

WEAPONS

BEYOND THE BLADE

LIMITED ENGAGEMENT
OCTOBER 7, 2017 – JANUARY 1, 2018

EXHIBIT EXPLORER GUIDE

Target age: modifiable for grades 5-12

DIRECTIONS FOR TEACHERS

Please use this exhibit explorer to guide your students through *Weapons: Beyond the Blade*. The following activities and prompts are meant to help you facilitate thoughtful discussion about the themes of the exhibit, which include (but are not limited to) the complexity of weapons and the meanings humans have ascribed to them in the past and present.

This guide is meant to prompt discussion for a wide range of ages/grade levels.

ARTIFACT HUNT

After finding each set of objects listed below, use the discussion points to facilitate a conversation.

Each section in *Weapons: Beyond the Blade* builds upon the next. Therefore, we recommend identifying each artifact as you progress through the exhibit, rather than jumping from section to section.

Oldest Weapon & Most Recent Weapon (represented in the exhibit)

Oldest: St. Charles Blade; Dane County, Wisconsin, Archaic Period, 8000-500 BCE
(Introduction Section; “Trial and Error” Case)

Most recent: Kirpan; India, 21st Century (Deeper Meaning Section; “Symbolic Weapons” Case)

Discussion points:

- From what material is each weapon made?
- Do you think these weapons were used for the same purpose? Why/why not?
- What can each of these objects tell you about the culture it came from?
- Are there stories associated with the object? How do these stories influence your assumptions about who used it?

Largest Bow & Smallest Bow (represented in the exhibit)

Largest: Bow; Japan, 19th century (Primary Purpose Section; “Bows & Arrows” Case)

Smallest: Bow, Arrows, and Quiver; South Africa, 20th century
(Deeper Meaning Section; “Symbolic Weapons” Case)

Discussion points:

- From what material is each weapon made?
- Do you think these weapons were used for the same purpose? Why/why not?
- What can each of these objects tell you about the culture it came from?
- Are there stories associated with the object? How do these stories influence your assumptions about who used it?

Various weapons made from animals (teeth, claws, hide, hair, poison/venom, etc.)

There are many weapons that fit this description. Some examples include:

- Shark-tooth sword; Gilbert Islands, 20th century (Introductory Section; “Animal Weapons” Case)
- *Baju empurau* (war jacket with parrotfish scales); Borneo, 20th century (Primary Purpose Section; “Weapons of Indonesia” Case)
- *Naga dao* (edged blade with decorative goat hair); India, 19th century (Primary Purpose Section; “Weapons of Powerful Impact” Case)

Discussion points:

- Do the animals serve the same purpose on all of the weapons that use them? How do these purposes differ?
- What can this tell us about each weapon and the individuals who used it?
- Why do you think people used specific animals when making weapons?
- Do we, in our society, rely on natural resources (animals or other things from nature) as much as other cultures and/or time periods? Why or why not?
- How do both time and place influence how objects are made and what materials are used?

WANT TO CONTINUE THE DISCUSSION?

Take a look at the reflection points below and refer to our *Weapons: Beyond the Exhibit* guide.

We have seen in *Weapons: Beyond the Blade* that weapons aren’t always used for violence. In fact, they can have multiple meanings and functions. Reflect on how humans have used weapons in other ways. How have weapons influenced other aspects of life? Identity? Artistic expression? Games and sports?

The Milwaukee Public Museum has thousands of weapons in its collection. Do you think weapons are important to have in a museum collection? If so, why or why not? How do you think we can use historical weapons to understand history? Can these weapons be used to understand the present? If so, how?



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www.mpm.edu/weapons

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