

OBJECTS IN TIME

LESSON PLAN FIVE



RECOMMENDED GRADE LEVEL: Grades 7 to 12



OVERVIEW

This activity is designed to accompany the Artifacts section of the *Black Americans in Congress* website, history.house.gov/exhibitions-and-publications/baic/artifacts/artifacts/. Students have the opportunity to analyze artifacts associated with Black Americans who served in Congress. Students are encouraged to think about how artifacts can be used in the study of past events and people.



CURRICULUM CONNECTION

- U.S. History, American Government, African-American Studies, Social Studies, Art
- Civil Rights Movement, Women's Rights, Material Culture



OBJECTIVES

1. Students will define, describe, and analyze artifacts.
2. Students will analyze the relationship between artifacts and the historical record.
3. Students will analyze the relationship between artifacts and the African Americans who served in Congress.



LESSON PLAN

1. To help introduce students to the upcoming activity, lead a brief discussion using the questions below:
 - a. What are artifacts?
 - b. Who makes them and why?
 - c. How can artifacts be utilized by historians to study past events and people?
2. Based on the class discussion, create a definition for the word artifact.
3. Divide the class into small groups. Each group will choose, or be assigned, three artifacts from the online House Collections page, history.house.gov/collection/. Make sure to have your students click on the African-American Members tab. Instruct students that only one of the three objects should be a campaign button.
4. Distribute the “Artifact Analysis” worksheet (p. 1 of first Student Activity). Review the directions and ask students to complete the worksheet.
5. Have each group read the *Black Americans in Congress* profiles for the Members highlighted in the artifacts. Go to history.house.gov/exhibitions-and-publications/baic/black-americans-in-congress/ and click on Member Profiles for a list of African Americans who have served in Congress. Distribute the “Congressional Snapshot” worksheet (p. 1 of second Student Activity). Review the directions and ask students to complete the worksheet.
6. Have students choose **one** artifact and **one** of the options below to present their findings from the “Artifact Analysis” and “Congressional Snapshot” exercises to the class:
 - a. An exhibit for a museum or historical society featuring the artifact and the Member
 - b. A unique artifact designed by students to distribute to people for an event honoring the Member
 - c. An interactive timeline featuring the artifact and the Member
 - d. A two-page narrative with images for a history magazine entitled “If This Artifact Could Talk...” that explains the relationship between the object and the Member
7. If time permits, conduct one of the **Suggested Extended Activities**.



SUGGESTED EXTENDED ACTIVITIES

1. Invite a curator to speak to your class about the historical value of artifacts.
2. Organize a history fair to display products created by students (timelines, exhibits, artifacts, and narratives).
3. Have students perform a series of skits which use artifacts to describe the careers of the highlighted Members of Congress.



ONLINE RESOURCES

History, Art & Archives | U.S. House of Representatives

A collaborative project between the Office of the Historian and the Clerk of the House's Office of Art and Archives. Together, the offices serve as the House's institutional memory, and a resource for Members, staff, and the general public.

history.house.gov

Online *Biographical Directory of the United States Congress*

Searchable database that contains biographical information on every person who served in Congress.

bioguide.congress.gov

Senate Historical Office

Includes information on the history and art of the U.S. Senate such as facts and milestones, historical statistics, featured biographies, and a photographic collection.

senate.gov/artandhistory/history/common/generic/Senate_Historical_Office.htm

Congress.gov | Library of Congress

Searchable database of congressional legislation from 1973 to present (bill text and roll call votes are available from 1989 to present).

congress.gov

GPO Federal Digital System

Includes links for searchable databases of the *Congressional Record* and *House Journal* (1994 to present) as well as information on how to find the nearest federal depository library.

gpo.gov/fdsys

4 Which district and/or state did he or she represent?

5 On which committees did the Member serve?

6 List some of the issues he or she advocated for during his or her congressional career.