

# What is Material Culture?

Analyze a Museum Artifact

# Material Culture

- Why do we study material culture? Studying the physical objects of a culture gives us a better understanding and appreciation for the complex lives of the people who interacted with those objects. It provides us insight into their ideas, beliefs, habits and values. The objects we surround ourselves with everyday help to tell who we are and how we live.
- Think like a historian as you examine each of the next seven artifacts from The Hershey Story Museum. What does each artifact tell us about Milton Hershey and the model town he built?

## Historians follow a set of steps or procedures to learn about an artifact:

- Close observation of the artifact to determine:
  - What materials were used to make the artifact?
  - What are the qualities of the artifact? Shape, size, color, etc.
  - Are there any words, dates, symbols on the artifact?
- Ask questions about the artifact, such as what purpose did the artifact serve? Who made it? Who might have used it? Do we still use it today?
- Draw conclusions and make interpretations about the artifact: What can we learn about technology of the time? What can we determine about the people who made and used the artifact? How does the artifact compare to an object today that fulfills the same or a similar purpose?

What do you see? What do you wonder?



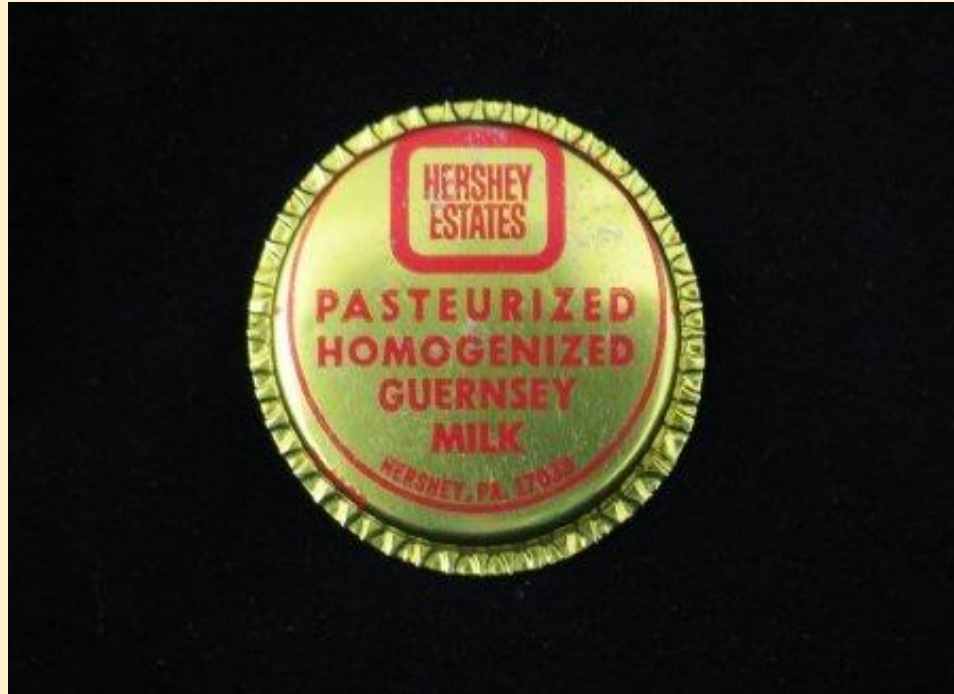
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