

Guidelines for Purchasing Artifacts

Introduction

Artifacts can be an excellent classroom resource. Over the course of the program, you will learn about how to interpret artifacts as primary sources and use them in your classroom. And yes, you can use funds from your \$600 materials allowance to purchase artifacts.

Buying artifacts can be more complicated than buying other classroom resources, and for that reason you are being given these guidelines and some restrictions.

First, and foremost, note the purpose of the materials allowance:

The purpose of the materials allowance is to enable you to have access to additional historical content and resources that can improve the teaching and learning of history by you and/or by your students.

Whatever you purchase (artifact or something else) *think about how it can help you in your social studies classroom.* If it can't—use another source of funding to purchase it (or don't buy it).

Definition: For our purposes, an artifact is a 3-dimensional object or an original document, manuscript, photograph, (historic or reproduction), or rare book.

Guidelines

1. You may spend no more than \$300 of your materials allowance on artifacts. You need to have a balanced mix of purchases.
2. Please be careful buying artifacts. Do not go to the first antiques fair that comes to town in the next few weeks and spend your \$300 all at once.
3. Historic artifacts can be expensive and they can be overpriced. Regardless of who's money you are spending on historic materials, if you are interested in artifacts, you need to do some research by looking at books and catalogs, and by visiting other collectors and vendors. You must get an idea of what is out there and how much things cost *before you* start buying—otherwise you can be taken for a ride.
4. FOR CLASSROOM PURPOSES, A QUALITY REPRODUCTION CAN GIVE YOUR STUDENTS THE PRIMARY SOURCE ANALYSIS EXPERIENCE THEY NEED. You do not need to have an original Hopewell effigy pipe or an autographed copy of de Tocqueville's *Democracy in America* in your classroom. Museum quality objects are not appropriate for hands-on classroom use that wears out the artifact.

5. Note that gift shops at historic sites often have quality reproductions of items related to the history of the site. Historical museums also typically offer a variety of reproductions of artifacts.
6. The materials allowance is not the place to turn to for funds to purchase Federal furniture for your living room.
7. Photos, posters, documents, and letters are great to use in your classroom. Many of these will be available to you free on resource CDs. Others may be purchased as reproductions from places such as the Ohio Historical Society, the Gilder-Lehrman Institute of American History, and the Library of Congress. See the *Connecting to the Past* website for more information. Reproductions such as these are much better to use in the classroom than expensive originals.
8. For artifact purchases of more than \$40, please email Judy and Stuart for prior approval.
9. Don't buy things your current or future principal might not like—for example, weapons such as muskets, swords, spears, etc., could be a problematic purchase because these are not always allowed in schools. Best talk to appropriate school officials first.
10. This is a grant focused on teaching American history. Try to keep your materials purchases (artifacts and other items) focused on that topic. If in doubt, ask Stuart.
11. If you do purchase an artifact or artifacts, we ask that you bring it to a seminar and take a minute at the beginning to show us all what you acquired and tell us how you intend to use it in the classroom.