



History

Objects in History

Object biography is one way through which historians have tried to understand the individual 'life' of an object – who made it and how it was made, who bought or owned it, and how did it find its way to a museum or collection? But, for many objects, the documents required to tell that life-story are not available, especially for objects which were not part of elite or literate cultures. Object biography is therefore also a way to think more generally about the place of kinds of objects within history - at the point of production and consumption, in relation to gender or family relationships, or as part of the history of collection. You might also want to reflect on what studying an object in this way adds to our understanding of history compared to studying other kinds of sources.

The task is to write a 'biography' of any object in historical context up to 1000 words. Any object with a history, even a recent history, can be chosen – from an ancient Roman mirror to an early modern leather shoe to a rotary dial telephone. The object can be related to a topic within your A-level/IB syllabus or can be from an entirely new period and from anywhere in the world.

For some object biographies, see:

- 1) <https://web.prm.ox.ac.uk/rpr/index.php/objectbiographies.html>
- 2) <http://blogs.ucl.ac.uk/eicah/the-attar-casket-of-tipu-sultan/>
- 3) <http://www.fitzmuseum.cam.ac.uk/gallery/treasuredpossessions/curatorschoice/index.html>
- 4) <https://www.concealedgarments.org/cache/28577/>

At the end of the essay, please list any primary and secondary sources that you have used. For the Object Biography and Image options, please provide an image or a link to where it is held along with a short description of including the maker and date and place of its production, if known, and, ideally also what it is made out of, its dimensions, and current location.

Submissions will be judged on creativity as well as argument and analysis.