Lesson 3 – Pre-Visit
Pop Culture of the Past

Objective: Students will be able to:

- Define and describe "material culture," as it applies to both the past and the present.
- Discuss the role of artifacts in preserving history.
- Describe reasons why some elements of material culture survive for long periods of time, while others do not.
- Discuss the challenges and obstacles of preserving material culture for future generations.

Time Required: 1-2 class periods

Materials Needed:
- A copy of the Time Capsule Inventory worksheet for each student (included)
- A copy of the Hall of Fame Artifact Analysis worksheet for each student (included)
- Baseball Pop Culture images from the Hall of Fame (included)
- For Educational Purposes Only
- A selection of obsolete/outdated media. Check with your school librarian or A/V coordinator for some possibilities. These items may include:
  - A vinyl record album
  - A "floppy" computer disc
  - An 8-track tape
  - A cassette tape
  - A reel-to-reel tape

Vocabulary:
- **Generation** - A group of individuals, born and living about the same time, who often share common cultural or social characteristics and attitudes
- **Material Culture** - All items that people make or build, such as clothing, architecture, printed material, technology, art, etc.
- **Time Capsule** - A collection of objects or information, intended to be a means of communication with people in the future
Applicable Common Core State Standards:
1. Open the lesson with a discussion of **time capsules**. Ask your students if they have ever created a time capsule before, or if they have ever seen a time capsule from long ago. Discuss that the purpose of a time capsule is to provide people in the future with objects and information that are unique to a time and place.

2. Provide students with the example of the Ebbets Field time capsule. When Ebbets Field (home of the Brooklyn Dodgers) was completed in 1912, a time capsule was sealed in the stadium’s cornerstone. In 1960, after the Dodgers moved to Los Angeles, Ebbets Field was torn down and bits of the stadium, including the cornerstone were auctioned off. The time capsule inside the cornerstone was then opened. Among the contents were letters from President William Howard Taft and the mayor of New York City, a 1912 calendar, a copy of the *New York Morning Post* from January 5, 1912, five 1912 pennies, and a photo of Charley Ebbets. The items were meant to represent the year, the city, and the stadium itself.

3. Ask students to imagine that they are going to create a time capsule of items relating to the culture of your school during the current school year. Tell students that their time capsule will be opened one hundred years in the future. Students must determine what items and objects will be included in the time capsule.

4. Explain that the items included in the time capsule will need to fall into the following categories: Entertainment (music, movies, or television), News and Current Events, Science and Technology, Books and Magazines, Sports, and Everyday Life. Write these categories on the board.

5. As a class, come up with one object for each category. (Examples might include a video game, a school newspaper, a school yearbook, a cell phone, an iPod, a poster of an athlete, a copy of a book read in class, a t-shirt with a school mascot on it.)

6. Divide the class into six groups. Assign each group one of the six categories of objects for the time capsule. Distribute the "Time Capsule Inventory" sheet. Ask each group to brainstorm a list of items they would like to include in the time capsule that fall into their assigned category. Students should record their group’s ideas in the appropriate place on the worksheet. Give students about 5 minutes to complete this task.
7. When the groups have finished, ask one student from each group to report on the objects their group would like to place in the time capsule. Ask another student from the group to record the items on the board. Have students record the objects listed by the other groups in the appropriate spaces on their "Time Capsule Inventory."

8. After each group has reported on the objects they would include in the time capsule, explain that the items listed are material culture. Ask students what they think "material culture" is. Work with students to develop a definition. Explain that historians, archaeologists, and museum curators use the term "material culture" when referring items that people make or build, such as clothing, architecture, printed material, technology, art, etc.

9. Explain that when historians, archaeologists, and curators look at material culture, they make observations. They measure the size and weight of the object. They look to see what the object was made of and think about how it might have been made. They then draw conclusions about the artifact such as how it might have been used, and what it can tell us about life a long time ago.

10. Ask students what possible problems or challenges might be associated with preserving material culture so that it survives for a long time? (Student answers may vary. Objects are sensitive to environmental factors such as heat, light, and humidity. They can fall apart or decompose. Other outside factors influence object survival as well such as use and wear.) Do students foresee any difficulties with any of the items they've selected surviving for the next 100 years? Why or why not?

11. Show students the selection of obsolete media you collected for the lesson. Ask students if they are aware of what these items are. Would people in the future know how to use them or how to access the information on them? Why or why not?

12. Review the list of time capsule contents developed at the beginning of the lesson. Should any of the items be removed from the time capsule? Which ones, and why?

13. Introduce the activity. Students will be exploring material culture preserved at the Baseball Hall of Fame.
1. Divide students into six groups (these can be the same six groups from the lesson).

2. Distribute Baseball Pop Culture images (Artifact #1 to Group 1, Artifact #2 to Group 2, etc.), and Hall of Fame Artifact Analysis worksheets (included).

3. Each group should spend several minutes observing their Baseball Pop Culture item, and answering the questions on the Hall of Fame Artifact Analysis worksheet.

4. Once the students have completed their observations, have all groups come together and compare their results. Which questions were easy to answer? Which were more difficult?

5. As each group reports, question the students on why they think this object of past material culture has survived to the present day. Where was this object kept before it found its way into the Hall of Fame collection? Was it preserved in an attic or basement? Was it purchased by someone who collected all kinds of baseball-related artifacts?

6. Ask students if they foresee any difficulties with any of the items they have observed surviving for the next 100 years? Why or why not?

**Conclusion:**

To conclude this lesson, have students write a summary of recommendations about the time capsule project, explaining some of the challenges and obstacles to preserving elements of material culture for future generations. In the summary, students should cite reasons why some elements of material culture have been preserved from previous generations, as well as the conditions that would have to be met for the creation of a successful school time capsule.
Time Capsule Inventory

In your group, brainstorm a list of items you would like to include in the time capsule that fall into your assigned category.

ENTERTAINMENT (Music, Movies, or Television):

NEWS and CURRENT EVENTS:

SCIENCE and TECHNOLOGY:

BOOKS and MAGAZINES:

SPORTS:

EVERYDAY LIFE:
Hall of Fame Artifact Analysis

Group Names: _______________________
___________________________
___________________________
___________________________
___________________________

Date _______________________

1. Describe the Artifact:
   - Shape: ______________________
   - Size: ________________________
   - Color: _______________________  
   - Age: _________________________
   - Condition: ___________________  

2. Does this artifact remind you of anything you have seen before?
   _______________________________________________________________________
   _______________________________________________________________________
   _______________________________________________________________________

3. What is unique about the artifact?
   _______________________________________________________________________
   _______________________________________________________________________
   _______________________________________________________________________

4. Who might have used this object?
   _______________________________________________________________________
   _______________________________________________________________________
5. What might this object have been used for?

6. What questions do you have about the object? What kinds of information might help you find out more about the object?
Baseball Pop Culture Artifact Images

Artifact #1
Artifact #2

Casey at the Bat

1

It looked extremely rocky
for the Mudville nine that day.
The score stood four to six,
with but an inning left to play.
And so when Cooney died at first,
and Burrows did the same,
and pallor wreathed the features
of the patrons of the game.
Artifact #4

[Image of a wooden box with the text "N.Y. CHAMPIONS CHOCOLATES" on it, along with other text that reads, "Can't be Knocked Out." and "The New York Champions CHOCOLATES." The box is open and displayed against a black background.]
Artifact #5
Artifact #6
Baseball Pop Culture Artifact Information

Artifact #1 - Apron

Object Date: 1948

Description: This white and red apron was made to celebrate the Cleveland Indians' American League pennant win and World Series appearance in 1948. The apron was created using cut up pieces of a red Cleveland Indians pennant. A picture of the team mascot (Chief Wahoo) was sewn onto left pocket.

Size: 20 inches wide, 19 inches long

Material: White cotton and red wool

What Is It Used For? Aprons are normally worn over the top of clothes to keep clothes clean while cooking or doing other messy activities.

Who Used It: This apron was hand made by Cleveland Indians fan Nona Lou.

History: The Cleveland Indians won the World Series in 1948, defeating the Boston Braves 4 games to 2.
Artifact #2 - Drinking Glass

Object Date: unknown

Description: This glass is part of a set of 13 glasses, printed in various colors with cartoon images depicting baseball players and fans on one side, and lines from the poem "Casey at the Bat" on the other side.

Size: 4 3/4 inches tall, 2 5/8 inches across

Material: glass

What Is It Used For? This is a drinking glass, although it may never have been used.

Who Used It: We are not sure.

History: The poem "Casey at the Bat" was written in 1888 by Ernest L. Thayer. It is one of the most well-known baseball poems of all time.
Artifact #3 - Fan

Object Date: 1872

Description: This is a wooden folding fan with decorative cut outs at the ends of each leaf. The leaves are connected with a red ribbon. The words written on the fan are signatures of the players from the 1872 Boston Red Stockings.

Size: 7 inches tall, 14 inches wide

Material: wood

What Is It Used For? Hand-held fans like this are used to keep people cool on hot days.

Who Used It: We don't know, but we can guess what that person was like. Fans such as this one were mostly used by women during the 1870s, so this object's owner was probably a woman or a girl. The woman or girl who used it was clearly a big fan of the Boston Red Stockings, and was brave enough to ask players for their signatures. She might have taken this fan with her to keep cool in the grandstand.

History: The 1872 Boston Red Stockings played in the years before the American League and National League existed. They were part of a league called the National Association. In 1872, they were the best team in the league, winning 39 games and losing only 8.
Artifact #4 - Candy Box

Object Date: 1890

Description: This is a wooden box with a lid. The label reads "New York Champions Penny Sweet Chocolates Can't Be Knocked Out". It shows a batter and a catcher.

Size: 2 1/2 inches tall, 9 1/2 inches wide, 7 inches deep.

Who Used It: At one time, this box held and displayed candies at a store. What store exactly? That's anyone's guess, but the store was probably close to New York City, since the "New York Champions" refers to the New York Giants.

Material: wood

What Is It Used For? This box stored penny candy, and also would have displayed the candy as it sat on a shelf or counter top.

History: Penny candy first got its name because it cost one penny. A person could buy just one piece, or many pieces. Most people bought penny candy from drug stores, general stores, and candy shops.
Artifact #5 - Game

Object Date: 1940

Description: This is a table top game machine with 4 games in 1. Games that can be played on it are: Put-In-Take, Baseball, Colors, and Bagatelle. The cartoon characters are meant to look like players and fans. There are ten small metal balls which can be put into play using the spring.

Size: 17 1/4 inches tall, 11 inches wide

Material: wood, paper, metal

What Is It Used For? This game is an early version of what we would now call "pinball."

Who Used It: We don’t know, but both children and adults have enjoyed games such as this one.

History: Pinball became popular during the Great Depression in the 1903s. Both children and adults liked the game because it was a cheap form of entertainment. Tabletop machines like this one were made starting in 1931. Legs were added to the machines to keep players from tilting the table to improve their chances of winning.
Artifact #6 - Game

Object Date: 1913

Description: This is a game titled *Major League Indoor Base Ball*. Inside, one side has a baseball diamond and "dugout" in which to set the team roster. The other side has a large colored spinner. Included in the game are strips of paper each containing a full roster for each major league team and small wooden token "players."

Material: wood, paper, metal

What Is It Used For? This is a baseball board game. The spinner in this game randomly determines the outcome of each play. For 25¢, players could purchase new and updated roster sheets for each season.

Who Used It: We don't know, but both children and adults have enjoyed games such as this one.

History: The first baseball-themed board game was made in 1866.