



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 researching and 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. They will also assess the advantages and disadvantages of interpreting a story using material culture vs. the written word. The activities in this unit are geared towards students eighth 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 their objects as primary sources, and their articles and exhibition catalogue entries as secondary sources.
- Determine and explore avenues of research relating to their object.
- Identify and summarize the key points in short readings relevant to their object
- Write a short description of their object that expands on its background and significance
- Assess the advantages and disadvantages of the two different interpretive mediums

Lesson Time Suggested: 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=ZdpaAAAAIBAJ&sjid=AGODAAAAIBAJ&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 (Theme 6)

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 (Theme 6)

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

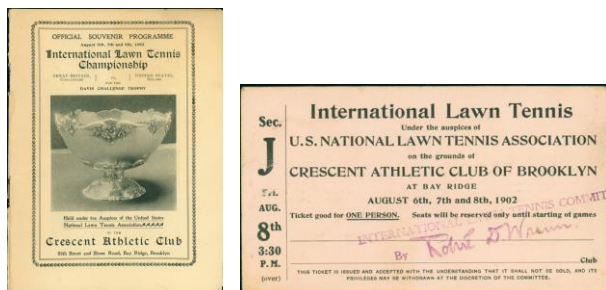
General Mills (American)

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



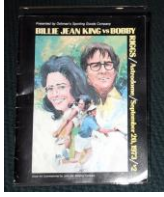
T-Shirt Highlighting the Battle of the Sexes Match Score

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

Photo of Shoes exhibit from Holocaust Museum

Paper and Pencils

Computer/Internet Access

White Board/Chalk Board and writing tool

Assignment Instructions Sheet

Vocabulary:

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

Circa - approximately

Common Core Standards:

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

Grade 8 - Reading Standards for Informational Text

Key Ideas and Details

2. Determine a central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including its relationship to supporting ideas; provide an objective summary of the text.

Craft and Structure

4. Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including analogies or allusions to other texts.

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

7. Evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of using different mediums (e.g., print or digital text, video, multimedia) to present a particular topic or idea.

Grade 8- Writing Standards

Production and distribution of writing

4. Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
5. With some guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on how well purpose and audience have been addressed.

Research to Build and Present Knowledge

8. Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources, using search terms effectively; assess the credibility and accuracy of each source; and quote or paraphrase the data and conclusions of others while avoiding plagiarism and following a standard format for citation.

Grade 8 – 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 8 topics, texts, and issues*, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.
 - a. Come to discussions prepared, having read or researched material under study; explicitly draw on that preparation by referring to evidence on the topic, text, or issue to probe and reflect on ideas under discussion.
 - b. Follow rules for collegial discussions and decision-making, track progress toward specific goals and deadlines, and define individual roles as needed.
 - c. Pose questions that connect the ideas of several speakers and respond to others' questions and comments with relevant evidence, observations, and ideas.
 - d. Acknowledge new information expressed by others, and, when warranted, qualify or justify their own views in light of the evidence presented.

2. Analyze the purpose of information presented in diverse media and formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) and evaluate the motives (e.g., social, commercial, political) behind its presentation.

Lesson & Activity

Class 1

1. Teacher can pose questions to the class: "What are some things you might expect to find at a museum?" Pose the question: why are some objects on display in museums while other similar objects are not? You can give the example: your shoes are not (yet!) in a museum, but these 100s of pairs are (show image). Explain that these hundreds of shoes are exhibited at the Holocaust museum and formerly belonged to victims of the Holocaust. Discuss how physical objects can be powerful tools to connect you to a specific story in an authentic way.
2. 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 different 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
3. 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. Teacher can note that museums research a variety of primary and secondary sources to bring the public the most accurate information on a topic.
4. 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 research the significance of the object (Who owned this item? How was this item used? How does this item relate to tennis?). The teacher can choose to offer the articles and books noted here as possible sources or see what the students come up with on their own. 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). Once each student has been assigned an object, they can spend the remainder of class researching and reading through the relevant articles while taking notes.

Class 2

5. Teacher will have students with the same theme break into groups to discuss the key information they have discovered about their objects.

Groups will note similarities and differences between their objects, soliciting recommendations and feedback from one another. Students will continue research.

Class 3

6. Students can finish research and 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 4

7. Students will present their catalogue entries and the photo of their object to the class.
8. After all entries have been presented, students will break back into their groups to discuss their thoughts on the following prompts: What are the advantages and disadvantages of using physical objects to tell a story over the written word? Most museums will combine the two: what are the advantages and disadvantages of this approach? Do you prefer one medium over the other? Is there a different medium you think could serve the story even better? Groups will share their thoughts with the class.
9. The teacher can add each entry to a binder after it is presented to have a complete "catalogue" at the end.

International Tennis Hall of Fame Exhibition Catalogue Entry

Assignment:

Class 1

- 1) 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?)
- 2) Locate and read through sources that help you 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 a related fact that people might be interested in). You should read at least 2-3 sources to be prepared for the discussion next class.

Class 2

- 3) 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.
- 4) Once you have finished your research, you will write a 1-page exhibition catalogue entry for your object. Exhibition catalogue entries provide more information than a basic caption that merely identifies an object but focuses on the most relevant and significant key points. You are providing a secondary source about the object to someone who wants to get a complete story about the object - without having to do all the hard work researching it that you did!

Class 3

- 5) You will present your exhibition catalogue entry as well as the photo of your object to class.
- 6) After all entries have been presented you will break back into your groups:

What are the advantages and disadvantages of using physical objects to tell a story over the written word? Most museums will combine the two: what are the advantages and disadvantages of this approach? Do you prefer one medium over the other? Is there a different medium you think could serve the story even better? Groups will share their thoughts with the class.
- 7) All catalogue entries will be submitted at the end of the discussion to go into the class catalogue.

Sample Exhibition Catalogue Entry - Mickey Mouse Magazine

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

The debut of Mickey Mouse to the big screen came 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 differentiate the passing fads from the ingrained 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.