



# Things to do with

## A FEW OF OUR FAVORITE THINGS : 100 CREATIONS OF THE 20TH CENTURY

### MUSEUM COLLECTIONS EXPLORE THE PAST

Objects are selected and preserved for their value as evidence of the past. Collections reflect choices and decisions. *A Few of Our Favorite Things* is an exhibit based on the Historical Society's view of the most important "things" of the last 100 years. Unlike other exhibits, each of the items is displayed as historically important in its own terms. They are not ranked or grouped in any way or organized chronologically. Every object tells a story about inventions and innovations that impacted everyday lives.

This collection of "Things To Do" suggests different ways to use this exhibit to integrate into curriculum or to embellish a field trip. Teachers and groups leaders can select activities according to their own interests and student needs.

- \* Before a visit, discuss what "things" they think were important in the 20th Century and look for their list as they go through the exhibit.
- \* Discuss what is "old". How do people, environments and culture change over time?
- \* Use the exhibit brochure to sort "things" into categories such as entertainment items, medical items, and items of technology, cooking and eating, clothing and fads.
- \* Use the exhibit brochure to create a timeline of the 100 Things. Compare this to the student's personal timeline or the timeline of their family. Pick out the most important things invented during their lifetime or during their parent's and grandparent's lifetimes. How did the introduction of new inventions or innovations, change their family's way of living, life spans and occupations?
- \* Pick out common "things" used in the student's households. How important are these items in their lives. For example can they imagine life without television or frozen foods?

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- \* **Make 3 columns with the headings, Past, Present, Future. Place an item, for example , use “zipper” under the Present heading. What did people use to fasten their clothing and other items before zippers ? What could they use in the future? Use other items from the exhibit, such as air conditioning , washers and dryers, radios, microwaves, or televisions.**
- \* **As the students go through the exhibit, have them make their own list of the ten things they think were the most important and be able to explain why they made those choices.**
- \* **Younger students can play an alphabet game and try to find items from A to Z. For the missing letters, they can have fun imagining a zebra, for example, in the exhibit.**
- \* **Older students can use the exhibit brochure and check off all 100 things as they find them or have individuals or teams responsible for finding certain items whether by alphabet or number.**
- \* **Have the students find one item from each of the decades of the 20th Century.**
- \* **Each student would be responsible for noting one item in the exhibit and looking up more information on it to either present to the class or write as a report.**
- \* **The class could bring cameras and drawing pads and create a bulletin board display of the exhibit and their field trip.**
- \* **Have older students create a scavenger hunt in the exhibit for either people their own age or for younger students.**
- \* **Select an item from the exhibit. Write a poem or story about this item to personify it. Tell the students they need to bring the object to life as if it had a mind, memory or voice. Describe the time period to which it belongs. Describe the physical appearance of the item. What story could it tell?**
- \* **The items of technology displayed in this exhibit all had a definite impact on people’s lives, some negative, some positive. List the items and discuss or write about that impact.**
- \* **Students may be familiar with “The List” programs on VH1. Celebrities come to the show with opinions on a rock ‘n roll topic like “Best Song of the 60s, and offer their three top choices . Each contestant gets to take one of those choices off the board and the audience decides on the top three choices. This could be used as a class activity for older students. The topic could be “The Three Most Important Things Invented in the 20th Century” Three students could be pre-selected to go through the exhibit with the rest of their class. Everyone would be responsible for three choices but those three students would write their choices on the board and defend them. They can also take one choice off the board and the class would vote on the remaining items.**