What questions can we ask an object?

**What is it?**

* What is it called?
* What is or was it used for?
* Does it have more than one function?

**What does it look and feel like?**

* How big is it?
* What’s it made of?
* What’s its shape, smell, and sound?
* What colour is it?
* Is it complete?
* Has it been altered, adapted, or mended?
* Is it worn?

**How was it made?**

* Who made it?
* How was it made?
* Is it hand or machine made?
* Does it have parts?
* What does it tell you about the maker’s technical skill?

**Does the design suit its purpose?**

* Were the best materials used?
* How is it decorated?
* What influenced its design and appearance?

**What can it tell us about the society in which it was made?**

* When was it made?
* Where was it made?
* Where was it used?
* Where was it found?
* Who made it?
* Who used it?
* Who owned it?
* How does it compare to similar items from other cultures and time periods?

**How was it valued?**

* What kind of value did it or does it have? (to the person who made it; to the person who used it)
* How does the object reflect the person, community, nation or culture at the time it was made?

Adapted from: Adapted by the US National Park Service, Museum Management Program from the Hands on History Program, National Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC; Museum Magnet Schools, Education Resources; English Heritage, A Teacher’s Guide to Learning from Objects; and the Victoria and Albert Museum education materials, London, England. https://www.nps.gov/index.htm