

Being a Museum Curator

Check out these examples of jobs that museum curators have!

Learning About New Artifacts That Arrive at a Museum

When a museum gets new artifacts, a curator is in charge of learning about them! A curator will look at the artifacts up close. Then, a curator will write take pictures of the artifact and write a report on it. The report will talk about where and when the artifact was found, what materials the artifact is made of, and any other details the curator might know. Examples of other details are what civilization the artifact came from, what it was used for, and how old the artifact is.



Working With Curators At Other Museums

If a curator wants to borrow an artifact from another museum, he or she has to talk with the curator who works there! The curators have to decide together how long the museum can borrow an artifact.



Answering Emails From the Public

Sometimes, people will email a curator with questions about an exhibit!



Checking Labels That Will Go Next To Artifacts

Curators check to make sure labels for artifacts are correct. This means that they check to make sure there aren't any spelling mistakes. They also make sure that the information is correct.



Organizing Special Events and Programs

Museum curators help organize events at a museum for kids and adults. For example, a curator might organize an event called "Unearthing Artifacts." Kids can come to the museum and learn about techniques used to safely remove artifacts from the ground. Kids will even get a chance to practice what they have learned by participating in a fake archaeological dig!



List of Artifacts

Circle two artifacts that you want to include in your exhibit.

Artifact #1

- This is a paper cartridge. A cartridge is a kind of container that held gun powder.
- The cartridge was placed in a small hand gun. Soldiers then fired the gun.
- This cartridge was never used. Instead, the soldier kept it as a souvenir of this very early battle.
- While soldiers were fighting, people were watching and eating lunch.



https://acwm.org/sites/default/files/resources/artifact_1.pdf

Artifact #2

- This is a rifle called a Spencer rifle.
- It was used by Union soldiers.
- Before using this rifle, Union soldiers' rifles did not shoot as many bullets. Soldiers liked using this rifle because it shot a lot of bullets.
- The Spencer rifle gave Union soldiers an advantage over Confederate soldiers. This was because the guns used by the Confederates did not shoot as many bullets.



<https://amhistory.si.edu/militaryhistory/collection/object.asp?ID=117>

Artifact #3

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https://s3.amazonaws.com/assets.saam.media/files/documents/2017-09/education_guide_civil_war_photography.pdf

Artifact #4

- This is a United States flag that was damaged when a Confederate soldier shot at it.
- Soldiers made a new pole so the flag continued to fly during battle.
- The flag was shot and torn apart in several places.



https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fort_Sumter_Flag#/media/File:Fort_Sumter_storm_flag_1861.jpg

Artifact #5

- This is a small glass bottle with a message inside.
- The message was sent from Confederate General Joe Johnston to Confederate General John Pemberton.
- The message is telling Pemberton that the Confederate army could not send extra supplies or soldiers because they were blocked by Union soldiers.
- The black objects in the bottle are caps that can be used in a gun. The caps are used to fire the guns.



https://acwm.org/sites/default/files/resources/vial_and_ciphred_message.pdf

Information on Battles

Battle of Bull Run

- This was the first major battle of the Civil War. It was fought in Virginia.
- There were way more Union soldiers compared to Confederate soldiers.
- Both Union and Confederate soldiers used guns to fire at each other.
- The battle was fought in farm fields and near a Bull Run Stream.
- Some people took picnic lunches and watched the battle.
- The Confederates won the battle even though they had fewer soldiers.

Battle of Chickamauga

- This battle was fought in Georgia.
- The battle was fought near several railroad tracks.
- The Confederates lost many men, including 10 of their generals.
- The Confederates won the battle.
- During this battle, Union soldiers used a new type of rifle for the first time.

Battle of Antietam

- This battle was fought in Maryland.
- It is considered one of the bloodiest battles of the Civil War. A lot of soldiers died.
- During the battle, soldiers fought at Burnside Bridge. Union soldiers fought to take the bridge from Confederate soldiers. The Union soldiers won the fight on the bridge.
- Union soldiers and Confederate soldiers also fought in corn fields and near a road, nicknamed “Bloody Lane.”
- The Confederates won the battle.

Battle of Fort Sumter

- This battle started the Civil War.
- It took place in South Carolina, near the city of Charleston.
- The battle started because the Confederacy did not want government troops in Charleston or at Fort Sumter.
- They asked that the government troops to leave Fort Sumter. They refused to leave!
- Confederate soldiers fired upon the fort for two days. The Confederates took over the fort.
- The Confederates won the battle.

Siege of Vicksburg

- Vicksburg was an important port city on the Mississippi River. A port city is a city located by water, like a river or ocean. Ships would bring supplies and food to the city.
- Union soldiers surrounded the city for a month! This meant that the Confederates were trapped in the city. The city ran out of food and supplies like medicine.
- The Union won the battle. This meant they controlled the Mississippi River.

Creating Labels

Name of Museum Curator: _____

Name of Artifact: _____

Observations about the artifact (color, shape, texture, etc.):

Battle the artifact is associated with: _____

Why is this artifact important to the Civil War?

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Observations about the artifact (color, shape, texture, etc.):

Battle the artifact is associated with: _____

Why is this artifact important to the Civil War?

Setting Up an Exhibit

Step 1: Choose artifacts

- Look through the list of artifacts.
 - Choose two you would like to include in your exhibit.
 - Match the artifact up with the battle you think it came from and fill the information out below:
- **Artifact I am choosing:** _____ **Battle I think it is from:** _____
- **Artifact I am choosing:** _____ **Battle I think it is from:** _____
- Have your teacher check your work. If you matched the artifacts correctly, move onto the next step. If not, try again.

Step 2: Create Replicas of the Artifacts

- Gather art supplies and building materials from your teacher. Use the supplies to create a replica of each of the artifacts.

Step 3: Create Labels for your Artifacts

- Use the "Creating Labels" handout to create a museum label for each of the artifacts you have created

Step 4: Create an Exhibit Sign

- Use construction paper and art supplies to create an exhibit sign that will tell museum visitors about your exhibit. The sign should include the following:
 - The name of the exhibit
 - The artifacts that can be found in the exhibit
 - The name of the museum curator(s) that designed the exhibit
 - Color

Step 5: Set Up Your Exhibit

You will now use all of the pieces of your exhibit you have created to arrange a museum exhibit.

- Find a space in the classroom to set up your exhibit.
- Include both artifacts, their labels, and your exhibit sign.
- Extra time? Add decorations or other flair to the exhibit.

Step 6: Visit Another Museum

Once all exhibits are set up, use the "Going to a Museum Handout" to visit another exhibit and evaluate that exhibit.

Teacher Key

Artifact Number	Artifact Name	Related Battle
1	Cartridge	Battle of Bull Run
2	Spencer Rifle	Battle of Chickamuga
3	Photograph of Bridge	Antietam
4	Flag	Battle of Fort Sumter
5	Message in a Bottle	Siege of Vicksburg

Going to A Museum

Name of Museum Curator: _____

Rate the exhibit on the following traits: (circle your answer)

- The exhibit had a clear sign that introduced the exhibit.

Strongly Agree

Agree

Neutral

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

- There were two clearly labeled artifacts in the exhibit.

Strongly Agree

Agree

Neutral

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

- The information included on the signs was correct.

Strongly Agree

Agree

Neutral

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

- The exhibit was neat, organized, and interesting to look at.

Strongly Agree

Agree

Neutral

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

- I learned about the Civil War from the exhibit.

Strongly Agree

Agree

Neutral

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

- What was the best part of the exhibit?

- What is one thing that could be improved in the exhibit?