

Save Our African American Treasures

3rd-5th Grade Lesson - Protecting Family History

30 Minutes

Curriculum Connections

U. S. history
Saving our shared history

Learning Objectives

After this lesson, the learner will be able to:

- name what might be learned from objects
- distinguish items in the home that are important to save
- demonstrate basic preservation techniques
- define the terms (textiles, media and preserve)

Materials

White gloves
Acid free photo sheets
Tongs
With parental permission, have the students bring one object each from home.

Advance Organizer (10 minutes)

Many everyday things tell the story of a person's life. Paper documents such as letters and photographs, textiles, such as clothing and media such as CD, tape, film, etc. all tell a story about what the owner did and what was important to him/her.

Ask the students to hold up and share examples of paper documents, textiles and media that they brought to share.

Museums research and preserve or care for objects in order to learn about people who lived in the past. You can do the same thing with objects at home.

Class Discussion (5 minutes)

What can you tell about your family history from the object that you brought from home?

Prompt Questions

When was the object purchased/received?
Who did the object belong to?
How did they use the object?
Why did they keep the object?
Are there family stories about the object?

On the board, list student responses.

Activity – Preserve Objects (15 minutes)

A few simple steps will help preserve your family history and memories.

- Photographs
- Uniforms, varsity jackets, graduation gowns, wedding gowns
- Letters, diaries or journals
- Bibles
- Newspaper clippings
- Film, videotapes, CDs

White gloves

Using gloves protects the object from the natural oils in your hands that over time will damage the object.

Light

Protecting the object from direct light slows down the aging and fading process.

Heat

Placing the object in the part of the house where it is most comfortable for people (not the unfinished attic or basement) prevents mold, mildew and heat damage.

Acid-free

Storing the object in acid-free protective pockets or tissue paper helps to keep the object free from chemicals found in many storage containers.

Folding

If the object is folded and already has creases, do not unfold it. If you are preserving a new object, make sure to store it in a dry, flat place.

Paper Clips and Rubber Bands

Removing or avoiding both paper and clips and rubber bands prevents indentation marks as well as stains.

Plastic Cleaner's Bags

Removing clothes from the plastic bags from the cleaner's and storing them flat whenever possible will remove the possibility of chemicals transferring to the object and will avoid strain on the garment.

Use the Tools

Using white gloves, acid-free pockets and tongs, students will practice gently placing documents in acid-free sleeves.