

Rise & Fall of the Canton Trade System – Lesson 03

Imagining China: Exploring 19th-Century American Impressions of China through Canton Trade Artifacts

Handout 03-A

Artifact Analysis Guide

All of the artifacts visually convey information about China in some way. Working as a group, answer the following questions for each artifact in your set.

1. How is the object used?
2. What do the materials, fabric, design, or decorations say about the object? What do they say about the country that produced the object?
3. Is the object a luxury item or practical item? Explain why you think so.
4. What aspects of Chinese life are conveyed on or within the artifact?
5. What aspects of China's geography or landscape are conveyed via the artifact?
6. Are people represented? If so, describe their dress, occupation, or pastime. Do the representations seem positive or negative? Why do you say so?
7. Does Chinese life seem similar to or different from American life at this time? Why?
8. Write three adjectives to describe the China that is presented on this artifact.
9. Based on this artifact, what aspects of China seem particularly interesting or attractive to Westerners of the period?