

World's Columbian Exposition: 1893

Activity: Crafting a Travelogue

When the Columbian Exposition opened on Chicago's south side, it was heralded as "stand[ing] alone in the history of all that have gone before it, and perhaps all that may come after it, as the most important demonstration of civilization known to modern times." ([LOC Douglass papers](#))

Directions for Part 1:

1. Read over the coverage of the opening ceremonies in the *Los Angeles Herald* via Chronicling America:

<http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn84025968/1892-10-22/ed-1/seq-1/> [article begins in third column]

2. Using the guidebooks provided, choose at least 6 sites or attractions to visit. List why you chose each one—what are you most interested in seeing?

a.

b.

c.

d.

e.

f.

3. Using the maps provided, chart a logical course through the park that allows you to see all 6 of your chosen attractions. Beginning at the main entrance to the park, plot your course below.

a.

b.

c.

d.

e.

f.

4. Answer the following questions:

g. What were some notable features of the attractions you chose? What do they tell us about Americans in 1893?

h. How was the Exposition laid out? Was it easy to plot your route?

i. If a World's Fair were held today, what kinds of attractions would it include?

Online Links to Maps:

Bird's Eye Map: <http://www.loc.gov/resource/g4104c.pm001522/>

Map of Grounds: <http://www.loc.gov/item/2010587004/>

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Activity: Artifacts from the Exposition

Part 1: Physical Artifacts

Examine the physical artifacts from the Fair provided by the Chicago History Museum. Then, with your group, choose one artifact and answer the following questions.

1. Briefly describe the basic physical characteristics of your artifact.
2. What does it appear to be made of? Why might this material or materials have been chosen?
3. Describe any markings for example, names, dates, etc... on the artifact and explain what they might mean.
4. Who do you think used this artifact? What might its primary use have been? What else might it have been used for?
5. Why would this item have been included in the Fair?

Part 2: Images

Examine the images advertising various human “attractions” at the fair. Then, with your group, answer the following questions:

1. Why do you think these “attractions” were included in the Exposition? What purpose did they \ serve? What message did they send?
2. What do these images tell you about late-nineteenth-century Americans’ visions of other cultures?
3. What effects do you think these sort of “attractions” had on public attitudes toward foreign peoples? Were any of these effects positive?
4. Imagine going to the Field Museum today. How are depictions of foreign peoples and cultures different?