



Preparing for Your Class Visit to the Museum

A field trip to the museum, or any site so rich with possibilities, can provide layers of learning to the classroom curriculum. Thoughtful preparation will help ensure the experience is worth the effort the actual visit will require. Preparation, reflection and a culminating activity will tie the experience altogether. Consider the following to make the most of your class visit to the Idaho Historical Museum.

Goal for pre-activities: Students will establish a personal connection to the museum experience.

I.

At least a few days before your museum visit, discuss with your class what they already know about museums. Ask: *Has anyone ever been to the Idaho Historical Museum or another museum? What do you remember most about your visit? What kinds of items did you see? Was there one exhibit that made a big impression?*

Make a KWL (*I Know, I Wonder, I Learned*) chart. First, list comments and impressions from students' previous experiences, and continue into what they wonder or hope to gain from the field trip. Discuss these impressions and ideas as a group. Keep the chart posted to finish the *I Learned* section after the trip as part of the culminating activity.

II.

Museums are full of *artifacts*, items that reveal information about the people who made or used them. Present a personal artifact—something that has meaning for you, but to others might seem ordinary (examples: a family photograph, a special book or object you have cherished over time). Allow students to take a close look, and to describe the item in their own words. Encourage them to guess why the item is meaningful to you. Tell them about the item, emphasizing why you chose it to explain something about yourself.

Invite each student to bring to school an artifact of their own, a small item from home, that reveals something about him/her. Along with the item, the student will fill out an index card with information: (show an example filled out with information about your artifact)

1. Description of the item
2. Where it came from (location, time period)
3. A detail or two that explains the item's connection to its owner.
4. Name of the owner

Set aside time and a suitable space for students to display and share their items with one another.

Reflection Question: *How do artifacts in a museum teach us about the people who lived before us?*





Behavior Checklist for Visiting the Museum

Showing respect and consideration toward the exhibits and other people is the overall behavior expectation for all museum visitors. For school groups, the following check list can help students understand what this looks like. Teachers may find it helpful to read through the checklist with students and post it in the classroom, asking each student to sign their name to acknowledge they understand the expectations.

The Idaho State Historical Museum Staff would like to thank you for:

- ✓ **Staying with your chaperon or group leader.** Wandering away from your group can cause others to spend their time looking for you instead of enjoying the museum.
- ✓ **Using a clipboard and pencil if you will be writing.** The exhibit cases and displays can be damaged if people use them for a writing surface. Pen ink can permanently damage some items.
- ✓ **Leaving candy, drinks, or other snacks outside the museum.** Spilled drinks and crumbs make the museum messy and can damage exhibits.
- ✓ **Walking between the exhibits.** Running, jumping, skipping are fun outside activities, but in the museum, you might hurt yourself or bump into an exhibit or another person.
- ✓ **Keeping the stairways clear from sitting or playing.** For safety, all visitors need clear paths up and down the stairways.
- ✓ **Using an appropriate voice level.** Talking quietly is ok, but yelling or screaming will disturb others who are working or listening to a program.
- ✓ **Keeping anything you purchase in the shop inside your bag with a receipt until you leave.** Especially with large groups, this helps museum staff know who has paid for their items, and who is waiting to pay.



The Museum Visit

The day you've been preparing for has arrived! Your class visit to the museum will stretch the walls of your classroom and provide a memorable learning experience for your students. With some focus and structure to the visit, the wide variety of exhibits and information will be meaningful and make a long-lasting impression.

Here are four suggested activities to help you make the most of your class visit. Choose one or more for your students to focus their attention. They will be engaged in learning, while still enjoying the experience of being out of the classroom and entertained by the variety of exhibits they will see.

For best results, divide the class into groups of 3-5 students, with an adult available to guide or assist. Jobs can be assigned, such as sign reader and note taker, but all are expected to contribute to their group activity.





Museum Activity I

Idaho's People

Idaho history is really a story about the people, groups and individuals, who lived here before us. All of the exhibits at the Idaho Historical Museum tell us something about Idaho's people.

Assign each small group of students a different group of people from Idaho's story. As students look through the museum, they will come across exhibits having to do with their particular group. Groups will cross over into various exhibits, for example, Chinese immigrants who were miners. Students will gather information about their assigned group, and present what they learn to the rest of the class when they return to school.

Native Americans

Pioneers

Explorers

Immigrants

Ranchers

Basques

Miners

Lumberjacks

Chinese

*You could focus on a different variety of groups, such as ethnic groups (specific tribes, immigrants); in general, men, women, children; or people who lived during certain eras: prehistory, territorial days; statehood; twentieth century. There are so many possibilities!

Suggested information to find out about your group:

When did this group first come to Idaho?

Why did they come here?

What kind of work did they do?

What kinds of homes did they have?

What problems did they face?

What did they do for fun?

What types of tools did they use?

How did they dress?

Who was a well-known person in this group?





Museum Activity II

Tell Me a Story

Learning our history takes different forms. Dates, names, and documents are essential for understanding the details, but the story that weaves everything together is what excites and motivates us to learn more. Giving students the opportunity to be the storyteller is one way to keep them and their peers interested. The museum's many exhibits and historical scenes provide a wonderful backdrop to spark imagination and creativity.

Students should arrive at the museum with some blank sheets of paper and a clipboard. Go to the second floor exhibits, which are contained within different scenes including: blacksmith shop, general store, Victorian parlor, Chinese temple, saloon, Depression-era kitchen, and others. Each student chooses an exhibit, and sketches the scene. They should look for details, such as the various artifacts that make the scene unique. They can also take notes from any interpretive signs near the exhibit to help them put the scene into context.

When they return to the classroom, they will write a story that takes place in the setting they recorded. The story does not have to be historically accurate or based entirely on fact. The only requirement is that the exhibit provides the setting for the story.

Students share their stories with their classmates. Students who used the same setting can compare and contrast their stories. Encourage students to comment on and appreciate the variety of stories that evolved from the various settings.



Museum Activity III

When Did It Happen?

How many of us were turned off by history education because it seemed an endless task of memorizing dates? Although knowing dates for important events is useful, it is not the most stimulating way to begin interpreting the big, fascinating picture of HISTORY. For young people especially, focusing on the order of events, rather than the precise dates, will build a web of understanding and appreciation for the important relationships inherent to history.

Below is a list of some of the important events in Idaho history. Before arriving at the museum, play a timeline game with the events:

- Divide the class into two groups, A and B.
- Give each person in one group an index card listing one of the events. (For ease in placing the cards onto an actual string timeline later, have cards folded in half to form a tent.)
- Within a limited time (3-5 minutes), Group A will work together to line up in the order they think the events occurred.
- Group B notes the order of events according to Group A, and makes changes based on what is known from previous learning and through discussing what makes sense. Allow time for debate and decision-making to take place.
- When consensus among members of Group B is reached, students transfer the cards to fishing line strung along a section of the classroom for a real time line that Groups A and B can review together.
- Arriving at the museum, have the two groups explore *The Story of Idaho* exhibit. Each group should have a copy of the events list. The exhibit will

provide dates and more information about all of the events. Each group will record the date of each event and bring the information back to the classroom. Students will check their timeline and see how well they put the events in order. Then they can make any necessary revisions and discuss how close or far off they were with their thinking before their museum visit.

Discuss

- How does the true order of the events make sense?
- Are there surprises about the order of any of the events?
- How does logic help make sense of the order? For example, could Idaho have been a state before it was a territory? Would the Nez Perce have been upset with miners before gold was discovered on their homeland? If the Hunt party had to go all the way to the Pacific Ocean for help, what does that tell us about the population of the area at that time?

If your museum visit takes place early in the year, repeat portions of this activity as your class continues its study of Idaho history , making your classroom timeline a continuous and sustainable work in progress.

Some important events in Idaho history:

- **A group of fur trappers, the Hunt Expedition, runs into trouble on the Snake River. They have to walk all the way to the Pacific Ocean to find help.**
- **Idaho becomes a state.**
- **Pioneers begin to cross southern Idaho on the Oregon Trail.**
- **The forests and fields of Idaho are home to mammoths and giant ground sloths.**
- **Mormon settlers come north from Utah and build Fort Lemhi.**

- Tired of conflict with gold miners and pioneers, the Nez Perce Tribe tries to escape to Canada.
- A great forest fire destroys 3 million acres of trees and kills 100 people.
- The Carey Act allows the government to sell land to homesteaders in Idaho.
- E.D. Pierce is the first prospector to find gold in Idaho.
- Explorers Lewis and Clark begin their difficult journey through the mountains of Idaho.
- Idaho becomes a territory.
- Many native tribes live without contact with non-natives throughout the land that will become Idaho.





When Did It Happen? Key

12,000 years ago The forests and fields of Idaho are home to mammoths, giant ground sloths, and other prehistoric animals.

Between 12,000 years ago and 1805 Many native tribes live without contact with non-natives throughout the land that will become Idaho.

1805 Explorers Lewis and Clark begin their difficult journey through the mountains of Idaho.

1811 A group of fur trappers, the Hunt Expedition, runs into trouble on the Snake River. They have to walk all the way to the Pacific Ocean to find help.

1840 Pioneers begin to cross southern Idaho on the Oregon Trail.

1855 Mormon settlers come north from Utah and build Fort Lemhi.

1860 E.D. Pierce is the first prospector to find gold in Idaho.

1863 Idaho becomes a territory.

1877 Tired of conflict with gold miners and pioneers, the Nez Perce Tribe tries to escape to Canada.

1890 Idaho becomes a state.

1894 The Carey Act allows the government to sell land to homesteaders in Idaho.

1910 A great forest fire destroys 3 million acres of trees and kills 100 people.





Museum Activity IV

Scavenger Hunt

Organize your class into small groups for an old-fashioned scavenger hunt, museum-style. Give them a limited amount of time to find the answers to the following questions. Have each group start at a different spot, remind them of the museum's behavior expectations, and let them go. At the end, gather in the lobby to collect answer sheets. The team with the most correct answers gets the title *Historians of the Day* (and maybe ten extra minutes of afternoon recess...)

Location: Downstairs Lobby

1. Idaho has many official symbols that represent the state. Pick one of them displayed here and describe it. Do you think it is a good symbol for Idaho? Why or why not? Can you think of another symbol that would be a good choice for Idaho?

Location: Downstairs Exhibit, *The Story of Idaho*

2. Archaeologists have unearthed many kinds of spear, dart, and arrow points in Idaho. In the space below, draw two types of points and describe how they are different from one another.

3. (*moved to Idaho 150 exhibit*) In 1811, a group of fur trappers led by Wilson Price Hunt sunk their canoes in the Snake River. They had to walk all the way to the Pacific Ocean to get help. Many years later, in 1938, some of their supplies were recovered from the river bottom. Name two of the items that were found.

a.

b.

4. Early visitors to Idaho often brought trade goods to exchange with the local tribes. What was one of the items used in trade? Why do you think this item was valuable to the tribes?

5. From about 1840 to 1860, many people traveled though Idaho on the Oregon Trail. The long trip could be very difficult and dangerous. Name one of the

dangers early pioneers faced on their journey west. Do we have to worry about the same danger today?

6. In 1860, E.D. Pierce discovered gold on Nez Perce land in what is now north central Idaho. Soon after, thousands of people rushed to Idaho with hope of becoming wealthy. Name two of the tools prospectors used to collect gold from the rivers, streams, and ground.

a.

b.

7. In 1863, Idaho became a territory. Unfortunately, keeping a governor in the territory was difficult! Name one of Idaho's first territorial governors and explain why he did not keep his job for very long.

8. Long ago, farmers and ranchers used many strange looking tools for their jobs. Draw one of the weird tools on display and explain how you think it was used. Are any of these tools still used today?

9. Although Idaho had many valuable trees in its forests, early loggers found it difficult to move the trees from the steep mountains to the saw mills. Describe one way loggers moved giant logs from place to place.

Location: Downstairs Exhibits (behind main staircase)

10. Idaho's native tribes used intricate beadwork to decorate their clothing and equipment. Choose the Indian artifact from the display that you like best and draw a picture of its bead design. What was the item used for?

11. Toys have been enjoyed by children throughout history. Over the years, designs and interests have changed. Examine the toys on display here and find one that you think is very different than the toys children play with today. Would this toy be something you or your friends would like to play with today? Why or why not?

12. Idaho's first flag was sewn in 1907. Thanks to a group of fourth grade students who loved history, our museum now has the privilege of displaying that original flag. What is one of the pictures on the flag? Why do you think this picture was used to represent Idaho? Have you seen the pictures on our flag anywhere else?

Location: Upstairs Exhibits

13. Meriwether Lewis and William Clark were the first non-natives to describe many animals in the west. Name two of the animals they identified on their expedition.

a.

b.

14. In 1915, most homes in Idaho did not have electricity, gas, or running water. How did an Idaho family keep meat, milk and vegetables cool back then? How could they protect their dry foods like flour, sugar, beans, and grain from mice and insects? How did water get to the kitchen without pipes and a faucet?

15. Originally, Chinese immigrants came to Idaho for the same reason many others did—to mine for gold. They quickly branched out and found other jobs to make a living. What was one job a Chinese pioneer may have had?

16. Different saddles were used for different jobs. Try out all of the saddles on display. Which one is most comfortable? Which one would a cowboy most likely have used?





Scavenger Hunt, Key

1. **State Seal; flag; bird, Mountain Blue Bird; flower, Syringa; vegetable, potato; fruit, huckleberry; gem, Star Garnet; horse, Appaloosa; tree, Western White Pine; dance, Square Dance; fossil, Hagerman Horse; fish, Cutthroat Trout; insect, Monarch Butterfly.**
2. Answers will vary. If you discuss this topic in class, you can bring up how archaeologists use shape to date the points. At certain times in history, native people made specific types of tips.
3. Axe head, beaver trap, musket stock
4. Knives, beads, blankets, tobacco, flint and steel, pipes, magnifying glass, axe head, brass bracelet. In most cases, tribes desired certain items because they could not make them themselves, and they were useful.
5. River crossings, conflict with Indians, shortage of food and water, disease, accidents
6. Gold pans, picks, shovels, rockers, hydraulic giants, dredges, stopper (rock drill), hammer and jack, miners spoon, dynamite, candlestick
7. **William Wallace:** left to join Congress; **William Daniels:** temporary position; **Caleb Lyon:** the public did not approve of his policies, so he snuck out of the state. Later Lyons took charge again, promptly stole all the state money, and fled. **C. Dewitt Smith:** died; **H. C. Gilson:** stole state money and fled.

8. Answers will vary. Some are: cattle weaners, curry combs, horse snow shoes, corn planters, hay crooks, corn huskers, cradle scythes.
9. Water flumes, log rafts on rivers, skidding tongs, wagons, trains, later trucks.
10. Answers will vary. Some are: awl case, belts, blanket strips, storage bags, moccasins, gloves, cradleboards, pipe bags.
11. Answers will vary.
12. Agriculture is represented by grain, horn of plenty, and a man plowing a field. The miner with a pick and shovel, and the stamp mill in the center show the importance of mining. The elk head above the shield tells of the plentiful game and wild life. The woman on the left represents justice and liberty. The fact that the woman is the same size as the man shows us that Idaho men and women are considered equal. *Esto perpetua* is Latin. The phrase means *may she endure*, suggesting that Idaho will last forever.
13. Mountain goat, great gray owl, ruffed grouse, salmon, western tanager, Clark's nutcracker, Lewis' woodpecker, marmot.
14. Pie safes protected food. Hand pumps brought water to the kitchen. Ice boxes kept food cool.
15. Farmer, laundry, shop keeper, restaurant owner, doctor
16. Saddle types: stock, Native American pad saddle, ladies sidesaddle, McClellan military saddle. A cowboy would have used a stock saddle.



Primary and Secondary Sources

Historians know research quality is determined by the reliability of the information sources that are used. Not all sources are equal. The validity of a source is measured by many factors, and students should learn early about how to evaluate them. One of the first steps in the evaluation process is recognizing whether a source is primary or secondary.

A **primary source** is a direct record of an event. It is described as first-hand account of an experience, such as an individual's personal diary or a newspaper article written at the time of the event. A primary source can also be an object, created in the past, which provides insight into the lives of people who lived at the time. Depending on the origin, primary sources can include museum artifacts, government documents, art work, photographs, diaries, letters, autobiographies, magazine or newspaper articles, literature, music, video footage, or oral history interviews.

All primary sources are not necessarily created at the time of the event. For example, a witness to an event may write or talk about the experience in an interview at a later time. Even though time has passed, the person provides a first-hand account of the event.

A **secondary source** is an account created by someone who was not present at the event. A common example of a secondary source is a textbook. The textbook writer researches an event using many sources and creates a summary that gives the reader a brief and easy to understand account of the event. In this way, the secondary source may rely on some primary sources to present factual information, but it is not a first-hand account.

Textbooks and online sources often contain primary sources within them. For example, The Idaho State Historical Society's online mining exhibit is a secondary source, but within the exhibit there are links to authentic primary sources in the form of historical photographs, artifacts, and documents.

Other examples of secondary sources include encyclopedia, biographies, current magazines or newspapers that feature stories about a past event, and most websites.

Primary sources are not necessarily better than secondary sources. Both are important to quality research. It is possible for either type of source to contain false or misleading information. A good historian uses a variety of sources to build a strong body of research. The direct link to the event provided by a primary source, combined with interesting insights and points of view from scholars who have examined a particular issue or event critically will likely result in a well-rounded report or project. Recognizing the differences and importance of both kinds of sources is an important skill for any researcher.





Primary and Secondary Sources Activity

Use the background information presented on the previous page to present the concept of primary and secondary sources to your class. A Venn diagram or other graphic organizer can help organize the information.

Choose a historical event with which the students are familiar, for example, the Lewis and Clark Expedition or Idaho's journey to statehood. Help students consider and decide which category to place various examples of sources.

Use the ***Primary or Secondary?*** practice sheet to check for understanding. The practice sheet presents ten possible resources the student might encounter while researching the history of mining in Idaho. Students will decide if a source is primary or secondary, based on a description.

Review practice sheet and lead a concluding discussion.

Possible discussion questions:

Is a primary source better than a secondary source? Why or why not?

Which type of source is easier to find?

Are first-hand accounts of an event always the most factual?

Are some sources more reliable than others?

How can you tell if a source is reliable?

Extend the lesson and encourage students to deepen their understanding by visiting www.loc.gov, the website of the Library of Congress, which provides a massive online collection of primary sources.



Primary or Secondary?

Pretend you are writing a report on the history of mining in Idaho, 1860-1890. While researching the topic, you come across many different sources of information. Consider each source, and decide whether it is primary or secondary. On the line next to each source, write a **P** for primary, or **S** for secondary.

___ Diary written by a Lucky Noah, a miner who lived in Idaho in the 1870s.

___ Article from *Time Magazine*, written in 1980 titled "Mining in the West."

___ Your Idaho history textbook that contains a chapter on mining.

___ Photograph of a Silver City mine you found in your great-grandparents photo album. The photograph has the date 1880 written on the back.

___ Gold pan used in 1872 that you saw displayed at the Idaho Historical Museum.

___ Library book *Digging Deep: the complete story of mining in Idaho*, published in 1992.

___ Original government document, *Idaho Mining Laws of 1875*, found on the Idaho State Historical Society website.

___ Website titled *The Complete Internet Encyclopedia* which has a page about mining.

_____ Sheet music for a song, *No Gold Nuggets for Me*, written by an Idaho City musician in 1888.

_____ Map, Ghost Towns and Gold Mines of Idaho, published in 1977.





Primary or Secondary? Key

Pretend you are writing a report on the history of mining in Idaho, 1860-1890. While researching the topic, you come across many different sources of information. Consider each source, and decide whether it is primary or secondary. On the line next to each source, write a **P** for primary, or **S** for secondary.

 P Diary written by a Lucky Noah, a miner who lived in Idaho in the 1870s.

Lucky Noah's diary is a first-hand account from the time period being researched.

 S Article from *Time Magazine*, written in 1980 titled "Mining in the West."

The magazine article was written years after the time period being researched.

 S Your Idaho history textbook that contains a chapter on mining.

A textbook is a summary of primary and other secondary sources.

 P Photograph of a Silver City mine you found in your great-grandparents photo album. The photograph has the date 1880 written on the back.

The photograph is from the time period being researched.

 P Gold pan used in 1872 that you saw displayed at the Idaho Historical Museum.

The gold pan was used or made during the time period being researched.

 S Library book *Digging Deep: the complete story of mining in Idaho*, published in 1992.

Similar to your textbook, this book was written long after the time period being researched.

__P__ Original government document, *Idaho Mining Laws of 1875*, found on the Idaho State Historical Society website.

Although is it posted on the Internet, the document is original, from the time period being researched.

__S__ Website titled *The Complete Internet Encyclopedia* which has a page about mining.

Encyclopedia, books, or internet sources are typically secondary.

__P__ Sheet music for a song, *No Gold Nuggets for Me*, written by an Idaho City musician in 1888.

The sheet music was published in the time period being researched. As an artistic piece, it may provide some interesting information about lifestyles and popular culture of the time.

__S__ Map, Ghost Towns and Gold Mines of Idaho, published in 1977.

Maps are often primary sources, but this one was created many years after the time period being researched.

