



Learning From Artifacts at Mystic Seaport

- How to Read an Object -

Properties of an Object – Questions to Ask and Answer	Observe, Deduce and Infer What can you find out by looking closely at the object?
<u>Function/Purpose</u> What is it? What is it called? What is or was it used for? Does it have more than one function? How has its use changed over time?	
<u>Physical Features</u> What does it look and feel like? How big is it? What is its shape, smell and sound? What color is it? Is it complete? Has it been altered, adapted, or mended? Is it worn? What is the surface like? Does it have any identifying numbers? Are there markings or writing on it?	
<u>Materials</u> What is it made of? How many kinds of materials is it made of?	

<p>Properties of an Object– Questions to Ask and Answer</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Observe, Deduce and Infer What can you find out by looking closely at the object?</p>
<p><u>Construction / Technique of Manufacture</u> How was it made? Who made it? Is it hand or machine made? Does it have parts? What does the object tell you about the maker's technical skill?</p>	
<p><u>Design and Decoration</u> Does the design suit its purpose? Were the best materials used? How is it decorated? What influenced its design and appearance?</p>	
<p><u>Context and History</u> What can the object tell us about the society in which it was made? When was it made? Where was it made? Where was it used? Where was it found? Who made it? Who used it? Who owned it? How has it changed over time? How does it compare to similar items from other cultures and time periods?</p>	
<p><u>Value</u> How was it valued? What kind of value did it or does it have — Monetary, spiritual, aesthetic, sentimental, practical? To the person/people who made it? To the person/people who used it? To the people who keep it? How has the object's meaning changed over time? How does the object reflect the person, community, nation or culture at the time it was made? How does the object expand your knowledge of the period?</p>	