

Lesson 1: Curating History!

Concept Question: What is a curator and what does their job entail?

Topical Essential Question:

What decisions must curators make to tell historical stories?

Overarching Essential Question:

What are the causes of the American Revolution?

Learning Objectives:

Students will be introduced to the goals of the unit and will start thinking about their final project. Students will examine the job of a curator by navigating online exhibits at the Clements Library. Students will acknowledge that all historical stories have a purpose and perspective they are told from, and it is the job of historians to try to identify the biases and extract the truth from those stories.

Do Now: What do you think of when you hear, “The American Revolution”?

Make a list of the causes of the American Revolution

The Clements Library Online Exhibit Activity

Clements Library Site Navigation

- Go to the Clements Library homepage. <https://clements.umich.edu/>
- At the homepage in the right corner there is a tab called “Explore Collections.” Click on that tab.
- Now, scroll down the page until you see the “Digital Resources” section.
- Click the box that says, “Online Exhibits.”
- Scroll through the online exhibits that the Clements Library offers.

Clements Library exhibit browsing activity

- What about the exhibit is interesting?
- What story is the curator trying to tell?
- Whose perspective is shown in this exhibit?

The Clements Library Online Exhibit Activity

After you've skimmed a few exhibits, pick one that look the most interesting to you. For 20 minutes, examine this exhibit and respond to the following questions.

- What exhibit did you choose?
- Why did this exhibit look interesting to you?
- What decisions did the curator have to make to tell this story?
 - What documents did the curator choose?
 - Why did the curator choose these documents?
 - What story is the curator telling in this exhibit?
 - Why was it important for the curator to tell this story?
 - Whose perspective is shown in throughout the story?
 - Why did the curator choose to tell the story from this perspective?
 - Whose perspectives are left out of this story?

How can you be an effective curator?

Exit slip: What decisions must curators make to tell historical stories?