

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!



Name: _____

List of Artifacts

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

Artifact #1

- This is a tool called a maul. A maul is a type of hammer.
- This would have been used by the Pawnee to build an earth lodge.
- The tool is made of stone and buffalo bone. A piece of buffalo hide is wrapped around it the bone.
- The stone might have come from a river and was attached to the bone by buffalo tendons.
- Mauls could be heavy to lift. Some might weigh as little as one pound or as much as 20 pounds.



<https://fineart.ha.com/itm/other/a-plains-stone-and-buffalo-hide-berry-maul/a/5302-70449.s>

Artifact #2

- This is a Pawnee Indian clay pot.
- This pot was probably used for cooking and storage.
- Pots like these would be found in the central area of the lodge where the cooking was done.
- Storage areas along the walls of the lodge might also have pots that held food.
- Some pots like this one would have patterns made by winding cords around the pot as it dried.



<https://www.kshs.org/kansapedia/kansas-archeology-middle-ceramic/18714>

Artifact #3

- This is a ladder that might have been used to climb down into a home dug in the ground.
- The ladder was made from tree branches that had been cut or found.
- The ladder was put together with nails.
- The ladders helped people get in and out of their homes.



<https://www.flickrriver.com/photos/48252806@N00/popular-interesting/>

Name: _____

Artifact #4

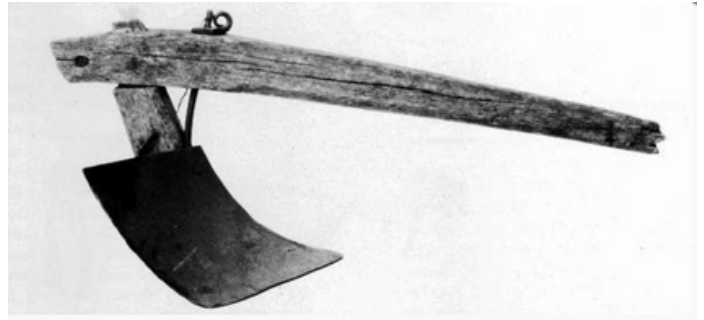
- This is heavy metal cooking pot known as a Dutch oven.
- It would be found in a pioneer's sod house.
- A Dutch oven was used to cook stews, soups, and other dishes.
- The iron handle allowed the pot to be hung over an open fire outside or a fireplace inside.
- The small pot legs allowed it to be set down on the ground or floor without tipping over.



<https://www.ereferencedesk.com/resources/state-symbols/utah/cooking-pot.html>

Artifact #5

- This is a farm tool called a steel plow.
- The plow was used by settlers to cut sod from the ground.
- Farmers used mules, horses or oxen to pull the plow.
- The plow's sharp edges cut through the heavy roots of the sod.
- A loud tearing sound would be heard as the plow cut through the ground.



<https://thestoryofjohndeere.weebly.com/deeres-plow.html>

Name: _____

Sod Houses and Lodges

Earth Lodges

- Earth lodges were built and used by the Pawnee Indians and the Kansas Indians.
- The earth lodges were circular and had dome-shaped rooflines.
- The first earth lodges were built around 1500 and were still in use in the early 1900s!
- A Pawnee village known as Kitkihahki had at least 40 earth lodges.
- As many as 40 to 60 people could live in a large earth lodge.

Dugout Houses

- Some of the first houses that settlers built were called dugouts.
- This is because the earth was dug out to make the shelter.
- Settlers would dig out earth from small hills.
- The dugout usually consisted of one underground room.
- These houses were temporary shelters. This means that until settlers could build a better and bigger house, they lived in a dugout.

Sod Houses

- This was one of the most common types of pioneer housing in Kansas.
- The houses were cheap to build because the materials came from the local environment.
- The sod was made up of hard packed dirt, prairie grasses, and roots.
- Settlers dug up sod and cut into rectangular shapes that were stacked together to build walls.
- Some settlers also built sod barns and stables to house farm animals and horses.

Name: _____

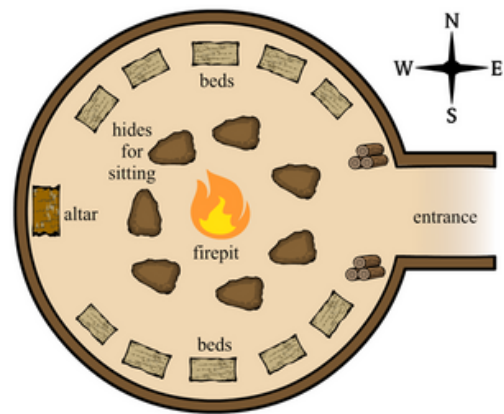
Sod Houses and Lodges

This is a photograph of an earth lodge. Earth lodges were built by many different Native American groups. In Kansas, the Pawnee and Kansas Indians built earth lodges. These structures were shaped like a circle with a rounded roof. These structures were made using timber poles that were covered with layers of branches and prairie grass. Then, mud was packed on top of the building to seal any cracks or holes in the building. When the mud dried the lodge was weather-tight. This means it would keep out the rain and the cold.



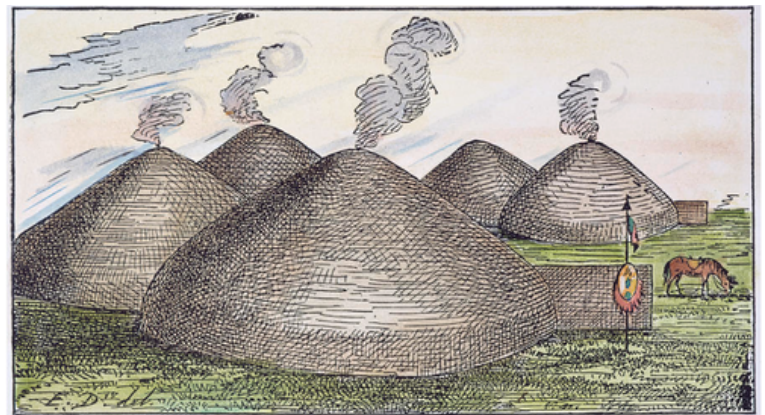
<https://www.britannica.com/topic/Pawnee-people>

This picture shows what the inside of a Pawnee earth lodge might look like. The center of the lodge was used for cooking and socializing. A fire pit was located in the center. The fire was used for cooking and heat. Beds were located all around the lodge. The beds were usually built off of the ground, so there would be storage underneath. There were also two pits where dried meat and vegetables were kept. A hole at the top of the earth lodge allowed smoke to escape, while also letting in light. At night, the Pawnee would look at the stars through the hole.



<http://nebraskastudies.org/1850-1874/native-american-settlers/earth-lodges-and-tipis/>

This is a picture of a Pawnee village. A village might have many earth lodges. The buildings were usually built close to each other. A single earth lodge might house several generations of a family. This meant that grandparents, parents, children and relatives all lived together.



<https://pixels.com/featured/pawnee-earth-lodges-1880-granger.html>

Name: _____

Sod Houses and Lodges

This is a photograph of a dugout. This was an early type of home built by settlers when they first came to Kansas. Building the dugout was hard work. Because there was not much lumber for building traditional homes, settlers looked for small hills like the one shown here. Settlers would dig out the area and then build a sod roof on top. Inside, the dirt walls were supported with either wood boards or rough poles made from tree branches. Settlers soon realized that while the dugout was comfortable during dry weather, it flooded when it rained.



<https://i0.wp.com/bevscott.com/bvs-content/uploads/2016/02/Nebraska-Dugout.jpg>

This is a photograph of a dugout in Kansas. Sometimes, settlers would build windows so light and air could get in. The dugout was usually one room that was below the ground. Notice the steps in the left of the picture. Those led to the ground outside. Many times, a simple wood ladder was used to go in and out of the house instead of steps.



<https://digitalcollections.nypl.org/items/510d47d9-ae66-a3d9-e040-e00a18064a99#/?zoom=true>

This is a photograph of a typical sod house that was built in Kansas and other Great Plains states. Because lumber was hard to find, settlers had to use the natural materials that were all around them. So settlers began building sod houses to live in. The houses were perfect for the Kansas climate. They were cool during the summer, and warm in the winter. If built properly, they could stand up against storms and blizzards. The sod houses were also fireproof because they were built of dirt.



https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sod_house#/media/File:Sod_house_1901.gif

Name: _____

Sod Houses and Lodges

This is a photograph of a settler and his family outside of their sod house. See the cow on the roof? Some houses were built into a hill, like this one. It was not uncommon to see farm animals on the roof as they grazed. In the nice weather, settlers would bring out household furniture to use outside. Women would move their sewing machines outside, where the light was better. Then when the weather turned cold or rainy, the furniture would be moved back inside again.



<https://history.nebraska.gov/collections/sylvester-rawding-sod-house>

This is a photograph of men cutting sod and loading it on a wagon. Most homesteaders cut bricks that were 18 inches wide by 24 inches long. The bricks were heavy too, weighing as much as 50 pounds each! It took almost 3000 bricks to build a 16 x 20 foot house. The sod bricks were laid so that the root-side was on top. This allowed the roots to grow into the brick above it. This helped make the house walls stronger.



<http://www.nebraskastudies.org/1850-1874/the-challenges-of-the-plains/building-a-sod-house/#lg=1&slide=0>

This is a photograph of the inside of a sod house in Kansas. Look at all the different tools and household objects. Most sod houses had only one room. There was usually not a lot of furniture in the house because there was not much space. Some people built their beds and tables into the walls. Others slept on pallets, which were beds made of straw or hay. In the morning, the beds were moved out of the way. Walls were used as places to store equipment and tools.



<https://www.kshs.org/index.php?url=km/items/view/443717>

Teacher Key to Identify Artifacts

Artifact Number	Artifact Name	Related Battle
1	Maul/Hammer	Earth Lodge
2	Pot	Earth Lodge
3	Ladder	Dugout
4	Dutch Oven	Sod House
5	Plow	Sod House

Name: _____

Creating Labels

Name of Museum Curator: _____

Name of Artifact: _____

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

Home the artifact is associated with: _____

Why is this artifact important to the Kansas frontier?

Name of Museum Curator: _____

Name of Artifact: _____

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

Home the artifact is associated with: _____

Why is this artifact important to the Kansas frontier?

Name: _____

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 home you think it came from and fill the information out below:
- **Artifact I am choosing:** _____ **Home I think it is from:** _____
- **Artifact I am choosing:** _____ **Home 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.

Name: _____

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
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- There were two clearly labeled artifacts in the exhibit.**

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
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- The information included on the signs was correct.**

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
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- The exhibit was neat, organized, and interesting to look at.**

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
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- I learned about the Kansas frontier from the exhibit.**

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
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- What was the best part of the exhibit?**

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

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