



## ARTIFACT ACTIVITY: TYRUS WONG BUTTERFLY KITE

A free [Distance Learning](#) activity aligned with  
Common Core & State Content standards for K-5th grades

**OVERVIEW:**

In this activity, learners will use object based thinking to analyze an artifact from the California Museum. They will then create a plan to research questions they have about the artifact.

**APPROPRIATE FOR:**

K-5th grades

**OBJECTIVES:**

In this activity, learners will:

- Use object based thinking to analyze an artifact
- Create a research plan to learn more about the artifact
- Learn about the artist who created the artifact.

**DIRECTIONS:**

Use the questions provided to analyze the photograph of Tyrus Wong's kite.

**TIME:**

1 hour

**MATERIALS:**

- Photograph of Tyrus Wong's kite, on page 2

**STANDARDS:****Common Core***Reading - Key Ideas and Details*

K-5                      Ask and answer questions about key details in a source

*Reading - Integration of Knowledge and Ideas*

K-5                      Use illustrations and details to describe the main ideas of a source

**History-Social Science California State Content Standards***Research, Evidence, and Point of View*

K-5                      Students pose relevant questions about events they encounter in historical documents, eyewitness accounts, oral histories, letters, diaries, artifacts, photographs, maps, artworks, and architecture.

Thank you for downloading this Distance Learning resource! We hope you and your students enjoy using it. For additional downloadable resources in our free program, visit the [Distance Learning](#) page on our website. For help or questions, contact the education department at [reservations@californiamuseum.org](mailto:reservations@californiamuseum.org).

**PART 1:**

**DIRECTIONS:**

View the picture of the artifact and analyze it using the following questions.



**Questions:**

1. What would you name the artifact?

2. Analyze the artifact using the chart below:

 <p>Step 1: See <i>What observations can you make? What details can you point out?</i></p>	
 <p>Step 2: Think <i>What background knowledge can you add to your understanding? What do you think you can learn from it?</i></p>	
 <p>Step 3: Wonder <i>What questions do you have about this piece? What more do you need to know to gain understanding?</i></p>	

4. Choose one of your *wonder* questions to research further:
  - a. Where is the best place to find more information?
  - b. What related questions do you want to answer about this topic?
  - c. What did you learn through your research?

### About this artifact:

This kite was made by artist Tyrus Wong and is on display in the Museum's signature exhibit "[Gold Mountain: Chinese Californian Stories.](#)" Tyrus Wong was born in China in 1910. When he was nine years old, he and his father immigrated to California. At that time, a law called the Chinese Exclusion Act made it illegal for them to enter the country, so they used different names to get through the Angel Island Immigration Station. This practice was called becoming a "Paper Son." Chinese Americans already living in the United States would sponsor people like Tyrus and his father, saying that they were family even if they weren't. Though they left China, Tyrus's father wanted to make sure he kept up with his Chinese calligraphy. While he was in school, his teachers noticed he was a talented artist, and they encouraged him to attend the Otis Art Institute. Tyrus and his father worked incredibly hard so that he could attend art school. Tyrus ultimately became a famous artist. One project he worked on was the Disney movie *Bambi*. Tyrus is responsible for the natural background scenes of the animated movie, which are inspired by classical Chinese art.



When Tyrus Wong retired from his successful career as an artist, he became inspired by a craft he had done with his father when he was a child - kite making! He built and decorated more than 200 kites inspired by birds, butterflies, snakes, and other animals, and flew them with his family at Santa Monica Beach.

To learn more about Tyrus Wong's kites, watch the video at <https://youtu.be/09Ta8BCrbLw>.