



## Object Autobiography

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Classroom Visit

*Introduction to Objects Series*

Great for: courses in subjects that closely align with the Museum's collections, such as art, anthropology, archaeology, area studies, gender studies, history, and religious studies.

If the objects in storage could speak, what would they say? How would they describe their creation, design, function, use, or previous owners? What could they tell us about their changing statuses, meanings, and purposes: a good to be bought or sold at market, a valuable status symbol to be displayed, a family heirloom to be treasured, a sacred item used in worship, or a symbol of peace traded in diplomatic relations.

This visit is the first part of a longer project for students to research an object from the collection, connect it to course themes, and write an object autobiography. This exercise combines research with creative writing to allow students to engage with the objects from a fresh perspective. In tandem with the visit to the classroom, we encourage instructors to schedule visits to the Museum Archives and Museum Library to help introduce students to Museum research resources. The final assignment can focus on the object as an example of a type or the specific object itself or even both, depending on the instructor's goals.

Class Time	One visit of 1-1.5 hours
Class Level	Advanced Undergraduate or Graduate
Class Size	Maximum of 15 students
Objectives	Practice critical thinking and analysis skills; Practice museum and/or object-based research; Utilize new knowledge in short creative essay
Prep	Instructors select objects from Museum collections for students to research that are related to key questions, content, and themes of the course.
Visit	Students spend their time at the Museum closely looking at their object, taking photographs, and taking notes about their object.  Students research their object type from resources at the Museum Library to help connect their item to course content.
Post	Students summarize their findings to the object autobiography prompt in a short essay