

Girlhood Leadership and Learning



Curricular Materials

Project Background

The history of girlhood is not what people think; it is complicated. Young women are often told that girls are “made of sugar and spice and everything nice.” What we learn from the past is that girls are made of stronger stuff. They changed history.

The Smithsonian Institution’s National Museum of American History aims to build relationships with teachers and students both nationally and locally by providing supplemental resources to be used in classrooms. From 2019 to 2021, the museum partnered with an all-girls public school located in Washington, D.C., to create the Girlhood Leadership and Learning curricular materials.

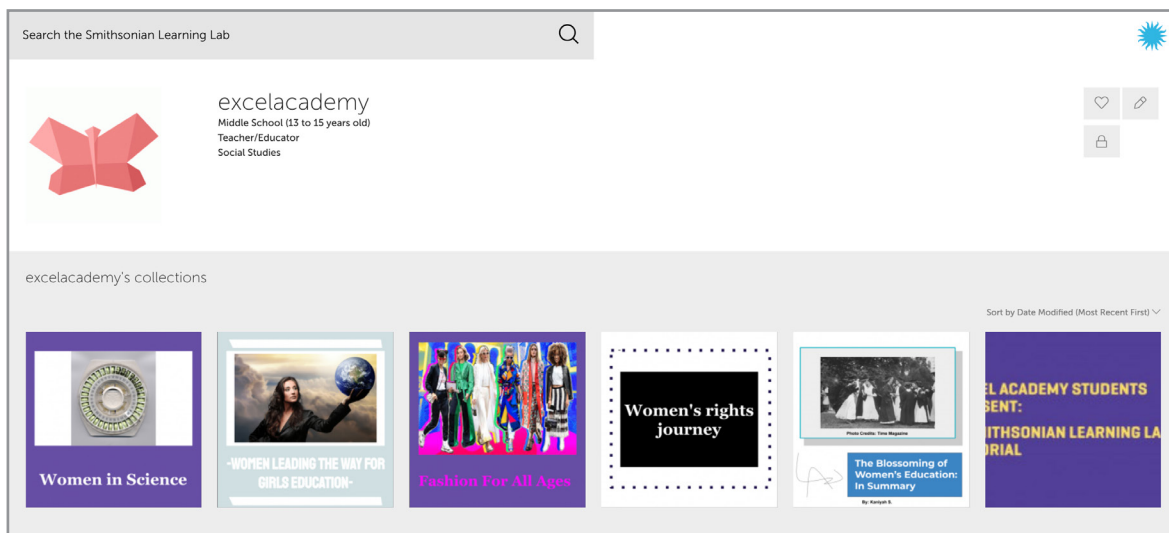
In support of the traveling exhibition of *Girlhood (It’s complicated)*, the Smithsonian has developed a set of curricular materials and platforms to create meaningful learning opportunities for girls (and all students) in your learning network connected to this content. The Girlhood Leadership and Learning curricular materials are designed to foreground students’ own lived experiences and their understandings of how girls make history. These materials are designed for middle and high school students with a focus on development of inquiry, research, and communication skills.

What's Included?

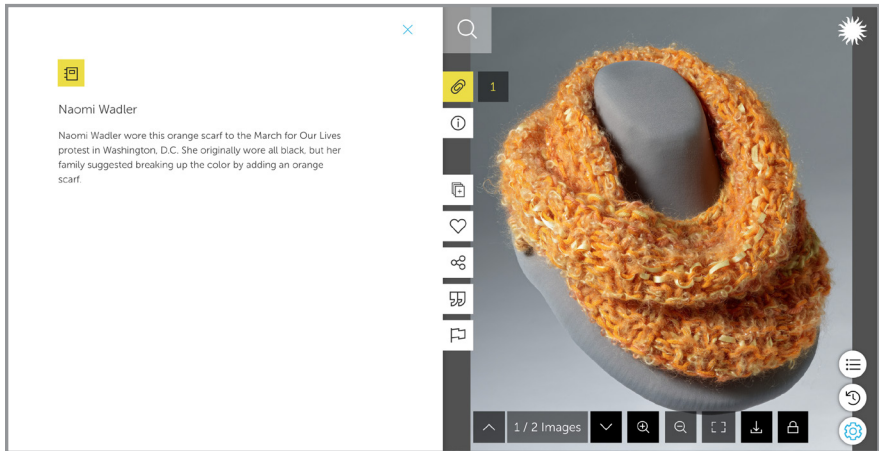
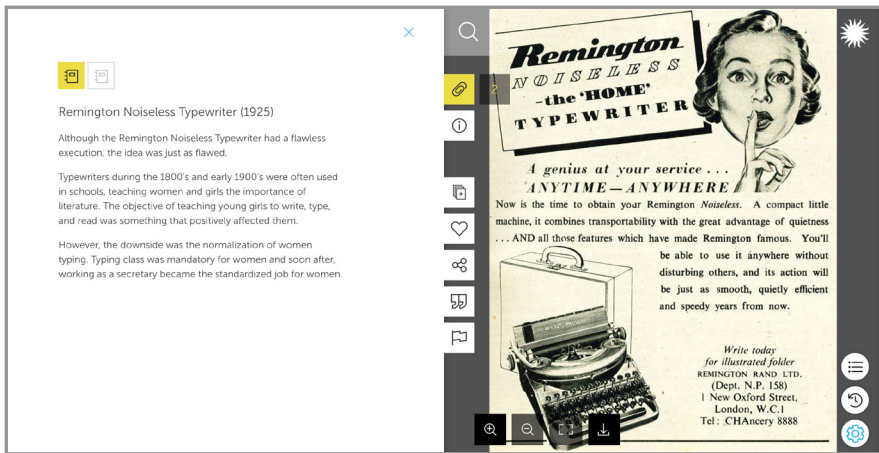
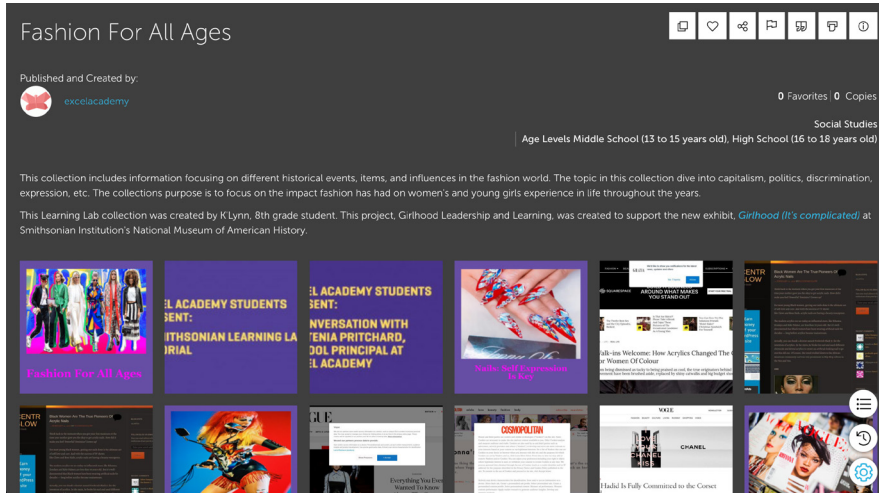
Learning Lab Collections

The student cohort created [six Learning Lab collections](#) surrounding the five themes represented in the exhibit, *Girlhood (It's complicated)*: education, work, news and politics, health and wellness, and fashion. Students went through the online exhibition to learn more about the ideas of girlhood and included topics and objects from the exhibit in their Learning Lab collections.

The students reflected on what girlhood means to them and incorporated their own research into their collections so that the research aligned with the students' interests and that the project was truly student-led. Some students included historic figures they had already learned about in their social studies classes such as Ida B. Wells, a journalist, educator, and civil rights activist; other students included role models their age such as Marley Dias, a teen who went viral for creating the #1000BlackGirlBooks campaign; and some included present-day events that resonated with them such as the death of Breonna Taylor, a young Black woman who was fatally shot by police officers.



Students created six Learning Lab collections in total.

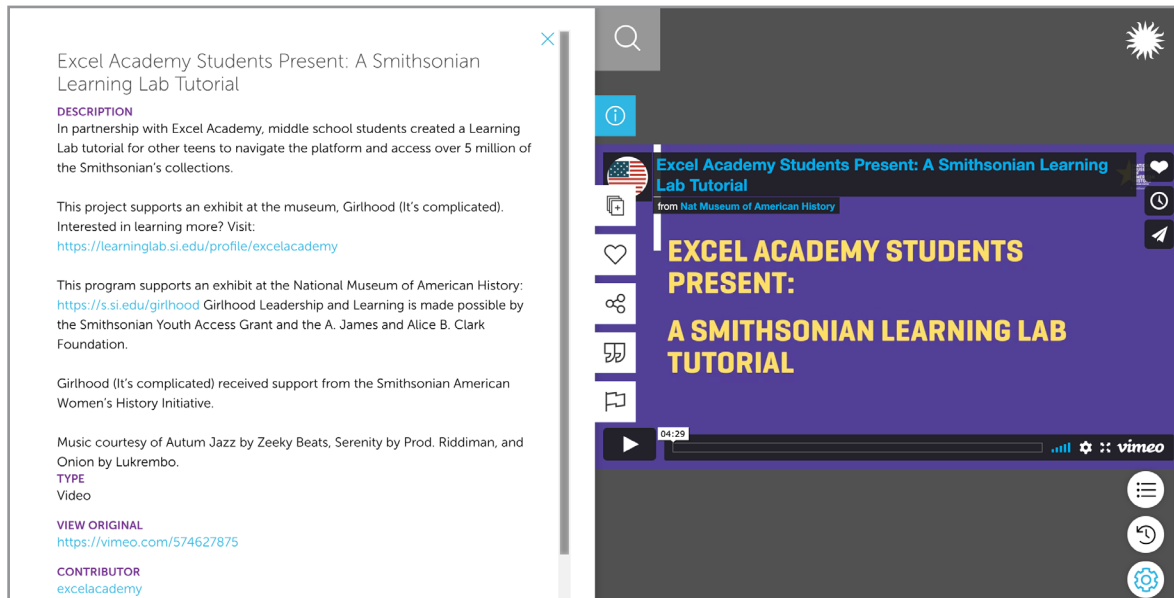


Students included objects from the exhibit such as Naomi Wadler's scarf as well as produced their own research inspired by the exhibition content.

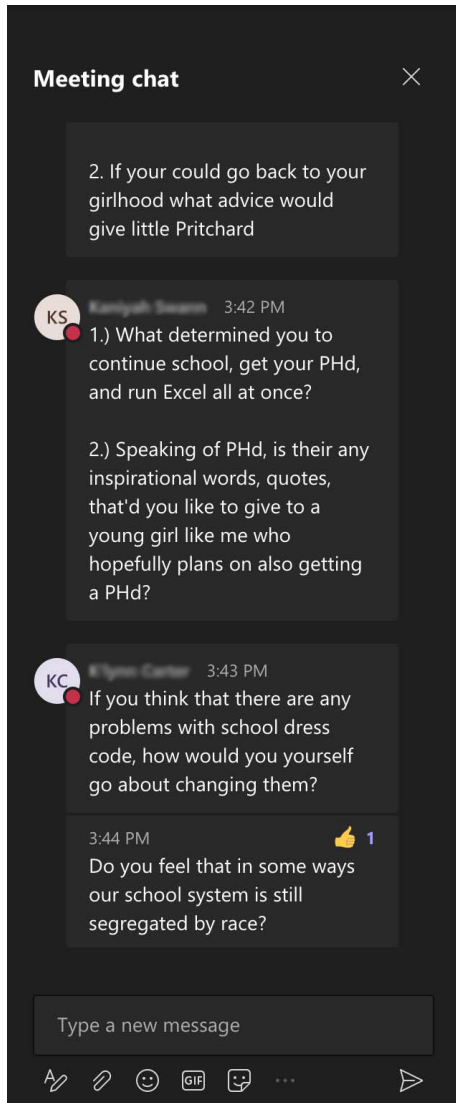
Video Tutorials

The student cohort created two videos as part of their interests in video production. Students worked with a video producer to create a tutorial on how to navigate and use Learning Lab as a platform. The tutorial is geared for other teens and provides a step-by-step guide to creating a Learning Lab account and browsing over five million of the Smithsonian's objects, artifacts, and research materials to create Learning Lab collections.

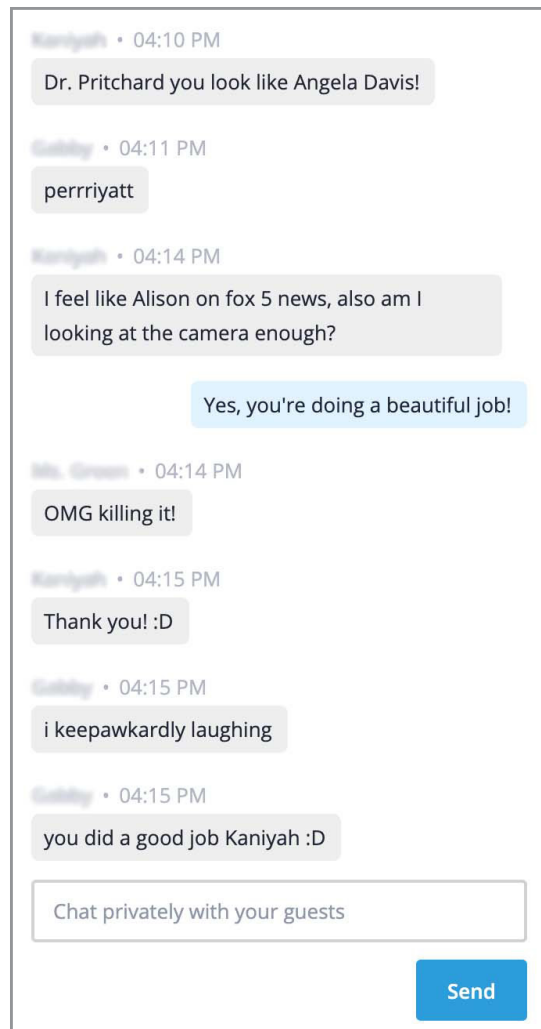
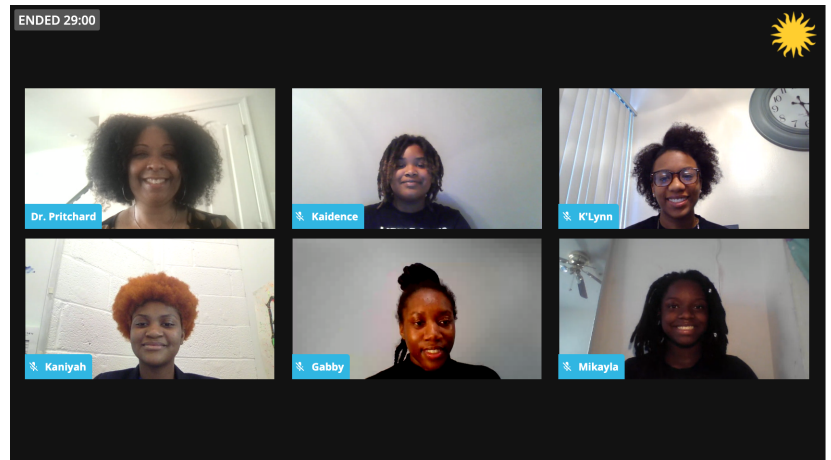
Students also interviewed their school principal as part of their girlhood research because they believed their principal was someone who had knowledge and experience in the five themes of the exhibition.



Students created a tutorial in navigating Learning Lab with their target audience, other teens, in mind.



Students brainstorming and editing their interview questions for Dr. Pritchard



As the school year progressed, students became more encouraging and supportive of one another.

Using This in Your Classroom

Both the Learning Lab collections and video components can be used in the classroom to help your students develop essential research and presentation skills.

As the student cohort did, Learning Lab can be used as a research and presentation platform for your own students to access primary and secondary resources while adding their own found research material. A video tutorial has already been created for your students to easily navigate Learning Lab.



An example of how student-led research resulted in increased confidence and ability to publicly present their topics

“The Smithsonian Institution’s National Museum of American History has changed the way my students learn. Through the Girlhood project, my students were able to strengthen skills in citing sources, contextualizing, sourcing research materials, revision—all skills that are applicable to history and that they are now more confident than ever using in everyday class.

—Ms. Green, Middle School Social Studies