



## **CURRICULUM TOOL KIT for CREATING MINI-MUSEUM EXHIBITS**

***Guided by Minnesota Literacy Standards for Elementary Grades***

**Target Learning Group:** Grades 1-4

**Time & Study Area:** Curriculum for a 1 hour/day for 5 days Social Studies lesson for mixed-grade classes.

**RATIONALE:** Students in grades 1-4 master learning and communicating local history to tourists in a multisensory approach that integrates research, creative design, writing and speaking in five, 1-hour sessions to create mini-museum exhibit board using the foundational pillars of literacy cited below, and showcasing the primary source materials of historic letters of Cook County, Minnesota.

**LEARNING GOALS:** To create a mini-museum exhibit that demonstrates to a broad museum-going public made up primarily of tourists. Specific individual learning goals are to:

- 1) research a knowledge base of North Shore life 1896-1903 through primary sources, observation, experiment, interviews
- 2) understand the vital role played by mail delivery and letters in creating community prior to the automobile in North Shore
- 3) know and appreciate the background of Ojibwe mailcarrier John Beargrease and his contribution to connecting the North Shore through letters
- 4) implement the 7 pillars of literacy in the creation of the “John Beargrease, Ojibwe Pioneer Mail Carrier and His Sled Dog Mail Trail” mini-museum exhibit for the Cook County History Museum.

**CASE STUDY:** The topic that models our approach for others to replicate is entitled: “John Beargrease, Ojibwe Pioneer Mail Carrier and His North Shore Sled Dog Mail Trail, 1896-1903.”

## **METHODS & MATERIALS**

1. Background books on John Beargrease to read about, partner read and quiz each other in peer-assisted learning
2. Note taking. Divide 8.5 x 11 inch sheet of paper into quadrants and label each quadrant: 1. Life Facts. 2. Setting. 3. Characters. 4. Background.
3. Students will practice and refine listening, discussion, reading and writing skills by focusing on a relevant background text, or listening to primary or secondary sources speakers and filling in the quadrants with knowledge notes they capture from these multisensory exploration of a topic using the following skills:

## **SKILLS TAUGHT: 21st Century Literacy is founded on 7 skill pillars:**

1. Reading
2. Writing
3. Speaking/Discussing
4. Listening
5. Observing
6. Exchanging ideas/Communicating
7. Reflecting/revising thesis, position, opinion as needed

## **II. EXHIBIT THEORY & PRACTICE for EARLY LEARNERS**

**Definition:** An exhibit is a visual representation of research and knowledge, with interpretation supported by evidence such as primary source artifacts, letters, or testimony of individuals.

**Process** Students research and apply knowledge in the museum setting to make a mini-museum that highlights children's public communication skills about John Beargrease, his dogs, sled and mailbag in writing, drawings, and 3-D sculptures arranged as a mini-museum for public display.

### **Class Activities**

1. Students observe, discuss, make notes and sketches about winning Minnesota History Day boards that successfully applied exhibit theory to win state awards. Samples: "Inventing Dinosaurs" and "The Great Molasses Flood."
2. To do this, students will work in 4-person teams each with a trifold cardboard exhibit board.
3. Before working on the formal exhibit board trifold, students will fold printer paper into thirds to use for designing layouts that distribute words and pictures in structure that is easy for viewers to understand.
4. Students divide their three panel draft sheets into:

**THESIS STATEMENT:** This is the idea that want to convey and support with evidence.

**FACTS:** This section includes biography, achievement, background about the topic.

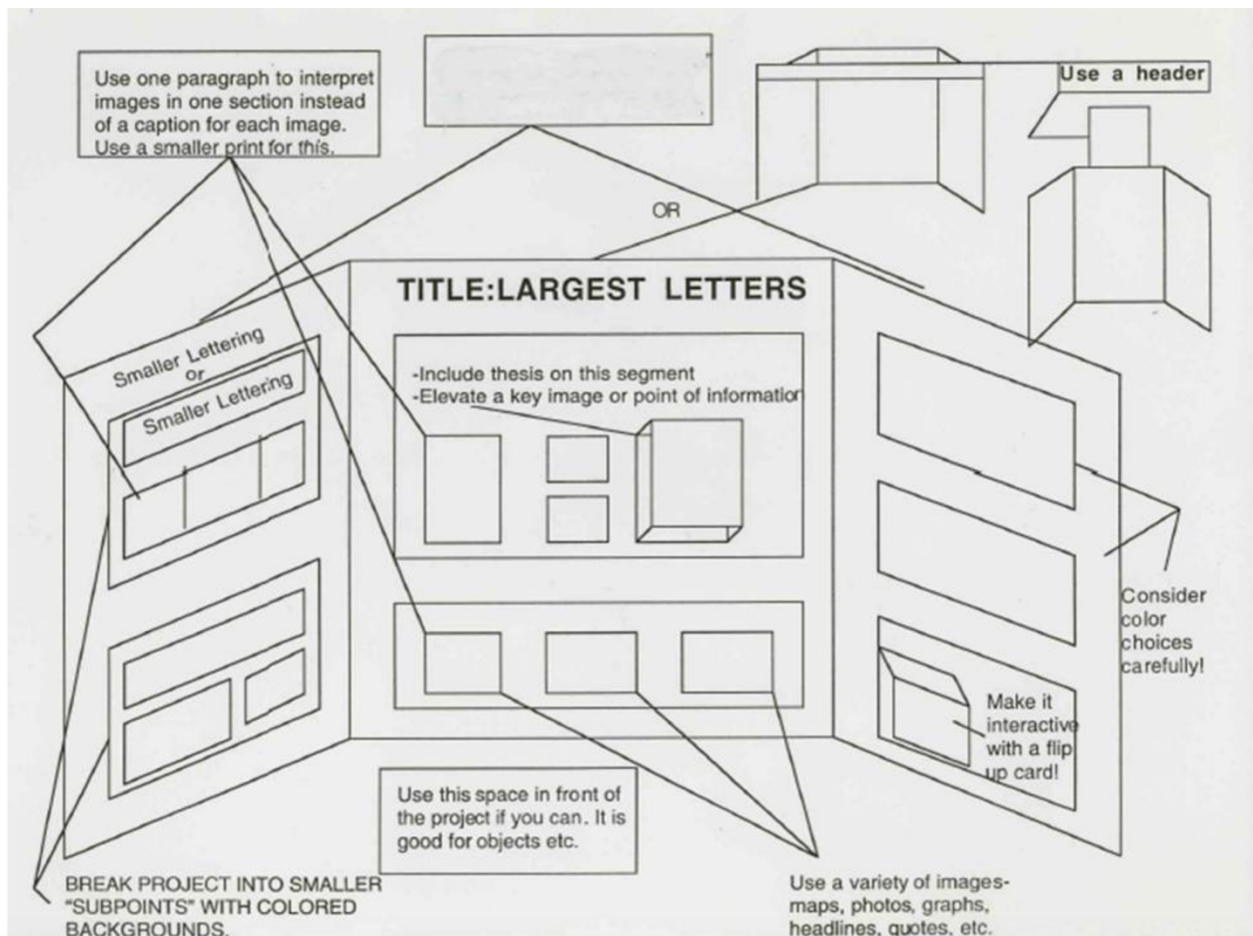
**CONCLUSION;** This section interprets the facts to support the Thesis Statement.

5. **PAL CHECK.** Pal stands for Peer-assisted-Learning, and is the lesson activity in which students pick new partners so they are exposed to a new draft exhibit board, and describe what they see and understand. They also make suggestions to add detail, correct and clarify.

6. **WRITE** text panels

7.**DRAW** illustrations of concept/Research history museum archives for historic photographs

8.**CUT, MOUNT** on contrasting background paper, paste text and illustrations and layout on board as shown in the exhibit below:



## **Assesment**

When the Cook County History Museum opens to tourists after May 15 2025, students will:

- conduct two observation sessions of tourists interacting with their mini-museum
- present additional knowledge to tourists by posing as characters in a dramatic “wax museum” of famous characters of early Cook County
- survey the museum-going public on their knowledge of John Beargrease and the role of literacy and letters in connecting the North Shore in winter via dog-sled delivery of letters in the era before automobile traffic made travel, connection and communication so much easier.
- Enter these observations on our web site: [www.northshoremuseum.org](http://www.northshoremuseum.org)
- Through the web site blog, connect with other students in 1-4 grades in the Arrowhead to encourage them to make their own exhibits so children and mentors can extend mini-museum exhibits throughout the region!

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