

Teaching with Museum Collections
The Many Hats of Harry S Truman
April 2005

The National Park Service [NPS] *Teaching with Museum Collections* provides lesson plans for teachers to use NPS museum collections in student-centered educational activities. The collections tell the story of America; its peoples, cultures, varied habitats, significant events, and ideas that continue to inspire the world. *Teaching with Museum Collections [TMC]* emphasizes the links between the ‘real things;’ the collections, and the sites where those collections were found, collected, or used. NPS collections include cultural objects, natural history specimens, archival documents and photographs. Lesson plans are linked to national education standards.

Lesson Plan Elements

□Title: The Many Hats of Harry S Truman
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□Grade Level: 3-6

□Length of Lesson: 1 to 3 days, may be adapted as needed

□Overview of Object-based Lesson Plan

▪*Topic:* To understand the different styles, functions, and importance of hats as a statement of or about the people wearing them.

▪*Park name and collections:* Harry S Truman National Historic Site

▪*Relevance:* Hats are important historical artifacts that can tell us a lot about a person. People wear hats for many different reasons. Hats can be worn for work, protection from the weather, formal occasions, as part of a uniform, or just to make a statement. The hat a person is wearing can tell us a lot about what he/she may be doing at the time.

▪*Background:* Harry S Truman, 33rd President of the United States, wore many different hats during his lifetime. Early in his adult life he worked as a farmer and would have worn a hat or cap mainly for protection from the sun. As a young banker and later as a county judge when more formal dress was required, his hat became an important part of his wardrobe. As a soldier fighting in France during World War I his hat was a required part of his uniform. After returning from the war he ran a haberdashery that sold fine mens clothing and accessories. He was always a proper gentleman and almost always wore a hat or had one in hand when in public. Some of the hats he owned were gifts he received after becoming

president, and may have been worn only once or not at all. Others may have been purchased and worn frequently. The collection at the Harry S Truman National Historic Site contains over 75 of President Truman's hats.

Additional background information on hats in general is included with this lesson.

☐ National Educational Standards

Social Studies: Early Grades

I. Culture – (a)

The students will explore and describe similarities and differences in the ways groups, societies, and cultures address similar human needs and concerns.

II. Time, Continuity, and Change – (e)

The students will demonstrate an understanding that people in different times and places view the world differently.

Social Studies: Middle Grades

I. Culture – (a)

The students will compare similarities and differences in the ways groups, societies, and cultures meet human needs and concerns.

II. Time, Continuity and Change – (e)

The students will develop critical sensitivities such as empathy and skepticism regarding attitudes, values, and behaviors of people in different historical contexts.

Missouri Standards

▪ Performance (Process) Standard Goal 1: Students will acquire the knowledge and skills to gather, analyze and apply information ideas.

1.2 conduct research to answer questions and evaluate information and ideas

1.8 organize data, information and ideas into useful forms (including charts, graphs, outlines)

▪ Performance (Process) Standard Goal 2: Students will acquire the knowledge and skills to communicate effectively within and beyond the classroom.

2.1 plan and make written, oral, and visual presentations for a variety of purposes and audiences

2.3 exchange information, questions, and ideas while recognizing the perspectives of others

- Social Studies Knowledge (Content) Standard 6: Students will acquire a solid foundation that includes the knowledge of relationships of the individual and groups to institutions and cultural traditions.

□Student Learning Objectives:

- Students will be able to identify different styles of hats
- Students will be able to match a certain hat with its particular related activity and associated region of the country

□Material/Objects and Collections:

- Hats and caps in the museum collection at the Harry S Truman National Historic Site. To view President Truman's hats visit park's two online exhibits:

Harry S Truman, American Visionary

<http://www.cr.nps.gov/museum/exhibits/hstr/index.html>

The Many Hats of Truman

<http://www.nps.gov/hstr/exhibits/hats/hats.htm>

- Teacher supplied collection of hats
- Each student will bring to class a hat, cap or photograph, magazine or book image of someone wearing a hat or cap

□Vocabulary (see additional information for more complete descriptions)

Crease – the shape of the crown created by a series of dents on the top and/or sides of the crown

Crown – part of the hat rising above the brim or the shape on the hat's top

Brim – portion of the hat below the crown

Cap – hat without a brim or with a small brim at the front

Fez – conical, flat-topped hat made of felt, once made only in the city of Fez, Morocco

Hat – an item of dress worn on the head.

Hatbox – container used for the storage of hats

Haberdashery – term used for a store selling fine men's clothing

Homburg – felt hat with a soft lengthwise crease in the crown and a narrow, rolled brim,

patterned after the hat of local militia men in Bad Homburg, Germany.

Idiom – sayings or expressions that make no sense when translated into another language

Milliner – hat maker

Panama - straw hat for summer wear

Pith Helmet – helmet made of cork or pith (dried spongy tissue from sola plant) that is covered with cloth

Sweatband – inner band sewn into the hat

Stetson – famous hat maker, usually associated with the cowboy hat

Top Hat – tall, cylindrical, flat-topped hat made of shiny silk or beaver cloth with a narrow brim

□ Lesson Implementation/Procedure:

Introduction: Discuss with the students the history of the hat. Familiarize the students with the words on the hat vocabulary list.

Activity #1: Students will be able to identify certain hats with certain social, professional, and leisure time activities.

Possible discussion questions:

--What is the most popular type of hat you see around you today?

--Why is it important to wear the right hat for a particular activity?

--Are some hats/caps associated more with one region of the country than another?

Have the students bring a hat, cap or photograph, magazine or book image of someone wearing a hat or cap from home. Have each one explain why his/her hat is special. Ask each student to describe what his/her hat is made of, who would wear it and why.

Hand out the “Why do people wear different kinds of hats?” activity sheet and ask them to put each hat in the correct column.

Activity #2 – The students will be able to recognize the different hats of President Truman and what type of activity he may have been engaged in while wearing them.

If your students do not have access to a computer, print photos from the website to laminate or just to have hard copy examples to show the students in class during the discussion.

Discuss with the students President Truman and his history as a proper gentleman and a dapper dresser, his history in the clothing business, and his political and military career.

Have the students log onto the American Visionary Website Image Gallery at www.cr.nps.gov/museum/exhibits/hstr/img.html to view some of the many hats owned by President Truman.

Possible discussion question:

Why and where would President Truman have worn a specific type of hat? (Show the students the examples of President Truman's hats)

Hand out the Activity #2 – Match Game worksheet

*To view an exhibit of President Truman's hats, go to

www.nps.gov/hstr/exhibits/hats/hats.htm

Activity #3 – The students will attempt to make up their own idioms relating to hats.

Explain the meaning of “idiom” to the students. Give them the following examples:

- 1) “Hold on to your hats” - Get ready for a surprise
- 2) “You are talking through your hat” - You are saying something silly or foolish
- 3) “Keep it under your hat” - Keep a secret
- 4) “You are as mad as a hatter” - You are wrong or acting silly
- 5) “Put on our thinking caps” - Think carefully

*Ask the students to make up their own hat idioms.

*Ask the students if they have heard idioms using something other than a hat

Additional Background Information

Hats come in two basic styles, brimmed and unbrimmed. Two basic forms of these styles are hats and caps. Hats are most often made of felt or straw. Other materials used to construct caps are fabric and plastic.

Felt is an unwoven fabric matted together by pressure. It is made from wool, fur, or hair. Felt can be made from rabbit, beaver, and muskrat.

Hat boxes are containers used to store hats. They contain cardboard rings and stays to support the hats within the box. Some hat boxes are designed to hold more than one hat.

One of President Truman's favorite hats was a style called the "Open Road" made by the J.B. Stetson Company. He also wore other styles of hats depending on the occasion. See the online exhibit of Truman's hats for more background information on hat styles worn by Truman.

The Baseball cap is an American icon. It is the only hat style that is an American creation. It became popular in the era of Babe Ruth when baseball fans wore the cap to identify themselves with their favorite team. Baseball had the distinction of being the only American sport where a hat was a required part of the official uniform. In the late 1980's and early 1990's the baseball cap became a popular fashion item. Like Coca-Cola and McDonald's, the baseball cap became a symbol of America.

Fedora: The best selling style of men's full size hats. The safari style, a fedora crown with a brim turned down in back and front received a huge boost with the release of the Indiana Jones movies. Indy's hat was emblematic of the man. For the first sixty years of the twentieth century, until President Kennedy removed his hat at his presidential inauguration, men were not considered properly dressed without a hat. By the 1930's almost every man who put on a suit also put on a Fedora.

Match Game

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|------------------|-------|--|
| 1. Milliner | _____ | (A) Container used for storing hats |
| 2. Cap | _____ | (B) Straw hat worn in summer |
| 3. Fez | _____ | (C) Tall, cylindrical shaped hat |
| 4. Hat Box | _____ | (D) Item of dress worn on the head |
| 5. Stetson | _____ | (E) Conical, flat-topped hat |
| 6. Panama | _____ | (F) Famous hat maker |
| 7. Hat | _____ | (G) Men's clothing store |
| 8. Homberg | _____ | (H) Hat without a brim, or small brim |
| 9. Pith Helmet | _____ | (I) Hat patterned after German Militia |
| 10. Top Hat | _____ | (J) Hat made of cork |
| 11. Haberdashery | _____ | (K) Person who makes hats |

Why do people wear different kinds of hats?

Put each of the hats below in the correct column. **Some hats may fit into more than one column

Top hat chef's hat baseball cap police officer's hat hard hat turban beanie firefighter's helmet
 earmuffs cowboy hat visor clown hat safari hat birthday hat football helmet nurses's cap

Hats for work

Hats for protection

Hats as part of a uniform

Hats for fun