaeological dig 100 years from now, what questions might you ask about it?
- What would it tell people in the future about our lives today?

Archeologists of the Future Student Worksheet

Directions: Archeologists are people who study the history of humans through the remains they find (i.e. pottery, jewelry, tools, etc.). They study these remains for clues to discover information about the people who used them.

Imagine you are an archeologist 100 years into the future and have discovered this object. Investigate your object by answering the questions below.

Draw the object:

1. What is it made of? _____

2. What color is it? _____

3. How big is it? _____

4. Are there any words on it? What do they say? _____

5. Are there any designs on it? What are they? _____

6. Does it look like it was made by machine or by hand?

7. What do you think the object was used for?

8. Who do you think used this object?

9. How old do you think the object is? Why?

10. What other questions would you ask to find out more about this object? _____

Draw how you think the object was used:

