How do the artifacts of ancient cultures demonstrate the worldview of the culture that created them, and reflect their beliefs and daily practices? We share many common hopes and fears in our lives that have been shared by human beings, regardless of time period or culture. Through discovered objects, let’s explore examples of common human concerns that people in Ancient cultures faced that are not so different from ours today.

Past Civilizations

Getting Started
In order to understand the significance of objects that survive today it is important to think about how the people of these cultures saw the world and their place in it. What do you already know about ancient cultures? Brainstorm a list of what you might know, including:

- The names of different ancient cultures
- Their beliefs
- The practices and rituals they were known for
- The locations they inhabited or moved to
- Types of artwork and objects that different cultures created
- Sources of food and particular dishes
- Organization of society within each culture

Activities to Try
Try one or two of these ideas to get ready to dive deeper into the ancient past!

- Can you create a timeline that includes 4 ancient civilizations—ancient Egypt, ancient Mesopotamia, ancient Greece and Rome. Think about the important elements that a timeline needs. You can even create one digitally!

- What other important historical events happened during the time that these civilizations existed? Put a few of them on your timeline.

- Extra Challenge: Add your own lifetime to the timeline! How long will your timeline need to become? What differences and similarities can you think of between the culture you live in today, and the ancient cultures on your timeline?

Glencairn’s Ancient Artifacts

Glencairn Museum is home to a rich variety of cultural artifacts and objects. To read up on a few of our items, follow the links below to issues of our monthly newsletters that highlight some of the ancient objects in our collections.

A Giant International Jigsaw Puzzle
https://bit.ly/2v8C7V1

A Masterpiece in Marble: Glencairn’s Minerva-Victoria

Sacred Stories: Scripture, Myth and Ritual

Bearded Angels, Protective Spirits

The Goddess Tawaret: Protector of Mothers and Children

Sacred Adornment: Jewelry as Belief in Ancient Egypt

Cats, Lions and the Fabulous Felines of Ancient Egypt

Future-proofing Kingship: Mesopotamian Foundation Deposits in Glencairn Museum

For the full archive of Glencairn Museum News, visit
https://glencairnmuseum.org/newsletter-archive

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**Ancient Egypt**

Ancient Egyptian civilization began in 4800 BCE, and continued for thousands of years until 641 CE. One of the ways that we can learn about and understand the lives of the people who lived during that time, is by looking at artifacts that still survive today.

**Object Observations**

Follow the link below to an image of an ancient Egyptian artifact in Glencairn’s collection. Print, project or zoom in on the image to view it. Using the questions as prompts, have a discussion as a class or in small groups. [https://bit.ly/3dKIOBG](https://bit.ly/3dKIOBG)

- What do you notice?
- What do you think the object is made of?
- What do you think this object was used for?
- What might it tell you about the people who made it? What about those who viewed it?
- Do you recognize anything in the artwork that is familiar to you?

Once you have had your discussion, visit this page to find out more about this object. How close were your observations and thoughts to the way ancient Egyptians viewed and used this object?

**Activities to Try**

- Humans have needed the same things to survive for thousands of years. Make a list of all the things you need to survive. Next to each item, write or draw how you get each thing today in the 21st century. Next, add how you think an ancient Egyptian may have made sure they had each of those things thousands of years ago. How does your life compare to the life of an ancient Egyptian?

- Humans have always sought protection for themselves and their loved ones. In ancient Egyptian culture, amulets were often used for many different protective purposes. Research and learn more about some of them here. If you were to think of a new amulet, what would it look like? What would it protect against? Why? Create your new amulet as a drawing or model.

**Spirit Door of Tepem’Ankh, Limestone, Giza, Western Cemetery, Tomb d. 20, Old Kingdom, 5th Dynasty**

**Ancient Near East**

Ancient Mesopotamia is considered the location of the earliest human civilization! Many of the oldest objects in Glencairn’s collections are on display in our Ancient Near East gallery. Taking a closer look at objects made by the ancient Mesopotamians can almost feel like traveling back in time ourselves. What do you think people who lived thousands of years ago cared about? Explore the suggestions below to find out more!

**Object Observations**

Follow the link below to an image of an ancient Mesopotamian artifact in Glencairn’s collection. Print, project or zoom in on the image to view it. Using the questions as prompts, have a discussion as a class or in small groups. [https://bit.ly/2w9Zhq4](https://bit.ly/2w9Zhq4)

- What do you notice?
- What do you think the object is made of?
- What do you think this object was used for?
- What might it tell you about the people who made it? What about those who viewed it?
- Do you recognize anything in the artwork that is familiar to you?
- If you owned this object, what would it mean to you? What would you use it for?

Once you have had your discussion, visit this page to find out more about this object. How close were your observations and thoughts to the way ancient Mesopotamians viewed and used this object?

**Activities to Try**

- Humans have always shared and communicated with one another. Glencairn has several examples of cuneiform—one of the earliest forms of writing—in our Ancient Near East gallery. Many examples are on small clay tablets, including some that had a clay envelope just like this one where you can see the inside tablet peeking out! Can you create a message in a different alphabet, and seal it in an envelope for someone to open? Learn more about our Ancient Near East collections here. Learn more about writing cuneiform here.

- The palaces of ancient Mesopotamian kings had walls lined with images of protective genies and beautiful scenes of nature. The reliefs in our collection are just fragments from larger scenes. First—try to recreate what you imagine the rest of scene surrounding the figure was by printing out and sketching it in around this genie. Next—look at this recreation of the full carving by staff at the CDLI.
Ancient Greece

The objects found in Glencairn Museum’s Greek gallery depict images of ancient Greek life, from religious beliefs to personal adornment, athletics to wine drinking, funerary practices to gods and goddesses. The ancient Greek culture spanned several thousand years from 2700 BCE to 146BCE, and by studying some of the objects left from that time we have a glimpse into the experience of an ancient Greek citizen.

Object Observations

Follow the link below to an image of an ancient artifact in Glencairn’s collection. Although this object is Byzantine, it has an ancient Greek connection. Print, project or zoom in on the image to view it. Using the questions as prompts, have a discussion as a class or in small groups.

https://bit.ly/2yVHp3c

- What do you notice?
- What do you think the object is made of?
- Who do you think the three figures are?
- How do you think this might be connected to ancient Greece?
- Do you recognize anything in the artwork that is familiar to you?
- Was this object designed to be visible or hidden? Why do you think so?

Once you have had your discussion, visit this page to find out more about this object. To find out more about this object’s ancient Greek connection, dive into these resources!

Ancient Rome

The Roman Empire existed for over 1000 years. At the peak of its strength about 1900 years ago, it stretched across Europe, from Great Britain, across the continent, into the Middle East, and along North Africa. The Roman objects in Glencairn’s collection highlight how the culture of ancient Rome had its own beliefs and practices, but as it grew Romans learned from the cultures they encountered and were very open to adopting new things from them.

Object Observations

Follow the link below to an image of an ancient Roman artifact in Glencairn’s collection. This is just a small section of the whole object. Print, project or zoom in on the image to view it. Using the questions as prompts, have a discussion as a class or in small groups.


- What do you notice?
- What do you think the object is made of?
- What do you think this small section is part of?
- Does this object remind you of anything?
- Do you think there was meaning to this object or not? If so, what kind of meaning?

Once you have had your discussion, visit this page to see more beads like this one, and to find out more about ancient Roman glass face beads!

Activities to Try

- There are many words and ideas from Roman culture that we still use today, for example the month of January is named after the two-headed Roman god Janus, pictured on a coin to the right. See if you can find out what other parts of our lives today were influenced by the Romans and make a poster to show them all!
- Part of ancient Roman culture included wearing images of different gods and goddesses as jewelry and on clothing. It was believed the gods had the power to influence life on earth, and so people would wear charms and give offerings to provide protection and good luck. Check out this resource to learn about the different domains of Roman gods and goddesses, and then choose one to design as a charm for a necklace. What kind of protection or benefit will your creation provide?