

Anthropological Collections Management

Topic: Anthropology

Subtopic: Tools and Methods

Type: Article

Level: for grades 9 and up

Time: Less than 1 period

Origin:

Keywords:

American Museum of Natural History • Antiquities--Collection and preservation • Archaeology • Ethnology • Museum conservation methods • Museums--Collection management • Physical anthropology

[MORE ABOUT THIS RESOURCE](#)

This online article explains the meticulous care and tracking that goes into storing the 530,000 items in the museum's anthropology collection. Along with discussing the inherent differences between the items in each of the collection's three subdivisions (archaeology, ethnology, and biological anthropology), the article covers these topics:

- The Nature of Collections
- Preserving Anthropology Collections
- Computerizing Collections Management

[TEACHER TIPS](#)

Supplement a study of anthropology with an activity drawn from this article about collections management.

1. Begin by telling students that there are 530,000 items in the AMNH's anthropology collection. Then, ask them to speculate about how the museum keeps track of everything. What tools or systems do they think the museum needs?
2. Send students to the online article, or print copies of it for them to read.
3. Have them create a catalog template designed to track their personal items. What standard information needs to be recorded for their items? If possible, have them create catalog entries for 10 or more items in a spreadsheet program.

Michigan Framework for Social Studies Education

Strand I – Historical Perspective

- **Standard 1.3 – (Analyzing and Interpreting the Past)** – Students will reconstruct the past by comparing interpretations written by others from a variety of perspectives and creating narratives from evidence.