



Questions for Classroom Discussion

Choosing an Icon

- **What makes an object “iconic”?**

- ⇒ Consider where the object originated, how it might have been used, and its historical context
- ⇒ Consider the personal meaning the object may have when viewed by different groups
- ⇒ Consider examples of objects that are considered “cultural icons” (such as the slippers worn by Dorothy in the *Wizard of Oz*, or the first light bulb created by Thomas Edison)

- **Is it important for people to recognize the “iconic” status that is placed on certain objects?**

- ⇒ Consider the real value of an object compared to its sentimental value
- ⇒ Consider why inanimate objects (flags, photographs, symbols) are able to create such strong emotions in people
- ⇒ Consider whether it is better to take things at face value, or to recognize a deeper meaning

- **What process would be reasonable for a respected museum—such as the Smithsonian—to choose items that are “cultural icons” to put on display?**

- ⇒ Consider the definition that would fit the term “cultural icon”
- ⇒ Consider what types of objects people would be interested to see in a museum setting
- ⇒ Consider what qualities that an object must have to be “iconic”... what might prevent it from being considered “iconic”