

Hands-on Items

The Oklahoma Explorers trunk has a variety of hands-on items, activities, and materials for classroom use. You may use any or all of the items.



Spanish conquistador helmet – Explorers, soldiers, colonists, and Spanish conquistadors journeyed throughout the New World between the fifteenth and nineteenth centuries. Accustomed to the plains and rocky areas of Spain, conquistadors wore armor and helmets designed for European climate and battle. The helmet is a Comb Morion Hemlet, developed in the sixteenth century for kings, nobles, and soldiers. Although it is probably of Spanish origin, the helmet also made many appearances from Hungary to England and from Sweden to Italy.

Buffalo hide strip – Most explorers utilized buffalo hide in their expeditions. Some used the animal for food and warmth while others, especially the French, hunted the buffalo and created an elaborate fur trade.



Haversack – Many different kinds of people used these cotton canvas bags throughout the eighteenth century. Explorers used haversacks to carry food and personal items. The haversacks were typically fifteen inches by fifteen inches with a shoulder strap.

Stoneware inkwell – Used since the Middle Ages, inkwells provided a convenient place to dip quill pens. Inkwells disappeared around 1884 with the invention of the fountain pen, and became almost unknown after the 1930s. Explorers carried writing supplies to record their discoveries and to keep journals.



Pounce paper sander – The red ware paper sander was used throughout the time of the quill pen and completed the explorer's writing kit. It contained sand which the writer would pour upon freshly written ink to dry the words quickly. The sander would be very useful for the explorer, who moved to different locations frequently and would not have the time to let the ink dry.

Copper pot – Many people used copper pots for cooking during the sixteenth through nineteenth centuries. Explorers used these pots to boil water and cook food while on an expedition. The pots were durable enough to survive the journey. This pot holds about one quart and it is safe to use over a fire.



Skillet – This eighteenth century hand-forged iron skillet featured a folding handle for easy storage. It weighed only 1½ pounds and enabled travelers to cook meat from hunting.

Pot scrubber – Made from natural broom straw, the pot scrubber enabled explorers to clean their dishes in nearby streams or water sources. Because cleaning opportunities were rare, the dishes often remained dirty for long periods, hence the need for a stiff scrubber to clean them.



Canteen – The canteen began as a gourd or animal hide sewn together and later evolved into a metal container used for holding water. Essential for traveling, canteens often meant life or death for the explorer due to primitive or non-existent maps and unknown water source locations.

Lantern – The candle lantern was used for hundreds of years and provided explorers with their only form of light during the night. The design of the body kept rain out and also absorbed the heat of the handle so it did not get too hot to hold. The holes are large enough to allow light to shine but small enough to prevent the wind from blowing the candle out.





Fire starting kit – A must-have for all explorers, the fire starting kit included a steel striker, flints, char cloth, and tinder to start a fire. The travelers also often included tobacco tins to keep their tobacco dry and fresh while exploring. To start a fire they would use the striker and flints

to create sparks, making them catch fire on the char cloth and tinder. They would then put the flaming materials in firewood to catch the larger pieces on fire.

Trade beads – Glass beads originated in 3500 BC in Egypt and Eastern Mesopotamia. Their popularity had grown by the sixteenth century after the early Spanish explorers traded with American Indians. Before European contact, Indians used beads made from turquoise, bones, and shells. The native inhabitants and explorers traded different types of beads, making them a large part of the fur trade.





Pencil – After the discovery of graphite in England, people began to make pencils around 1564. Originally, writers held bare graphite, but in the 1600s the pencil featured wood or metal encasements. This style of pencil, also called a porta crayon, has a brass casing and dates to 1680. Explorers used pencils most often for sketching the new landscapes and animals encountered in their expeditions.

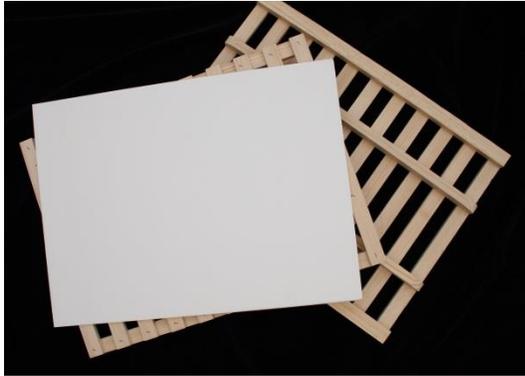
Compass and compass with sundial – Around 220 BC, Chinese fortunetellers used stones composed of iron oxide to align the arrows in a north-south



direction. They would then use them for their fortune telling boards. The first needles, made of the same stones, always pointed south. Magnetized needles replaced the iron oxide stones in China around the eighth century AD and became popular among navigators on ships around AD 850-1050. These solid brass compasses replicate what the explorers used in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. One compass also has a folding sundial which tells the time.



Brass telescope – The telescope allowed explorers to navigate from ships or see vast amounts of landscape from the ground. Although the optics are not up to today's standards, the telescope was top-of-the-line technology in its day.



Plant press – In discovering new territory the explorer also encountered new types of plants. They carried plant presses to collect the unknown specimens and take them back to the east for further study. The press consisted of a wooden frame for support, space between the slates for

ventilation, and thick paper to absorb moisture. Straps and buckles hold the frames tightly together during the drying process. Pressing plants would extract moisture quickly and preserve the scientific integrity of the plant. This allowed specimens to be stored for long amounts of time and studied at a later date.

Royal Standard of Spain, circa 1513 –

According to the Oklahoma Historical Society, this was the first flag to fly over Oklahoma. Spanish explorers brought it to the Great Plains area that included Oklahoma by



Coronado and his followers in 1541. The red-and-white quartered flag has a golden castle on the red and a red lion on the white. The castle and lion represented royal houses Castile and Leon, from which the King of Spain descended.



The Great Union flag of Great Britain

- This flag flew over Oklahoma beginning in 1663 when King Charles II gave his friends a wide strip of country called Carolina, which stretched from the Atlantic to the Pacific.

French flag - Bernard de la Harpe brought this flag to the region in 1719 when he visited an Indian village on the Arkansas River near Haskell in Muskogee County. However, the French claims on this area go back to 1682, when La Salle claimed all the country drained by the Mississippi River and its branches in the name of France.





Napoleonic French flag – This flag represented Napoleonic France. It flew over Oklahoma after Spain gave the Louisiana Province to France under the terms of the Treaty of San Ildefonso. Spain had previously acquired the territory in 1763 via the Treaty of Paris.

US flag with fifteen stars –

This flag flew over Oklahoma after the United States obtained the territory from France in the Louisiana Purchase. Congress established this flag in 1794. This flag has 15 stars and stripes to represent the 15 states of the Union.



US flag, 1818 – Congress passed a new law on April 4, 1818, and changed the US flag's design. They reduced the number of stripes to 13 to represent the 13 colonies. The flag also has 20 stars that represent the 20 states in the Union.