

# Investigate: Grand River Artifacts (Grade 3-12)

## Program Description:

During the *Investigate* program, students will take the role of Museum curators and use close observation and critical thinking to discover the origin, meaning, and importance of real objects from the Museum's Collection. Students will learn how to handle and study primary sources and will be pushed to consider how singular objects or groups of objects can tell meaningful stories about our place.

## What content standards align with this program?

**Michigan Social Studies Strands:** H1 The World in Temporal Terms: Historical Habits of Mind, H3 The History of Michigan and the Great Lakes Region, G5 Environment and Society, P1 Reading and Communication, P2 Inquiry Research and Analysis

**NGSS Science and Engineering Practices:** Constructing Explanations, Engaging in Argument from Evidence

**ELA Common Core Standards by Domain:** Research to Build and Present Knowledge, Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas

## Museum Program Strand:

- Empower individuals to use observations and inquiry to understand arguments and design creative solutions.
- Help learners tell, interpret, create, and share compelling stories so no history is ignored or untold.

## This program is aligned with the following Museum Learner Outcomes:

Holders of Foundational Knowledge	Masters of Fundamental Literacies	Creative Thinkers and Doers	Generous Collaborators for Tough Problems	Learners For Life	
X	X			X	

## What will students know and be able to do after completing this program?

- Learners will be able to analyze primary sources (artifacts and photographs) and make inferences about the story or significance of the sources.
- Learners will be able to describe how the Grand River impacted the lives of people who lived in Grand Rapids between 1850 and 1910.

## What questions will students answer?

- What is a primary source?
- What is an artifact?
- How can we 'read' a primary source in order to learn from it?
- What story does this artifact or this group of artifacts have to tell?
- How does this artifact compare and contrast to objects we have today?

## Key Vocabulary

Artifact  
Primary Source  
Context  
Observations  
Inferences

## Materials List and Setup:

Collection of 10 artifacts  
Slideshow of photographs from Museum's collection (to provide context for the investigation).  
Gloves  
Artifact Investigation handouts  
Reflection sheet  
Whiteboard and expo markers

## Program Activities: 60 minutes

1. Engage
  - a. Informally assess student prior knowledge of key terms: artifact, primary source.
  - b. Introduce essential question for artifact investigation:
2. Explore
  - a. Provide context for the investigation: Share powerpoint of relevant primary sources--photographs--that give students a visual of the time period or issue under
    - i. "I notice, I wonder" activity during slideshow of photographs
  - b. How do we learn from objects? Observations to inferences
    - i. Model how to 'read an artifact' with whole class
  - c. Small groups of students will perform a close and detailed analysis of the artifacts at their table, using an artifact investigation handout.
3. Explain
  - a. Groups will share out the results to the rest of the group. Instructors will give prompts as needed
  - b. Groups will generate lists of the major takeaways we learned about the essential question from the artifact investigation. Instructor will record these on the board.
  - c. Instructor will introduce the concept of use/value categories. They will generate a list on the board of all the ways the Grand River was used in this time period (e.g. health and wellness, economy, transportation, recreation. Social services, etc.)
4. Elaborate
  - a. Give time for students to observe the Grand River outside of the window in modern day. Instructor will prompt learners to think about objects from society today that signify how we use and value the river.