

Guidelines for Description Writing

- Before writing descriptions for individual items, consider the whole collection and identify the main types of objects in it and the main themes, stories, or narratives they connect to in history and collector's experience. This will help to determine on which exhibit section page the item will eventually appear (if you are creating exhibits).
- Seek secondary literature on the object and record it in the entry.
- Write a brief outline of all the information you have on the object (what an object is, its history (including where and when first produced), from the collection of (a person's name), date, text on the object, its significance for the owner.
- Write a plan for the object description including the following points
 - What the object represents;
 - Brief description of representation
 - History of the object/its use/its significance;
 - Connection to the place of collection;

-Connection to the collector.

- Always start with a statement of what the object is and its brief description.
- The title of an item reflects all the important information from the summary's first sentence.
- If an object is a photograph, include a brief one-to-three sentence description of people and things in the photograph in the summary. (Example: <http://unlhistory.unl.edu/items/show/243>)
- Make sure that the description reflects all facets of the object – the reason for its production, the meaning to the owner, its symbolism.
- Make sure to explain the typical in the object, e.g. types of dances mentioned in the sheet music, types of toys, what role did silverware play in the 19th century home, etc.
- Write in reasonably short sentences. Try to write concisely, and think of twelve-sentence narrative as the largest summary needed for the item.

If outside sources (books, films, web-sites) were quoted or referred to in the body of the summary, the full citation (Chicago Manual of Style, appropriate

footnote/endnote form) appears double-spaced after the description.