

## Featured Artifact: Hockey Skates

<http://historyexplorer.americanhistory.si.edu/resource/?key=1277>

Era 10: Contemporary United States (1968 to the Present)



**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)?

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**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?

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## Background Information

These skates were worn by Phil Verchota (number 27), a member of the underdog 1980 U.S. Olympic hockey team that astounded the world by capturing the Gold Medal at Lake Placid, New York. While it was the win against the Finns that cinched the Gold, the defeat of the Soviet team in the semifinals — known as the “miracle on ice” — captured the hearts and imaginations of Americans during a time of cold war tensions.

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

**Analyze:** Address the following object-specific questions:

- Why do you think the American victory against the Soviets was so important? How do sports capture the attention of a nation?
- Can you think of any recent Olympic moments that are as powerful? Why?

**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 questions:

- How have economic, social and cultural developments in contemporary America shaped who we are as a country today?