

## A Matter of Style: 19th Century Furniture

### Analyzing an Object of American Material Culture – Lower Grades

- Purpose:* students will find important cultural information by looking carefully at an object and analyzing it systematically.
- Objectives:* after viewing A Matter of Style at <http://www.museum.state.il.us/muslink/art/htmls/ms.html> Web site (and being familiar with the At Home in the Heartland at <http://www.museum.state.il.us/exhibits/athome/welcome.htm>) and discussing American material-culture studies, the students will retrieve historical information from an object by analyzing it with an Object Analysis Form (A).
- Materials:* an object of material culture (a piece of furniture or a good picture of one from A Matter of Style  
pencils  
Object Analysis Form (A) for each student
- Motivation:* Discuss how historians can get important information directly from an object. Use an item in the classroom, like a chair, for an example. Have students brainstorm about what questions they want answered about the object (what is it made of, who made it, where did it come from, who uses it, who bought it, what is its function?).
- Procedure:* Assign students to find one piece of furniture of their choice in At Home in the Heartland Objects (1800-1850) at <http://www.museum.state.il.us/exhibits/athome/1800/objects/index.html> and At Home in the Heartland Objects (1850-1890) <http://www.museum.state.il.us/exhibits/athome/1850/objects/index.html>. Print it out after looking carefully at it. (If resolution and clarity are lost in the printout, the student may have to view it online while filling in the form).
- Students will
- fill out the left-hand box with the information requested (using the object or label as the source).
  - fill out the right-hand box with the source of their answer (e.g., there was a label on it, I recognize it from other chairs I know)
- Publication and Closure:* Use the information on the form to write (or report orally) a narrative version of the results of their research. Students may not be able to find all the information asked for on the form. Objects do not always tell us everything we want to know. Share the results with the class.
- Evaluation:* Assessment is based on the information written on the form and the final report. Responses should show that the student inspected the object the object carefully. Students with higher thinking skills may be able to make inferences from marks of wear and tear, from the labels, etc.

**A Matter of Style: 19th Century Furniture**

**Material Culture: Object Analysis Form (A)**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Use of the object

How do you know?

\_\_\_\_\_

Function

\_\_\_\_\_

Function

\_\_\_\_\_

When

\_\_\_\_\_

When

\_\_\_\_\_

Where

\_\_\_\_\_

Where

\_\_\_\_\_

By Whom

\_\_\_\_\_

By Whom

Making of the object

How do you know?

\_\_\_\_\_

Function

\_\_\_\_\_

Function

\_\_\_\_\_

When

\_\_\_\_\_

When

\_\_\_\_\_

Where

\_\_\_\_\_

Where

\_\_\_\_\_

By Whom

\_\_\_\_\_

By Whom

Design of the object

How do you know?

\_\_\_\_\_

Function

\_\_\_\_\_

Function

\_\_\_\_\_

When

\_\_\_\_\_

When

\_\_\_\_\_

Where

\_\_\_\_\_

Where

\_\_\_\_\_

By Whom

\_\_\_\_\_

By Whom