

## **Submission for Visualizing Objects, Places, and Spaces: A Digital Project Handbook**

**Category:** Assignment, Narrative-Assignment

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### **Assignment: The Brontë Cabinet ~ COVE Exhibit and Presentation**

#### **Assignment Description:**

This assignment is designed to deepen engagement with the Brontë sisters' lives and the Victorian era by creating a virtual gallery "case" on COVE (the Collaborative Organization for Virtual Education). In *The Brontë Cabinet* (2015), Deborah Lutz investigates material objects owned by the sisters—e.g. souvenirs, mementos, miniature books, writing desks—to illuminate the sisters' lives. Material objects that the sisters created, lived with, and incorporated into their writing help us to set the Brontës in their cultural moment and to understand each sister better. As a class, we will construct our own Brontë cabinet in the form of a virtual gallery.

Each student will contribute to our COVE gallery entitled "The Brontë Cabinet." In designing a virtual display case, each student will complete the following tasks:

- Choose a topic and assemble a group of related objects to construct a narrative thread about how the Brontës created, lived with, and/or incorporated these objects into their writing or lives.
- Identify each object's significance, noting the date, title, artist, location, and any other relevant information.
- Formulate captions to explain the meaning of each object and how the objects in a case work together to strengthen our understanding of the Brontë sisters' lives and legacy.
- Complete the story arc by creating an introduction to the virtual display case.

In class and in breakout rooms, I will provide the following: a list of possible objects for the gallery cases; an introduction to prime sources to locate Victorian material objects in the public domain (*The Victorian Web*, The British Library, the Norman M. Fox Collection); handouts to successfully navigate the COVE tools; a model case on Charlotte Brontë and the Great Exhibition of 1851 as a guide; an assessment rubric to help plan and design cases. Each student will give a presentation of approximately 10 minutes to explain the virtual display of chosen objects to remember the Brontës' lives and their literary legacy. Students will have an opportunity to make changes to their virtual display cases based on feedback they receive during their presentations.

## Possible Objects for COVE Gallery Cases

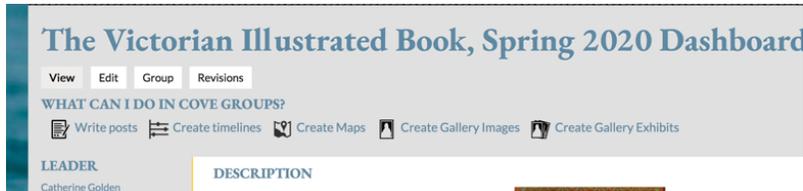
We will construct our own Brontë cabinet on COVE Editions by choosing either an artifact Lutz mentions from the sisters' lives—writing desks, letters, paintings, etc.—or objects in the sisters' novels. The object—which can be a beloved place or pet—might best be illuminated in context of related objects; for example, the contents of a writing desk might accompany a gallery case on a sister's desk. Aim to have at least 3 images in your case; you could have up to 5, depending on what you choose. After choosing an object or objects from this list or of your own inclination, write it on the Google sheet to claim it as your topic. Each class member will choose a different material object to create a rich class gallery display.

### Objects to Consider—and Again Please Feel Free to Add to this List

- The writing desk (and its contents)
- Letters in general
- The black-edged mourning letter
- Hair (e.g. locket with hair from Heathcliff and Edgar Linton)
- Dogs (both in the Brontës' lives and novels)
- Flowers
- Piano
- The moors
- Catherine Earnshaw's large oak case (with sliding panels where she stacks her select library and writes on the windowsill)
- Catherine Earnshaw's windowsill
- Gravestones
- The Bible
- Bewick's *History of British Birds*
- Paints and palette
- Miniature books
- Diary
- The Red Room and the Supernatural
- Bertha Mason's attic
- Paintings and sketches
- Walking boots
- Pattens
- Needle-work (embroidery), mending, making clothes, and knitting
- Workboxes
- Mourning (e.g. etiquette, clothing)
- Chess
- Wine or liquor decanter

## Tips for Creating and Designing a Gallery on Cove

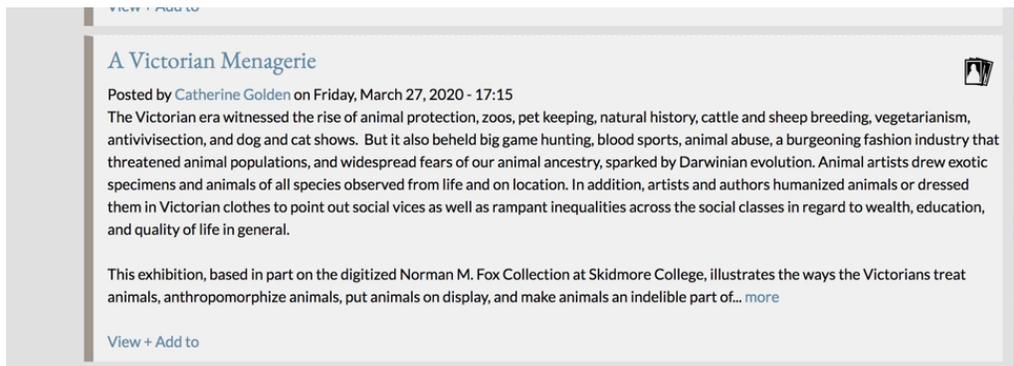
- Think carefully about the narrative you wish to create for your gallery “case.” Which three to five images will help you to convey a story arc?
- You need not have all your images to start your “case.” I have included deadlines for posting material, and I urge you to follow those deadlines, so you can share your work in progress with your classmates during break-out rooms.
- To build your Gallery case, do **NOT** click on the choices under “WHAT CAN I DO IN COVE GROUPS.” Doing this creates a separate gallery apart from the class.



- Rather, scroll down and look for the Gallery icon, which will allow you to join our group gallery along with your classmates.



Create Gallery Exhibits



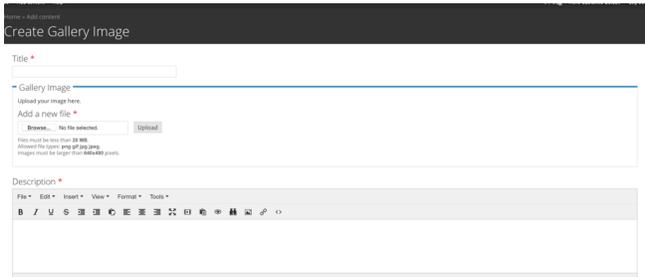
- Then, click on the title of our class gallery, which in this example is, “A Victorian Menagerie”:

A Victorian Menagerie

- Next, click on “+Add Images to this exhibit” in the list below.

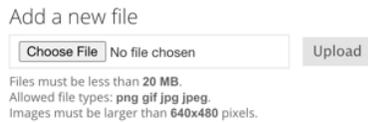


- You will see this screen appear (see below). Click on “Title” and create a title for your case. You can change the title and any work you do, so don’t be afraid to post your work.

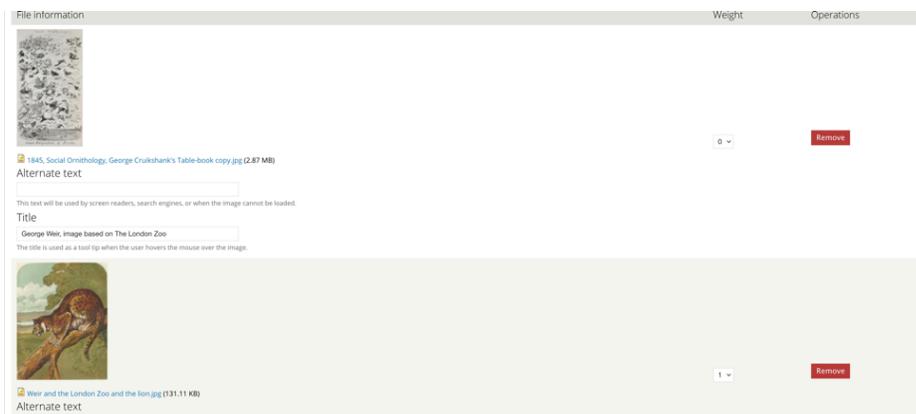


- The next step is to “Add a new file” or picture. Save the chosen image on your desktop, and then choose it and upload it. The picture should load as long as it meets the following criteria:  
Files must be less than 20 MB.  
Allowed file types: png gif jpg jpeg.  
Images must be larger than 640x480 pixels.
- If the image is too large or too small, you will need to adjust it in photoshop. Students have discovered they can take a picture of the image with their cameras and upload the image that way if the image is too large or small to load initially. Just make sure the image is of a good quality.
- You may add additional images to your “case” using this same process; see the screenshot below:

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- In addition, you may change the order of your images in the “case” or remove an image as follows:





**Harrison Weir, "The Leopard," from *The Pictorial Capital of Marvels*, 1878, *The Victorian Web*, scanned by Simon Cooke.**

**Unknown artist, "Jumbo Greet Some Visitors as They Pass by His Den in London Zoo," 1880s.**

- Look closely at a sample header and caption to get an idea how to compose your captions and headers:

**George Du Maurier, "At the Zoo," 1897, from *English Society*, *The Victorian Web*, scanned by George P. Landow.** This final plate in the case is a cartoon showing a nicely dressed mother and her two children, Tommy and Dorothy, viewing a tiger at the zoo. Tommy questions why the tigers do not live in "little shut-up houses," and Dorothy replies with a seemingly obvious answer – "to see the people, of course!" Interestingly, the zoo houses exotic animals who need to be protected and are neither seen as domesticated pets nor as livestock. Hence, animals in zoos intrigued all social classes in the Victorian era, bringing them together in one place to admire the beauty of these animals who also gaze back upon them, as this cartoon playfully suggests.

- To look at more examples of previous student "cases," captions, and introductions, check out "A Victorian Menagerie" at <https://editions.covecollective.org/content/victorian-menagerie>
- Make sure to proofread your captions and headers to catch typos and grammatical errors. Our aim is to make the gallery as professional as possible.

## **The Brontë Cabinet Assessment**

The following criteria will be used to assess each virtual display case in The Brontë Cabinet . Although the grade will be holistic, each learning goal and outcome is valuable.

- ❖ Enriching a reader’s understanding of the Brontës by choosing places, companion animals, and/or material objects that the sisters created, touched, lived with, and/or incorporated into their writing
- ❖ Creating a narrative thread or story arc to present the chosen 3-5 images in an effective way
- ❖ Composing an opening description to explain the significance of the material object to the sisters’ lives or fiction as well as the contents of the case
- ❖ Creating headers that clearly identify each object—date, title, artist, etc.
- ❖ Designing captions under the headers that explain how each particular visual adds to our understanding of the sisters’ lives and legacy
- ❖ Designing a visually attractive case that contributes to the “Brontë Cabinet”
- ❖ Writing with clarity
- ❖ Proofreading the opening description, headers, and captions for grammaticality and punctuation (e.g. use of italics, the umlaut, correct use of punctuation, no misspellings)
- ❖ Giving an engaging oral presentation to illuminate the virtual display case
- ❖ Stimulating interest in your topic and sparking questions from classmates