

SPECIAL COLLECTIONS

Activity: Approaching the Book as an Artifact



LOOK AT THE BOOK SELECTION PROVIDED AND CHOOSE ONE BOOK. ANSWER THE QUESTIONS BELOW BASED ON THAT PARTICULAR BOOK

DESCRIBE

SUBSTANCE. What materials is the book made of, inside and out?

CONTENT. Can you read the text? Are there illustrations? What do they represent? Are there any markings that intrigue you?

FORM. What is the size of the book? Are there any signs of use?

SENSE. Is the book heavy or light? How does it feel? How does it smell? Record any other information your senses give you.

INTERPRET

THINK. What can the size/weight/appearance/material of the book tell you about its use?

What can it tell you about the potential owner/user?

If you have knowledge about the period, subject, or author how does this book relate to your prior knowledge?

SUM UP

What is the author, title, and publication year of the book you selected?

Who is the audience the book is intended for? Why?

In what kind of setting would the book be used? Why?

What challenges did the book present to you that would make it difficult to work with it?

What benefits did you encounter in working with the actual book that an electronic copy of it could not provide?

What does this book tell you about the period or topic you are studying?

Partially based on Kelli Hansen's *Approaching the Book as an Artifact in Using Primary Sources - Hands-On Instructional Exercises* by Anne Bahde, Heather Smedberg, and Mattie Taormina (Editors), 2014