



CONNECTING TO COLLECTIONS

Activities Suggestions

Scope of Collections Brainstorm

Overview: How does your organization (or the host organization) define what they will collect? In this activity, participants will draft a scope of collections statement for the host institution.

Materials:

- Paper (can be done on blank paper, or using the worksheet below).
- Pencils

Activity Goals:

- Have participants think critically about criteria that should be used in assessing collections.

Process: Ask participants to draft a scope of collections statement. Have them answer the following questions first.

Scope of Collection Worksheet

What should the organization collect? Answer the questions below:

1. What types of collections does the organization have (permanent, educational, exhibit, etc.)?
2. What types of materials are collected?
3. From what time periods should materials be collected?
4. What themes or topics should materials relate to?
5. From what geographic region should materials be collected?

Draft your Scope of Collections Statement Here:



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Nomenclature Look-up

Overview: Nomenclature systems help museums identify objects using a uniform vocabulary. Utilizing a printed version of a nomenclature system, participants will need to identify

Materials:

- Objects or photographs of objects.
- Printed book version of a nomenclature system. Suggested: Bourcier, Paul et. Al. Nomenclature 3.0 for Museum Cataloging. Lanham: Altamira Press, 2010.

Activity Goals:

- Familiarize participants with a nomenclature system

Process: Lay out items or photographs of items and challenge participants to use the book to look up the Category, Sub-category and preferred name of object. This activity can be incorporated into the Cataloguing and Condition Reporting Activity listed below, utilizing the worksheet to mark down categories. Moderator can enliven the event by presenting it in a game show fashion, splitting group up into teams and then giving them three items to look up and time them during the process. Allow teams to compete for the best time.



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Description Wars

Overview: Writing a good description for an item when cataloging is extremely important. In this activity, participants will be presented with a series of similar items and asked to write a description of one of the items in clear enough terms that the group can identify which item they are describing.

Materials:

- Series of at least five similar items (i.e. set of forks, dinnerware, wrenches, etc.)
- Post-it Notes
- Pencils
- Numbers to number items in line up.
- Gloves (if using artifacts).

Activity Goals:

- Help participants understand the importance of description.
- Hone description writing skills.

Process: Lay out items in a line up with numbers visible. Ask participants to pick one item and write a description of that object. Instruct them to write the number of the item on the back of the sticky note. Place sticky notes face up on a table and have participants, one at a time, select a sticky note (not their own) and place it near the item they think it best describes. Check answers at the end.



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Cataloguing and Condition Reporting

Overview: If possible, utilize collections from the host organization to give participants a chance to try their hand at cataloguing and condition reporting. In this activity, individuals are assigned an object and asked to catalog it and do a condition report on it.

Materials:

- Artifacts to catalog. Ask host organization for help finding some materials to catalog from their collections, or find an assortment of materials from home.
- Condition Reporting Form. See attachment to this document for a sample collections management form, or use the form utilized by the host organization.
- Pencils
- Measuring Tapes
- Magnifying glasses
- Gloves
- Chenall's Nomenclature book.

Activity Goals:

- Introduce one method of cataloging and condition reporting and aspects to consider.
- Introduce the idea of a nomenclature system
- Allow for practice in description condition reports.
- Give hands on activity and chance to practice concepts

Process: This activity can be done in a guided fashion, having the instructor lead the group through the form together, or the instructor can give a brief overview of the steps and allow the participants to muddle through, asking questions as needed.

Variations: You can focus just on the cataloging or the condition reporting aspect. Consider having several participants write a condition report for a single object and then in groups share their reports and compare.



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Sample Cataloging Form

Object ID: _____

Catalog: ☐ Object ☐ Photograph ☐ Archives ☐ Library

Other Number: _____

Category: (circle 1)

Structure

Communication

Distribution &
Transportation

Furnishings

T&E Science and Tech.

Unclassifiable

Personal Artifacts

T&E Communication

Natural History

Recreation

T&E Materials

Sub-Category: _____

Object Name: _____

Description: _____

Dimensions: Height: _____ inches; Width: _____ inches; Depth: _____ inches

Material: _____

Date: _____

Provenance

Date Source: _____

Made (Company & Location): _____

Inscription/Tag Text: _____

Inscription/Tag Location: _____



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Condition: ☐ Good ☐ Fair ☐ Poor ☐ Unstable

Notes: _____

Current Location: _____

Completed by: _____ **Date:** _____

Entered by: _____ **Date:** _____



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Collections Storage Activity

Overview: In conjunction with the host organization, determine if there is a collections storage project with which the participants could assist. Potential projects could include:

- Digitizing records
- Interleaving records
- Encapsulation of map or pamphlet collections
- Box making
- Sleeve making for glass negatives

Materials:

- Will Vary.

Activity Goals:

- Allow participants to get hands on experience working with collections.
- Provide service to the host organization.