

An Artifact in My Life: Description Paragraph

What memories of your cultural and family heritage exist within the objects of your life?

What stories do artifacts tell?

The artifacts in our lives are a vital part of our living history. An artifact, or a human-made object, physically exists in a place at different moments in time. It can contain historical and cultural memories. In which ways do artifacts connect us to our own history, culture, family, and place? What does the story of an artifact tell us about ourselves?

Many artifacts are passed down from generation to generation, becoming a part of our family and cultural heritage. Some examples include family photographs, medals from war, jewelry, religious items, diaries, old coins or stamps, kitchen items, clothing, or literature.

Artifacts are all around us. They can be found in our homes, gardens, streets, parks, and churches, among other locations. Anything that provides more evidence about the cultural, economic, historical, religious, and social aspects of our society could be considered an artifact. Preserved in museums around the world, artifacts tell the stories of humanity's downfalls, achievements, and innovations.

The Smithsonian Institution article suggests different ways to think about artifacts. They include the following:

- Artifacts tell their own stories.
- Artifacts connect people.
- Artifacts capture moments.
- Artifacts reflect changes.

For this paragraph, you will select an artifact in your life that shows something important about your history, culture, family, or where you are from originally. You will take a photo of it to include with your photo or, if you do not have the object, search online for an image that looks as similar as possible. In your paragraph, do the following:

1. Include a heading in the top left with your name, your teacher's name, the class, and the date.

2. An appropriate centered title (Examples: An Important / Valued/ Treasured / Dear / Special Artifact in My Life)
3. An indented topic sentence that captures the reader's attention and gives the main point of your paragraph (Examples: *An important artifact in my life is a family heirloom that was passed down three generations from my great-grandmother to my grandmother to my mom and now to me and represents love and commitment: a simple gold wedding band.* OR *A special artifact I brought with me from my native country to keep my culture and beliefs close is my grandma's apron.* OR *An artifact that I keep in a special drawer in my bedroom is the hunting knife my dad gave me when I turned 16.*)
4. Describe the artifact in detail:
 - What does it look like? (colors, textures, sizes, shapes, materials)
 - What does it sound like?
 - What does it smell like?
 - What does it feel like?
 - What does it taste like (as applicable)?
 - How does it make you feel?
5. Then explain your connection to the artifact by answering whichever questions apply:
 - How did you get the artifact? Who gave it to you or did you buy it or make it?
 - Where was the artifact made? How was it made and who made it?
 - How old is the artifact? Describe the artifact's place in time. What meaning might it have throughout history—past, present, and future? How does the artifact reflect change? (Cultural, historical, or social, e.g.)
 - Does the artifact have a function?
 - Where does the artifact live or where is it kept?
 - Is this artifact important to you and/or your family?
 - Has the artifact been passed down from generation to generation (an heirloom)?
 - How does this artifact connect to other people beyond who it belongs or belonged to?
 - In what ways does the artifact connect the people in your life?
 - Does the artifact bring up memories? If so, what memories?
 - In what ways does the artifact connect to a "set values" or beliefs?
6. Include a concluding sentence that answers this question:
 - Would you like to see this artifact preserved for the future? Why?