

### Old School Desk



Each month The California Museum will introduce a new artifact with accompanying information and questions, which will consist of three different difficulty levels to choose from. To be used as a sponge or opening activity, you can use the artifact of the month for your students to study, question and form ideas. You can also print the image and place it on each student's desk, have them work in teams or project the image for a class activity.

Use the provided questions to help your students learn more about the artifact and its importance to California -- or make up your own questions. Most importantly, have fun!

Be sure to check out our web site, [CaliforniaMuseum.org](http://CaliforniaMuseum.org), for other interesting and unique activities for your students.

### Old School Desk



This student desk was used in one-room schoolhouses across America 100 - 130 years ago. This desk and its story takes us back to the time when one teacher taught grades one through eight in one classroom. The desks and their attached benches were bolted to the classroom floor in rows facing the chalkboard at the front of the room. The youngest students sat in the front nearest the teacher.

The students did not write with the kinds of pencils or pens that we use today. The students who used this desk used a dip pen. A dip pen wasn't full of ink like today's pens. Instead, it had a wooden handle and a pointed steel tip that had to be dipped in ink repeatedly as they wrote, just like the quill that people had used for centuries.

The student kept his or her own ink supply at the desk. There is a circular hole in the top of the desk that is just the right size for an ink bottle to fit in. The hole is called the ink well. The desk top also has an indentation for the pen to rest in, so it wouldn't roll off the desk.

This desk reminds us of a not really so distant time when one teacher in the one-room school taught all subjects to all ages, in a very simple classroom. You can look around and see all the changes that have improved classrooms. However, one basic thing remains the same: The students worked at their desks, as students do today: reading, writing, working on spelling, math and solving word problems.

## Old School Desk



### Elementary

- 1) How was the one-room schoolhouse the same - and different - from schools today?
- 2) Imagine you were a student in the late 1800s. What school supplies would you need everyday at school?

### Middle

- 1) How are today's schools equipped for learning?
- 2) Log on to [http://edsitement.neh.gov/view\\_lesson\\_plan.asp?=319](http://edsitement.neh.gov/view_lesson_plan.asp?=319) for photos of a teacher and pupils in the classroom. There are references to many photos in the article. At the end of the article under "Selected Edsitement Websites" click on "Photograph of a Teacher and Her Pupils in a One-Room School House" and also "Students and their Transportation."

### High School

- 1) Many of the students at this time were children of farmers and shopkeepers in rural small towns. How can you tell that education was a high priority - or not a priority - in these communities?
- 2) For many young people, eighth grade completed their education in the late 1800's and early 1900's. What changes have occurred in our society that require higher education now?

## The Old School Desk

M S A I W H S W N R G Z F O C  
K A E X N N I V G X F R N L H  
C S X I O K Z U B B V P A R A  
S B E S L C W G R M C S L E N  
P R S D Y P V E W R S T Q T G  
F E S H R U P S L R F E O U E  
L A O U J A T U O L F C A P S  
T E A C H E R O S K X H A M O  
D D H E E J M L Q L U N V O Z  
H W V L J A B F L M E O T C R  
S T C E J B U S N X F L M S W  
X X H S Z E J K M X I O A J G  
Q O U M S Z Q R E V N G W G S  
S C O F M G W A T K Q Y K Y H  
D T V D H L L I U Q M E P R H

CHANGES  
CLASSROOM  
COMPUTER  
DESK  
INKWELL  
LESSONS

QUILL  
STEEL  
SUBJECTS  
SUPPLIES  
TEACHER  
TECHNOLOGY

