

Archival Study Assignment

For this assignment, you will write a series of descriptive captions for artifacts. This genre is known as “label copy” in the archival world. As the **author** of this assignment, you will assume the role of curator for an imaginary archival exhibit on the **topic** of travel. Your **purpose** will be to educate, inform, entertain, and/or persuade the **audience** of your exhibit. As with most museum exhibits, your audience will be interested members of the public.

On Friday, April 8, we will visit Emory’s Rose Manuscript, Archive, and Rare Book Library. In this class session you will see many related to travel and to the topics we’ve discussed. You will choose **five artifacts** you would like to include in your imagined exhibit. You should take lots of notes on your chosen artifacts and bring a camera (or device with a camera) to class. After class, you will write 200 word captions or “Object Labels” for each of your five artifacts (1000 words total) plus a 500 word “Introduction Label” on your exhibit as a whole. You will arrange these captions in the order you would want a viewer to encounter the artifacts. You will post this assignment (Introduction Label, Artifact Photos, Object Labels) to your website. If you use outside sources for research, please include a works cited sheet.

Questions to consider:

For your Introduction Label:

- Will your exhibit focus on a specific theme: a certain destination or traveler type, or perhaps some mode of travel or type of travel artifact (maps, memoirs, travel diaries)?
- Why should members of the public be interested in your exhibit?
- What do you hope visitors will take away from your exhibit?

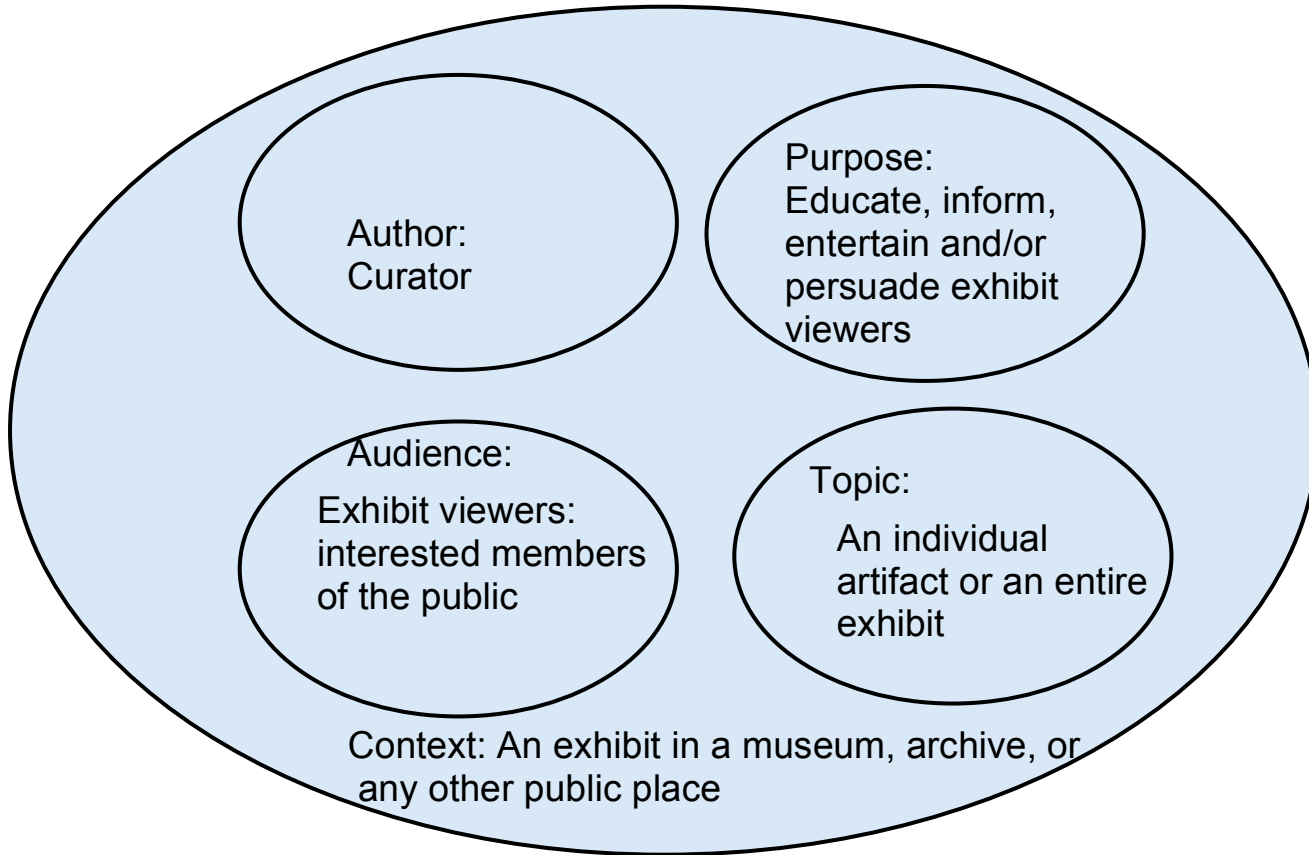
For your Object Labels:

- What is this artifact?
 - What is the rhetorical situation of this artifact?
- Why is this artifact significant?
- What does this artifact say about travel?
- How does the artifact connect with the rest of your exhibit?
- Object labels must also include bibliographic information for the artifact. You will receive a handout during our archive visit with bibliographic information, be sure to hang on to it.

This assignment will be due on **Friday, April 22**. It is worth 10% of your final course grade. You will have the opportunity to revise this assignment for inclusion in your final portfolio.

Writing Label Copy

What is “label copy?” “Label copy” is a descriptive caption in an exhibit. It is a genre used in museum and archival work. We will look at examples in class. This is the rhetorical situation of label copy:



There are many kinds of label copy. We will use two in this class: Introduction labels and object labels.

Introduction labels: In an exhibit, the introduction label is the first label a visitor should see. It should explain your exhibit in by introducing the topic. The introduction label should be a “teaser” and encourage people to see the rest of the exhibit. If there is something significant or special in the exhibit, it should be introduced here. At this point the visitor should have a good feeling what the exhibit is generally about.

Object labels: Object labels are captions placed next to an artifact on display. Object labels typically include the title of the work, followed by the date and place of creation, and the materials or technique of the object. There may be a brief description or commentary. Object labels should tell the viewer why a particular artifact is significant and how it relates to the exhibit on the whole. Remember that your audience for this exhibit will be interested members of the public, but they might not know much about travel artifacts. Think about how much background information you will need to include or summarize. Include a works cited list if you undertake outside research.