

# Object contextualization assignment

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Type: Short assignment

## Learning objectives

- Students learn to place objects in different historical contexts.
- Students learn to apply source criticism to artefacts and (audio) visual material.
- Students learn to recognize the voice and contexts of different actors.
- Students learn to contextualize museum collections differently

## Assignment suggestion

Select from the “Tours” or from the “What’s like this?” section below each of the stories in each of the tours at [www.inventingeurope.eu](http://www.inventingeurope.eu) an object, image, or video that intrigues you, and relates to European infrastructures. Tell us: 1) what you find intriguing about this object in max. 100 words; 2) give the metadata for your object; 3) The [Object of History Guide](http://objectofhistory.org/guide/) (<http://objectofhistory.org/guide/>) (discusses 5 ways in which an object can be contextualized by the metadata and the story it is linked to. Analyze and explain briefly how the object of your choice is contextualized in the *Inventing Europe* virtual exhibit by means of its metadata and accompanying story. – Eindhoven University of Technology, Netherlands.

## Approach

In preparation of this assignment we suggest the following optional steps:

1. Explore the *Inventing Europe* website with an eye to the topic of your course.
2. Show your students *Inventing Europe*, and give them a few examples of interesting objects (images and videos) that relate to your course topic in the week prior to the assignment.
3. Give them the link to the Object of History Guide: <http://objectofhistory.org/guide> (you might have to click on “guide” to see the page correctly). This guide explains different modes to look at objects and introduces a set of questions depending on the context in which you look at it.
4. Let your students make the assignment.

5. In case you want to create a lecture around source criticism and creating new European and transnational contexts to primary (audio)visual materials, you might want to explore the below suggested online lecture, or Prezi.

### Tips for use

- *Inventing Europe* has a [1000+ object page](#), which features all the objects that are exhibited on *Inventing Europe*. Your students can explore this page and find their objects here.
- Curious where to find more objects? Take a look at [www.europeana.eu](http://www.europeana.eu).
- You can choose to show your students the [online lecture](#) by Alexander Badenoch (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iZKQwbKFOAE>) about contextualizing objects which will help them to complete the assignment successfully. The lecture lets your students think about different questions they can ask to objects, from a perspective that is European and transnational.
- This [Prezi](#) (<http://prezi.com/vfgkq0n2xutt/using-sources-audio-visual-artifacts-and-their-contextualization/>) teaches your students to contextualize all kinds of audio visual primary sources: "Using Sources: (Audio-visual) artefacts and their contextualization". The prezi was part of a guest lecture given at Eindhoven University of Technology, the Netherlands.

### Fellow teacher tips

- This is a great assignment to let your students learn source criticism and learn them to pose all kinds of interesting research questions to other than written sources: namely all kinds of audiovisual material. For my students, who were no historians, this was not easy initially, but they really learned a lot. - Suzanne Lommers, former teacher Eindhoven University of Technology, the Netherlands.

### Reading suggestions

- The Object of History Guide: <http://objectofhistory.org/guide> (you might have to click on "guide" to see the page correctly).
- Feel free to explore the six-volume book series: Johan Schot and Philip Scranton ed., 'Making Europe: Technology and Transformations, 1850-2000' (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013-2016) at [www.makingeurope.eu](http://www.makingeurope.eu).

Are you planning on using this suggestion and teach with *Inventing Europe*? Then we invite you to join our teaching community. You then keep up-to-date on activities, have ample opportunity to share your materials and experiences, and to be in touch with other teachers.

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