

If You
WALKED In My
SHOES

**Who
would
you be?**



**When
would
you
live?**



**What
would
your shoes
be made
of?**



**Where
would
you
travel?**



**Why
would
you
go?**



**How would
you shape
the world?**



Smithsonian
National Museum of American History
Kenneth E. Behring Center

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Smithsonian's
History Explorer

If You

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Teachers



We hope you will use this poster to begin a conversation about the teaching power of objects and the essential questions to ask with students as they interpret them. The questions on the front of this poster are designed to introduce students to the basic questions to consider when using primary sources. Objects and other primary sources can help students make a personal connection with the past, help students begin to “think like historians” by developing their own interpretations of original material, and help students develop analytical and critical thinking skills by using prior knowledge and imagination to determine the uses of unfamiliar objects, and by opening conversations about the strengths and limits of different kinds of sources.

OBJECTS CAN ALSO:

- ★ Offer clues when no written documents exist
- ★ Give insight into a people whose language the researcher cannot read or speak
- ★ Give clues to the materials that were available during the time period
- ★ Create a visual record through three-dimensional facts: size, weight, texture
- ★ Provide clues about function
- ★ Convey information of everyday life
- ★ Tell of ideas and information which either *are not* or *cannot be* expressed effectively in writing or speech (forms, colors, effects of visual arts; personal fantasies, idioms of taste, unspoken significance, customs, and prejudices)



What Do Your Shoes ...

MOCCASINS

These moccasins were presented to President Ulysses S. Grant by a delegation of Plains Indians during a peace conference in Washington, D.C. in the 1870s. Since the nineteenth century, Native Americans have adapted and used the American flag in various ways to symbolize their own relationship to the nation.



RUBY SLIPPERS

Sixteen-year-old Judy Garland wore these sequined shoes as Dorothy Gale in the 1939 film classic *The Wizard of Oz*. In the original book by L. Frank Baum, Dorothy's magic slippers are silver; for the Technicolor movie, they were changed to ruby red to show up more vividly against the yellow-brick road. One of several pairs used during filming, these size-five shoes are well-worn, suggesting they were Garland's primary pair for dance sequences.



ABIGAIL ADAMS

Abigail Adams began the tradition of First Lady as political partner. The marriage of John and Abigail Adams was a lifelong partnership in which the couple informed each other of political events and exchanged frank views. These embroidered leather slippers, once owned by Adams, are typical of the period and were made without a right or left, as was the norm in the colonial era.



... Say About YOU?

CELIA CRUZ

Over the course of a career that spanned six decades and took her from humble beginnings in Havana, Cuba to a world-renowned artist in the United States, Celia Cruz (1925–2003) became the undisputed Queen of Latin Music. Combining a piercing and powerful voice with a larger-than-life personality and stage costumes, she was one of the few women to succeed in the male dominated world of Salsa music.



COMBAT BOOTS

These boots date to about 1952 and have “RUSSELL HATCH 57100176” written in ink on the inside cuff. Conditions during the Korean War (1950–1953) were extreme. On hot and humid summer days in Korea, temperatures often topped 100°F. During Korea’s bitter cold winters, temperatures often dropped to -30°F.



with objects is available in
our guide *Engaging Students
with Primary Sources* at
[historyexplorer.si.edu/
primarysources.pdf](http://historyexplorer.si.edu/primarysources.pdf)



CAST IRON SHOES

Dating from the 18th century, these metal shoes were made for and worn by a chemist in France. They are made of cast iron to protect against corrosive materials. Each shoe weighs over 1½ lbs!

Objects courtesy of the Divisions of Medicine and Science, Political History, Armed Forces History, and Culture and the Arts; National Museum of American History, Kenneth E. Behring Center; Smithsonian Institution

For additional artifacts and object-based lessons and activities, visit
www.historyexplorer.si.edu