

# ANALYSING ARTEFACTS IN THE VHEC'S MUSEUM COLLECTION

**NOTE TO TEACHER:** The following questions are designed to support students' independent inquiry into primary source artefacts in the VHEC's museum collection. These guiding questions will assist students to place an original artefact in its historical context and make inferences to deepen their understanding of historic events.

**DIRECTION TO STUDENT:** Study the photographs of the artefact in the VHEC's online collection ([collections.vhec.org](https://collections.vhec.org)). Read the information in the catalogue record for the artefact and respond to the following questions as best you can.

ARTEFACT:

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DATE OF CREATION:

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## OBSERVE THE ARTEFACT

- What are your initial impressions of the artefact? What did you notice first?
- Describe the physical appearance of the artefact (colour, size, condition, fragility etc.)
- What material is the artefact made from?
- Does the artefact appear to be intact or is it missing parts?

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## **ESTABLISH THE CONTEXT**

- Who created the artefact?
- Who owned or used the artefact?
- When was the artefact created or used?
- How was it created or used?
- Where was the artefact created or used?
- What was the intended purpose or function of the artefact? Why was it created?
- What point of view or perspective did the owner, user or maker of the artefact represent (eg. perpetrator, victim, resistor, refugee, rescuer, bystander, collaborator, liberator etc.)?

## **DRAW INFERENCES**

- What inferences (conclusions) can you draw from the artefact about life before, during or after the Holocaust? What story does this artefact tell you?
- Many of the artefacts' owners, makers, and users risked their lives to create or retain these objects. What do you think was the significance of this artefact to its owner, maker or user?
- Why do you think that the owner donated the artefact to the VHEC?
- How does this artefact compare to (or connect with) other sources of history you have studied?
- What does this artefact tell you that you might not learn elsewhere? Does it reveal a unique perspective on events?
- What questions do you have about this artefact that you cannot answer? How could you find answers to these questions?