Objective:

- Students will understand that the objects that we use for particular purposes often change over time.
- Students will be able to compare objects from the past with objects that we use today.
- Students will be able to find objects from the past that serve the same or a similar purpose as objects we use today.
- Students will learn how to compare and identify some of the changes that have taken place over time.

Pre-Museum Activity

1. Students are going to be asked to decide on a purpose for some items and then to think about what people used in years past that had a similar purpose and how these items are different from or the same as items we use today.

2. Ask students to choose one or two items from the list and to write down what and/or how we use the item (its purpose). Allow students to share their ideas (encourage discussion and let them resolve any differences of opinion). Continue until they have a purpose for all of the items on the list.

3. Once students have come up with an acceptable purpose for each of the items on the list, ask them to think about what things people in the past used that served the same or a similar purpose. Use the same process you used above to get this information from students. Remind them that there were many different periods of the past, so there can be several acceptable answers. In fact, you may want to put those answers in chronological order once you’ve collected them.

4. Next, students will think about how the objects today are different from the objects used in the past. Changes can be in the materials used, size, power source, etc. Some objects will be very similar while others will have changed dramatically. For example: Today many televisions have flat screens and all produce color pictures (some are high definition and 3D). In the past they were larger and heavier, before the ’60s they were black and white, and before the ’50s people used radios in homes because televisions were not invented. Also, remote controls are a relatively modern addition. Complete the comparisons for all of the items on the list.

Before the Visit

Tell students that they will be going to the Oakland Museum of California History Gallery. They will see many different artifacts (such as objects, photographs, and maps), displays, and other items that will help them to understand some of the people, places, and things that shaped California’s history.
Explain that they will be looking at the items in the History Gallery collection and comparing items used in the past with items we use today. This will help them to understand how life in the past was similar to and different from our lives today.

You might want to preview the worksheets with students before the Museum visit. Some students, especially second language learners, may benefit from a preview of the objects they will be searching for and the vocabulary they will need to understand.

**Vocabulary**

Make sure students understand the following words and ideas that they may see in the Museum and on the worksheet:

- Artifact
- Gallery
- Exhibit
- Display
- Time periods
- Purpose
- California history
- Same/similar

**Museum Visit**

There are five different worksheets for this lesson; each one takes place in a different exhibit area within the History Gallery:

- Before the Other People Came
- Voyages of Discovery
- 1770–1820 (Spaniards Claim This Land)
- 1848–1860 (Coming for Gold)
- 1850–1875

(There are yellow date markers as well as signs to the named exhibits—the list above matches the way exhibits are labeled in the History Gallery.) You will need to decide how you plan to have the students spread out within the Museum, which exhibits you will visit, and whether or not the students will visit more than one exhibit within the Gallery.

Photographs of the objects in the Gallery are included on the worksheet, which also has space for simple sketches. Hopefully, these will help students to locate the objects more easily (especially if they are not familiar with the names) and to enhance their learning experience. Some students prefer to make drawings in addition to using words to record their experience.

Students can work in pairs or small groups. Coordinate your assignments for placement within the Gallery with the adult chaperones who will accompany the class for the visit. Give each student his or her own copy of the form, even if they will work with partners or in small groups. You probably will want to have students start in different sections of the Gallery so everyone won’t be trying to look at
the same things at the same time within limited spaces. You also might want students to complete more than one worksheet (so they can see more than one exhibit within the Museum). Adult chaperones can have the additional sheets to hand out when appropriate.

Some students may have trouble identifying the objects and/or their purpose. Hopefully the adult chaperones or Gallery staff will be able and available to help with identification and clarification of the purpose of the artifacts students are uncertain about.

The Museum prefers that students use pencils rather than ink pens for recording so please remind students of this before they get started.

Collect the student worksheets at the Museum before you leave so they don’t get misplaced. Students will use them for further activities once you return to school.

After the Visit

Allow students time to look over their worksheets and notes. Let them share what they saw and learned about California’s history. Also, have them talk about their overall impressions: which parts they liked (or didn’t like) with brief explanations and reasons. You also might have groups report out their results from the worksheets and see if other groups/partners had similar or different results.

You might also add the idea of why objects changed over time. This could include materials used, resources available, technology advances, etc. It might encourage students to think about why there are often changes as time progresses.

Projects/Activities

Then and Now Images

Have students make two-sided (a piece of paper folded in half, using both sides in a horizontal or vertical format) representations of items “Then and Now” (or “Now and Then”). Ask them to put one item on each side of the sheet—one for an item from the past (Then) and one for an object from today (Now). Students could draw pictures or look for magazine or computer images to paste on the pages. At the bottom of the page, have them write brief statements comparing the items used past and present. For example: People used to write with feather quills and ink but today we use ink pens and Sharpies. They can use items from their Museum experience or other items in which they are interested. You can display their work or put the collected work into a booklet format.

Venn Diagrams

Have students make Venn diagrams for one (or more) of their comparisons. If students are not familiar with this procedure, you can model it. Usually it involves two overlapping circles (could also be two rectangles). Put the names of the objects on opposite sides. Fill in the unique qualities on each side, and then use the overlapping part to tell how the objects are both similar. Students can use their worksheets from the Museum to get information for the diagrams.
“Concentration” Games

Have students use 3x5 cards. They need ten or more cards for each game. (They must have an even number of cards.) Students can make the games individually or in small groups. They should label half of the cards “Now” and the other half “Then.” Students then draw (or find) a picture to show an object from today for the Now cards and from some period in the past for the Then cards. They can use their worksheets from the Museum for information. Students should also write the name of the objects on each card so there won’t be any confusion.

Once cards are made, students shuffle the cards and place them face down on a table. The first player chooses two cards from the set. If they get a matching pair, they get to collect the cards; if not, they have to put the cards back face down in the same places on the table. After a few picks, students will remember where a match might be and will be able to collect the cards. Each player in turn keeps choosing two cards until all of the cards have been matched. The player with the most cards wins. The game could also be played alone by one student.