



DUNDAS  
MUSEUM &  
ARCHIVES

# DISCO

“I learn!”

## PRE-VISIT PROGRAM

Education programs at The Dundas Museum and Archives subscribe to the philosophy that all genuine learning is through discovery. The pedagogical approach to all our programs is best characterized as *object-based-discover-learning*. A meaningful relationship between an artifact and a student is best achieved by that student adopting a spirit of inquiry. Asking good questions that are *genuinely interesting* to the student is at the very heart of historical thinking.

Educational programs at the DMA that complement junior, intermediate and senior curriculum have a pre-visit component that involves the Director of Education at the museum coming to your class prior to your participation at the museum.

WHY: Working with your class prior to your visit to the DMA is intended to prepare them for a full and rich experience with the inquiry activities that are an integral part of the education program in which they are participating. They will engage in the concepts of historical thinking; being able to pose meaningful questions is essential.

WHEN: the pre-visit lesson is arranged at a time that is mutually convenient to both you as classroom teacher and the Director of Education at the museum. Ideally, this visit to your classroom is two or three days prior to your visit to the DMA. The pre-visit lesson is about 60 minutes in length.

WHAT: Professor Picone will engage your students with an artifact such as a picture that captures a moment in historical Dundas. The first activity is to describe the artifact in as much detail as possible. This is done individually.



How might having a passenger train service have an impact on the economy of Dundas?



In 1967 the turning basin of The Desjardins Canal was filled in. Why? Was this a good idea?

There is a skill to *reading* an object for all its detail.

By examining different kinds of questions Dr. Picone will pose about your school – *When was it built? What's the best thing about it?* – your students will appreciate that there are questions that lead to a dead end, and others that invite the student along a path of exciting and meaningful inquiry. The approaches here are different to suit different panels: primary as opposed to junior and intermediate.

The students will then turn their attention back to the artifact they have already described in detail. Any given artifact – even a post-card picture of the Dundas Train Station – is part of a larger story; the artifact exists in any number of contexts. So, the next step is to challenge the students to go beyond the artifact: train travel in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century; motivations to travel; travel fashion; technology; the railroad and commerce; comparing any number of aspects of early 20<sup>th</sup> century Dundas culture to the town today. It's like finding a *topic* to a project.

The students will then be challenged to pose questions about the artifact bearing in mind what they've already learned about different kinds of questions and different kinds of thinking.

The fact is that some questions are interesting to pursue, and others aren't. And we want your students to be *interested, engaged!*

Some questions invite factual, right/wrong answers. Others challenge the student to have a personal opinion and support it with evidence. Then there are questions that afford the opportunity to speculate and evaluate. The goal is to help them learn to pose questions of higher order cognition: inductive reasoning and evaluation. And to appreciate the importance of supporting opinions with evidence.

The overall intention of the pre-visit activity is to get your students *genuinely interested* in exploring some aspect of the topic of the program. Good inquiry needs this foundation.

The pre-visit activity in your classroom is also a wonderful way for your class to meet and get acquainted with Professor Picone, Director of Education at the DMA, and his assistant, Karen, who will be leading the program at the museum.

How have businesses on King Street changed in the past 150 years? What does this suggest about the changing "personality" of Dundas?

