



# I Spy the Past

## Thematic Unit

### Introduction

Everyday life looked much different at The Hermitage while Andrew Jackson was around than it does today – just think of how often we use electricity and running water! From the toys with which children played to the differences in which the houses were cleaned, students will have to use all five senses as they become history detectives as they try to identify 20 objects from the 19th century to determine their purpose.

### Objectives

- A. Examine 19th century everyday objects, using deductive reasoning to understand their purpose, and the time in which they were utilized.
- B. Understand, through dialogue and discussion, how everyday life has changed through technological advances in the 175 years since Jackson's time.

### Vocabulary

Artifact  
Character traits  
Deductive reasoning  
Evolution  
Technological advances

### Suggested Pre-Program Activities

1. Have students bring in an object from their home for a “show and tell,” where students have to guess the purpose of the object

2. From those objects, speculate on how said object has evolved. What improvements have been made to make the object what it is today? How could the object be further improved?

### **Presentation Outline**

*Note to classroom instructor: this information will be covered within the education program.*

1. Begin program by discussing everyday life in the 19th century. What did students have for breakfast and travel to school? Discuss how everyday life today is different from Jackson's time.
2. Use these points to discuss how life might have been harder in the 19th century. How might life have been easier back then?
3. Ask if it is possible to identify some character traits about a person based on objects they might find in their house. Give an example. How might students be able to tell key facts about people who lived in the 19th century based on the objects they used?
4. Introduce the concept of deductive reasoning.
5. Divide students into three groups, assigning a captain for each group.
6. Each group moves to one of three tables; two of the tables have 20 objects from the nineteenth century on them, while one has three spices in receptacles. Students must identify as many of the objects they can – working, thinking, and discussing together.
7. Go over the answers to each of the objects and spices.
8. Reinforce that objects had specific purposes, and many people did not have the amount of physical possessions that we have today.

### **Suggested Post-Program Activities**

1. Have students create a diary entry from the 1820s in which they describe how they used three of the objects in their everyday routine.
2. Take three of the objects and identify ways the students use a more advanced version today, identifying key technological advancements.
3. Ask students to draw a picture of themselves using one of the objects at The Hermitage.

## **Selected Bibliography**

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