



## Tennis and Material Culture: Interpreting the significance of historic objects

**Unit Overview:** As students work through the activities in this lesson, they will explore the history behind some of the objects in the International Tennis Hall of Fame's collection. After reading sources relating to the context and significance of the objects, students will identify which key points they feel would be most relevant for the museum to share with its visitors by writing sample exhibition catalogue entries to accompany them. The activities in this unit are geared towards students in fifth grade. This unit connects to the Rhode Island Common Core State Standards for Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects.

### Objectives:

Students will be able to -

- Recognize that museum labels only tell a small part of an object's story
- Recognize the thematic connections between their object and their sources
- Identify and summarize the key points in short readings relevant to their object
- Identify and define challenging vocabulary words
- Write a short description of their object that expands on its background and significance

**Lesson Time Suggested:** Two to Three Class periods of one hour or less

### Themes

- 1 - US Open
- 2 - African American Players (Arthur Ashe, Althea Gibson)
- 3 - Davis Cup
- 4 - Women in Tennis (Virginia Slims, Billie Jean King, WTA)
- 5 - Wimbledon
- 6 - Tennis in the Olympics and Paralympics

### Possible Sources:

Articles:

<https://www.britannica.com/sports/US-Open-tennis> (Theme 1)

<https://news.google.com/newspapers?id=OK4nAAAAIBAJ&sjid=Y2wDAAAAIBAJ&pg=7218%2C1849890> (Theme 1 - Arthur Ashe Wins)

<https://www.blackpast.org/african-american-history/ashe-arthur-1943-1993/> (Theme 2)

<https://www.blackpast.org/african-american-history/gibson-althea-1927-2003/> (Theme 2)

<https://www.wheaties.com/history/> (Theme 2)

<https://www.daviscup.com/en/organisation/davis-cup-history.aspx> (Theme 3)

<https://www.britannica.com/sports/Davis-Cup> (Theme 3)

<https://www.britannica.com/biography/Dwight-F-Davis> (Theme 3)

<https://www.dol.gov/oasam/regs/statutes/titleix.htm> (Theme 4 - Title ix)

<https://www.wtatennis.com/news/looking-back-original-nine> (Theme 4)

<https://www.wtatennis.com/about-wta> (Theme 4)

<https://www.britannica.com/biography/Billie-Jean-King> (Theme 4)

<https://news.google.com/newspapers?id=ZdpaAAAIBAJ&sjid=AGODAAAIBAJ&pg=4926%2C2841464> (Theme 4 - Billie Jean King Defeats Riggs)

<https://www.britannica.com/topic/Battle-of-the-Sexes-tennis> (Theme 4)

<https://www.britannica.com/sports/Wimbledon-Championships> (Theme 5)

<https://www.historic-uk.com/CultureUK/The-History-of-the-Wimbledon-Tennis-Championships/> (Theme 5)

<https://www.paralympic.org/feature/how-one-man-s-idea-spawned-wheelchair-tennis> (Theme 6)

<https://www.paralympic.org/wheelchair-tennis> (Theme 6)

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Randy\\_Snow](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Randy_Snow) (Theme 6)

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tennis\\_at\\_the\\_Summer\\_Olympics](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tennis_at_the_Summer_Olympics) (Theme 6)

<https://www.nbcolympics.com/tennis/> (Theme 6)

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tennis\\_at\\_the\\_2000\\_Summer\\_Olympics](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tennis_at_the_2000_Summer_Olympics) (Theme 6)

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chantal\\_Vandierendonck](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chantal_Vandierendonck) (Theme 4 and 6)

## Books:

*The Open Book: Celebrating 40 Years of America's Grand Slam* by the United States Tennis Association (Theme 1)

*Arthur Ashe: A Life* by Raymond Arsenault (Theme 1 and 2)

*Days of Grace: A Memoir* by Arthur Ashe and Arnold Rampersad (Theme 1 and 2)

*Born to Win: The Authorized Biography of Althea Gibson* by Frances Clayton Gray (Theme 2)

*The Davis Cup: Celebrating 100 Years of International Tennis* by Richard Evans (Theme 3)

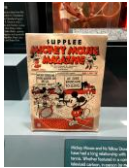
*The Story of the Davis Cup* by Alan Trengove (Theme 3)

*Pressure is a Privilege: Lessons I've Learned from Life and the Battle of the Sexes* by Billie Jean King (Theme 4)

*Game, Set, Match: Billie Jean King and the Revolution in Women's Sports* by Susan Ware (Theme 4)

*Wimbledon: The Official History* by John Barrett (Theme 5)

## Objects



Mickey Mouse and his fellow Disney characters have had a long relationship with the sport of tennis. Whether featured in a comic book, a televised cartoon, in-person (or mouse) events, or on merchandise, these characters appeal to people of all ages.

***Mickey Mouse Magazine (Volume 1, Number 10), August 1934***

Walt Disney Enterprises (American)

Gift of Marilyn and Edward Fernberger, 1995

95.15.18

*Location: Area 2: Tennis & Culture, Pop Culture Case*  
*Museum Catalog Example*



***Hall of Fame Class of 1998 (Jimmy Connors)***

***"T-2000" Tennis Racquet used by Jimmy Connors, 1983***

Wilson Sporting Goods Co. (American)

In 1983, using this racquet originally invented by René Lacoste, Jimmy Connors defeated rival Ivan Lendl 6-3, 6-7(2), 7-5, 6-0 to win his fifth US Open title. Connors who began using this model in the 1970s was a leader in the use of this steel racquet model when many of his contemporaries still preferred wood tennis racquets. He had a trade secret of applying lead tape on the head (which he removed from this racquet) to give it the right feel for his style of game.

Gift of Jimmy Connors, 1983

83.2

*Location: Area 3: Grand Slam Gallery, US Open Case*

*Theme 1*



***Hall of Fame Class of 2017 (Kim Clijsters)***

**Outfit worn by Kim Clijsters, 2010**

FILA (Italian)

At the 2009 US Open, Clijsters won her second US Open singles title. She made history by becoming the first unseeded player and wildcard to win the tournament, the first unranked player to win a major title, and the first mother to win a major title since Evonne Goolagong in 1980. In 2010, she successfully defended her title by defeating Russian Vera Zvonareva 6-2, 6-1.

Gift of Fila on behalf of Kim Clijsters, 2010

2010.65.1 and 2010.65.2

*Location: Area 3: Grand Slam Gallery, US Open Case*

*Themes 1 & 4*



**Telegram from Jackie Robinson to Arthur Ashe, September 10, 1968**

Western Union (American)

In 1968, Arthur Ashe, an amateur tennis player, defeated professional Tom Okker 14-12, 5-7, 6-3, 3-6, 6-3, in the first US Open final. With this win, Ashe became the first African-American man to win a major title, a historic feat which was recognized by Jackie Robinson.

ITHF&M Acquisition, 2005

2005.8.1

*Location: Area 2: Tennis & Tours, ATA Case*

*Themes 1 & 2*



In 1934, the breakfast cereal Wheaties began including pictures of athletes on its packaging to coincide with its slogan, “The Breakfast of Champions.” Initially, the athletes appeared on either the back or the sides of the cereal box, but began appearing on the front in 1958. The first tennis player to be featured on a Wheaties box was Ellsworth Vines in 1934. Other players to have graced the front of the iconic cereal box include Chris Evert (1987), Arthur Ashe (1997), Pete Sampras (2000), Althea Gibson (2001), and Andre Agassi (2004).

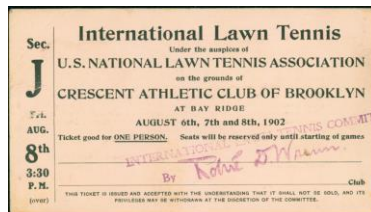
**Wheaties Cereal Box featuring Arthur Ashe, 1997**

General Mills (American)  
 Gift of Julia A. Levering, 1998  
 98.20

**Wheaties Cereal Box featuring Althea Gibson, 2001**

General Mills (American)  
 ITHF&M Collection, 2001  
 2001.2.1

*Location: Area 2: Tennis & Culture, Pop Culture Case  
 Theme 2*



**Davis Cup Challenge Round Program and Ticket, 1902**

Team Captain Malcolm Whitman led the Americans to victory over the British Isles team 3 rubbers to 2 at the Crescent Athletic Club in Brooklyn, New York.

ITHF&M Acquisition, 2010  
 2010.5.1 and 2010.5.3

*Location: Area 1: Davis Cup Area, Davis Cup Case  
 Theme 3*



**Pocket Watch, 1936**  
 Jules Jurgensen (Swiss)

This 18-carat gold watch was presented to Dwight Davis in recognition of his founding of the International Lawn Tennis Championship, more commonly known as the Davis Cup.

Gift of the Family of Dwight G. Davis, 1995

95.1a

*Location: Area 1: Davis Cup Area, Davis Cup Case*  
*Theme 3*



**Davis Cup Trophy presented to F. Gordon Lowe, 1912**

unknown maker

This sterling silver kangaroo trophy was awarded to F. Gordon Lowe, member of the British Isles team, following its victory over the Australasian team in Melbourne in 1912.

ITHF&M Acquisition, 2002

2002.34.1a&b

*Location: Area 1: Davis Cup Area, Davis Cup Case*  
*Theme 3*



**Davis Cup Program, 1911**

In the 1911 Final Round held at the West Side Tennis Club in Forest Hills, Team Captain Bill Larned led the Americans to victory over the British Isles team 4 rubbers to 1.

ITHF&M Acquisition, 2000

2000.14.9

*Location: Area 1: Davis Cup Area, Davis Cup Case*  
*Theme 3*



**Davis Cup Score Sheet Poster, 1932**

unknown maker (French)

This hand-drawn poster recorded the players competing in each rubber of the 1932 Davis Cup Challenge Round between the United States and France in Paris.

Gift in memory of Lawrence A. Baker, Sr., Assistant to Captain Bernon S. Prentice in 1932 and 1933, by his son, 1988

88.3.2

*Location: Area 3: Global Tennis Gallery*

*Theme 3*



Promoted by *World Tennis Magazine* Founder, Gladys Heldman, and sponsored by Philip Morris, Inc., the Virginia Slims Circuit was the first professional tennis tour for women, aiming to popularize the game and provide equal opportunities to female players.

### **The 1973 Virginia Slims Tennis Guide**

ITHF&M Collection

1000.2005.41

### **\$500,000 Virginia Slims Championships Ticket, March 21, 1986**

In 1986, Martina Navratilova defeated Hana Mandliková in a best-of-five-sets final (6-2, 6-0, 3-6, 6-1).

Gift of Judy Jolly, 1997

97.52.1

*Location: Area 3: WTA Gallery, Virginia Slims & Prize Money Case*

*Theme 4*



### **T-Shirt Highlighting the Battle of the Sexes Match Score**

Loan courtesy of June Harrison, 1998

L98.1.4

*Location: Area 3: WTA Gallery, Middle Case*

*Theme 4*



### **Official Program from the Battle of the Sexes Match**

Gift of Naomi Rothschild, 1996

96.31.198

*Location: Area 3: WTA Gallery, Middle Case*

*Theme 4*



**Tennis Shoes worn by Billie Jean King in 1973**

adidas (German)

King was under contract from adidas® to wear royal blue tennis shoes, and when Tinling created looks for her to wear, he always added some royal blue to, “validate the shoes.”

Gift of Billie Jean King, King Enterprises, 1977

77.23.4a&b

*Location: Area 3: WTA Gallery, Middle Case*

*Theme 4*



**Wimbledon Championships Advertising Poster from the London Metro, ca. 1935**

(artist) Phyllis Bray (British, 1911-1991)

(printer) The Dangerfield Printing Co., Ltd. (British)

Loan courtesy of John Austin and Jennifer Bocock, 1997

L97.6.4

*Location: Area 2: Tennis & Tours, 1930s Case*

*Theme 5*



**Wimbledon Gentlemen's Doubles Medal, 1931**

Fattorini & Sons Ltd. (British)

George Lott and John Van Ryn defeated the French team of Jacques Brugnon and Henri Cochet 6-2, 10-8, 9-11, 3-6, 6-3.

From the Estate of Cornelia Drake Van Ryn, 2004

2004.22.10a

*Location: Area 2: Tennis & Tours, 1930s Case*

*Theme 5*



**“Thunder Lite Midplus” Tennis Racquet, 1998**

Prince Global Sports LLC (American) OR Prince Manufacturing, Inc. (American)  
Jana Novotná of the Czech Republic had great success in the majors as a doubles player, winning 12 titles. She reached the finals of four major singles, using this racquet to win the 1998 Wimbledon Ladies Singles Championship over Nathalie Tauziat of France 6-4, 7-6(2).

Loan courtesy of Jana Novotná, 2005

L2005.3.1

*Location: Area 3: Grand Slam Gallery, Wimbledon Case  
Theme 5*



Randy Snow was all-around athlete, excelling in wheelchair basketball, racing, and tennis, and the first Paralympian inducted into the U.S. Olympic Hall of Fame.

**Paralympic Gold Medal awarded to Randy Snow, 1992**

Fábrica Nacional de Moneda y Timbre (Spanish)

Gift of the Randy Snow Family, 2014

2014.10.3a

*Location: Area 3: Global Tennis Gallery, Olympics Case  
Theme 6*



**Tennis Wheelchair used by Brad Parks, ca. 1984**

Quadra Wheelchairs, Inc. (American)

Brad Parks used this specially-designed wheelchair throughout his career. Parks was one of the founders of the National Association of Wheelchair Tennis in 1980 that began the globalization of the sport, and in 1988 was elected President of the newly formed International Wheelchair Tennis Federation.

Gift of Brad Parks, 2014  
2014.12.1

*Location: Area 3: Global Tennis Gallery, Wheelchair Tennis Platform  
Theme 6*



**Tennis Wheelchair used by Chantal Vandierendonck, ca. 1990**

Top End (American)

Chantal competed in her first wheelchair tennis event in 1983, and returned to the Netherlands eager to promote the sport. She used this during her outstanding career where she captured seven US Open women's singles titles and five Paralympic medals.

Loan of Chantal Vandierendonck, 2014

L2014.6.1

*Location: Area 3: Global Tennis Gallery, Wheelchair Tennis Platform  
Theme 6*

**Materials Needed:**

Object Photos and Captions

Mickey Mouse Magazine Sample Photo

Mickey Mouse Magazine Sample Exhibition Catalogue entry

Paper and Pencils or Computer Access

Short Articles and/or Book excerpts

White Board/Chalk Board and writing tool

Vocabulary Challenge Worksheets

Assignment Instructions sheet

**Vocabulary:**

Artifact - any object made by human beings

Material Culture - all of the physical objects made by humans to meet their needs

Exhibition - a public display of works of art or items of interest, typically held in an art gallery or museum

Significance - being worthy of attention; importance

Interpretation - the action of explaining the meaning of something.

Circa - approximately

## Common Core Standards:

### *English Language Arts and Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects:*

#### Grade 5 - Reading Standards for Informational Text

##### Key Ideas and Details

2. Determine two or more main ideas of a text and explain how they are supported by key details; summarize the text
3. Explain the relationships or interactions between two or more individuals, events, ideas, or concepts in a historical, scientific, or technical text based on specific information in the text.

##### Craft and Structure

4. Determine the meaning of general academic and domain-specific words and phrases in a text relevant to a *grade 5 topic or subject area*.

#### Grade 5 - Writing Standards

##### Text Types and Purposes

2. Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly.
  - a. Introduce a topic clearly, provide a general observation and focus, and group related information logically; include formatting (e.g., headings), illustrations, and multimedia when useful to aiding comprehension.
  - b. Develop the topic with facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples related to the topic.
  - c. Link ideas within and across categories of information using words, phrases, and clauses (e.g., *in contrast, especially*).
  - d. Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to inform about or explain the topic.
  - e. Provide a concluding statement or section related to the information or explanation presented.

##### Production and distribution of writing

4. Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development and organization are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

#### Grade 5 - Language Standards

##### Vocabulary Acquisition and Use

4. Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on *grade 5 reading and content*, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.
  - a. Use context (e.g., cause/effect relationships and comparisons in text) as a clue to the meaning of a word or phrase.
  - b. Use common, grade-appropriate Greek and Latin affixes and roots as clues to the meaning of a word (e.g., *photograph, photosynthesis*).
  - c. Consult reference materials (e.g., dictionaries, glossaries, thesauruses), both print and digital, to find the pronunciation and determine or clarify the precise meaning of key words and phrases.

#### Grade 5 - Speaking and Listening Standards:

##### Comprehension and Collaboration:

1. Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners

on *grade 5 topics and texts*, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas

4. Report on a topic or text or present an opinion, sequencing ideas logically and using appropriate facts and relevant, descriptive details to support main ideas or themes; speak clearly at an understandable pace.

## Lesson & Activity

### Class 1

1. Teacher can pose questions to the class: “What are some things you might expect to find at a museum?” Show the class an image of the Mickey Mouse Magazine and ask why they think this might be in an exhibit at the International Tennis Hall of Fame. Discuss how there are many kinds of museums with many different kinds of objects and experiences that tell a wide variety of stories. Discuss how all objects have some significance to the stories the museum is trying to tell and explain how the Mickey Mouse cartoon was a good example the International Tennis Hall of Fame used to show how tennis had maintained popularity across many decades, being present in pop culture items, like the Mickey comics, over many decades (can show additional pop culture items featuring tennis). Review the definition of material culture with the students and discuss how anything made by anyone can be considered a part of material culture. It’s the stories behind these things that make them significant enough for museums to display
2. Ask the students what kind of information they might expect to see on a museum label telling them what an object is. Then show the caption for one of the Mickey Mouse cartoons. Discuss how seeing objects at a museum can afford a quick glimpse of an object’s story but getting a complete picture takes longer than most people have to spend and requires a little more research. For this reason, museums sometimes create exhibition catalogues to provide a little more background for the visitor. Teacher will have students read the sample exhibition catalogue entry for the Mickey Mouse Magazine.
3. Teacher will explain that the students are going to write sample exhibition catalogue entries for some of the objects in the International Tennis Hall of Fame’s collection. Each student will receive a photo and simple caption for the object. Then, they will have to read one or more articles (see possible sources: can include excerpts from books) relating to the significance of the object. After determining what information is most important for the visitor to know, they will write an exhibit catalogue entry for the object (1 page or less). They are well suited for the task since most museums try to keep their labels at around a 6<sup>th</sup> grade reading level so everyone can understand the story! As they work their way through the articles, explain that the students will also be keeping track of any challenging vocabulary words they come across for a game later on (see worksheet below).
4. Once each student has been assigned an object, they can spend the remainder of class reading through the relevant articles, taking notes, and identifying any challenging vocabulary words. Students can finish reading the articles and working on the vocab sheets as a take home assignment. Each student must submit at least 2 vocabulary worksheets.

### Class 2

5. Students will pass in their vocabulary sheets to the teacher. Teacher will have students with the same theme/sources break into groups to discuss the key information in their article and share how it relates to their object with others in their group, soliciting suggestions and feedback.

6. Students can then begin drafting the exhibition catalogue entry for their object. They can work on the draft for the remainder of class, getting peer revision from their group members if time permits. Students who do not finish this task in class can complete the assignment at home.

### **Class 3**

7. Students will present their catalogue entries and the photo of their object to the class. The teacher can add each entry to a binder after it is presented to have a complete "catalogue" at the end.
8. Teacher will break class into two teams and explain the vocabulary game. Teacher will call up one student from each team to face-off, then present the two students with one of the challenging vocabulary words, and read off the three possible definitions. Whichever student raises their hand first can guess first. If the first guess is correct, their team receives 5 points. If incorrect, the other player can guess for 2 points. Whichever team has the most points at the end, wins. Teacher should ensure that a student is not one of the two players guessing for the word and definitions they wrote.

Vocabulary Challenge

1. Fill in the blanks with your answers below any time you encounter a new, challenging, or interesting word while reading your sources:

The interesting word I encountered while reading my source(s) was:

\_\_\_\_\_

Based on how it was used in the following sentence,

“

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_”

\_\_\_\_\_

I thought it could mean:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

When I looked it up, the dictionary said it meant:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2. Next, make up two fake definitions for this word. We will use these to challenge the class and see if they can guess which definition is correct! One of these definitions can be what you originally thought the word could mean. The more convincing your definitions, the trickier the challenge will be!

False Definition 1:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

False Definition 2:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

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## International Tennis Hall of Fame Exhibition Catalogue Entry

### Assignment:

#### Class 1

- a. Examine the photo and caption of your object. What questions do you have about the object that might be worth exploring? (ex: Who owned this object? What was this object used for? Is this object associated with an important historical event or date? How does this object relate to tennis?)
- b. Read through the provided sources to determine the key information visitors would want to know about this object, as well as any important information in its backstory. (ex: Saying that Mickey Mouse was created in 1928 may not directly relate to the Mickey Mouse Magazine from 1934, but it is an interesting related fact that people might be interested in).
- c. While examining your sources, **identify any challenging vocabulary words and fill out a “Vocabulary Challenge” sheet for each word.** You should have no less than two. These will be submitted next class.

#### Class 2

- d. Discuss the key information you have found about your object so far with the members of your group. Your group members will have objects that are similar in theme to yours so sharing sources and information could be helpful.
- e. Once you have finished your research, you will **write a 1-page or less exhibition catalogue entry** for your object. Exhibition catalogue entries provide more information than a basic caption that just identifies an object, but focus on the most relevant and significant key points.

#### Class 3

- f. You will present your exhibition catalogue entry as well as the photo of your object to class. All entries will then be added to the class exhibition catalogue.
- g. Using the vocabulary challenge sheets everyone submitted, we will play a game to share the new challenging words you encountered.

## Sample Exhibition Catalogue Entry - Mickey Mouse Magazine

Mickey Mouse Magazine (VOLUME 1, NO. 10), 1934

Mickey Mouse was first introduced to audiences in 1928: right in the midst of what is known today as the Golden Age of tennis. Rising steadily in popularity, Mickey Mouse has become a globally recognized pop culture icon. Artifacts of “Pop culture,” especially when viewed over time, can help separate the passing fads from the long-term interests and preferences of a community. The choice made by the Disney company to repeatedly feature their beloved Mouse exploring and enjoying the game of tennis in a variety of pop cultural items over many decades suggests that Tennis is another enduring American favorite. From comic books, to toys, to watches, and more, Mickey and his pals have been showcasing their love for tennis from the 1930s through the present day. It’s not just Mickey and his pals though: tennis has been featured by countless popular celebrities and brands of the times: Daffy Duck, Coca Cola, Marvel Superhero Patsy Walker, and even athletes from other sports have embraced tennis in one medium or another. Tennis and its players have been featured in everything from toys, clothing, and fashion accessories, to books, television shows, and film. In addition, the popularity of the game made celebrities out of early tennis idols like Suzanne Lenglen and Bill Tilden. Modern tennis greats often gain fame through association with popular brands and sportswear lines while legendary players are immortalized in television and film. As you engage with the popular phenomena of the day, you are bound to come across tennis: a consistent thread weaving its way through the fabric of pop culture decade after decade.