

Featured Artifact: Souvenir of the Opening of the Brooklyn Bridge

Era 6: The Development of the Industrial United States (1870-1900)

<http://historyexplorer.americanhistory.si.edu/resource/?key=2012>



Look at the artifact presented to you. In a few sentences, respond to the following questions:

Describe: Objectively describe the artifact. What do you think it is made of? What does it look like? Does it look old or new? Is it intact, or is it damaged in some way?

Analyze: When, where or how do you think this item was used? What kind of person may have created or used this item? What significance do you think the object held, either for the creator or the user? Do you see words or images on the artifact that connect it to others (besides the creator and user)?

Share your conclusions with a partner, then discuss the following:

Evaluate : Justify why you came to those conclusions about the artifact. What further questions do you have about the object? Of those questions, which could you solve by observing the object in person and which would you need to solve with research?

Background Information

By the late 19th century, the United States had established itself as a world leader in the area of civil engineering. Perhaps no project better symbolized America's technical prowess than the awe-inspiring Brooklyn Bridge, which connected the nation's largest and third largest cities—New York and Brooklyn, respectively—in 1883 across the turbulent tidal strait known as the East River. The main 1,600-foot (490-meter) span of this towering suspension bridge exceeded the world's longest span by fifty percent.

After reading and considering the background information, compose a response to the following:

Analyze: Address the following object-specific questions:

- Why was the opening of the Brooklyn Bridge such a momentous event?
- Might a souvenir like this be handed out at a similar event today? Why or why not?

Synthesize: What does this object tell us about the era in which it was created, or the American experience as a whole? How would you describe the social, economic, or political climate of America during this time? What connections can you make between this object and other things that you have seen, read, or experienced?

Analyze: Address the following era-specific essential questions:

- How did the rise of corporations, heavy industry, and mechanized farming transform the American people?