

Abina Museum Project

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Overview: You have now read all that we know about the story of Abina, a real woman who lived in the late 19th century Gold Coast and who challenged the power structure of her society. You are among the few people who know such an important story. Most people, however, never learn about the experiences of “ordinary” people in the past. When we want to teach the larger public about history, we often use another medium: museum galleries. Museums are, in a sense, public educational spaces where the general public goes to learn about interesting topics.

Your Mission: Curate a special museum exhibit: “Abina and her World.” Museums have the role of teaching the public about important people, events, and works of art throughout history. As a curator, your task is to bring the story of Abina to the public. Your presentation should speak to children and adults, experts in history and those who don’t care about the topic. It’s a tough task, but as one of the few people who know the story it is important that you do so.

Layout:

An exhibit called “Abina and her World” would, of course, have to have a special section devoted to the woman at the center of our story. Most gallery rooms have a special plaque at the start introducing the topic of that particular room. Write a plaque entitled “Abina” in 500-1000 words that introduces the public to Abina.

In addition to an introduction, exhibits are often broken into several different sections, each of which provides a specific pathway, or lens, through which to interpret the history.

- Abina’s Biography
- Abina and Slavery
- Abina and Colonialism
- Constructing “Abina”

Central Question: Why is Abina’s story important for us to learn about? How can we help others to learn about her? How can we help others to see the importance of her story?

“Abina and her World” Museum Sections/Pathways/Lenses

Entrance

Plaque titled “Abina” that introduces the public to Abina in roughly 500 to 1000 words. The plaque should cover the main sections of the exhibit (listed below) and hint at some of the theses and evidence that are covered in the rest of the exhibit.

Abina’s Biography

Central Question: Was Abina exceptional or representative?

Supporting Questions:

- Who was Abina?
- What was her story?
- Is her story an exceptional or ordinary one? Why does that matter?
- What is the meaning that we should take from Abina’s story?

Abina and Slavery

Central Question: Was Abina a slave?

Supporting Questions:

- Who was Abina?
- What did slavery mean during the time and place in which she lived?
- What are current definitions of slavery?
- What is the evidence on both sides of the argument?
- What is the meaning that we should take from the case regarding Abina’s slave status?

Abina and Colonialism

Central Question: What does Abina’s story and her encounter with the British colonial justice system tell us about colonialism and how it was experienced by colonial subjects?

Supporting Questions:

- Who was Abina?
- What took place in her encounter with the colonial British justice system? What were her goals?
- Did her experience and did the outcome help her achieve justice? Did she receive a fair trial?
- What meaning should we take from this story of colonialism in the Gold Coast?

Constructing “Abina”

Central Question: How “true” and how “authentic” is *Abina* (the History)?

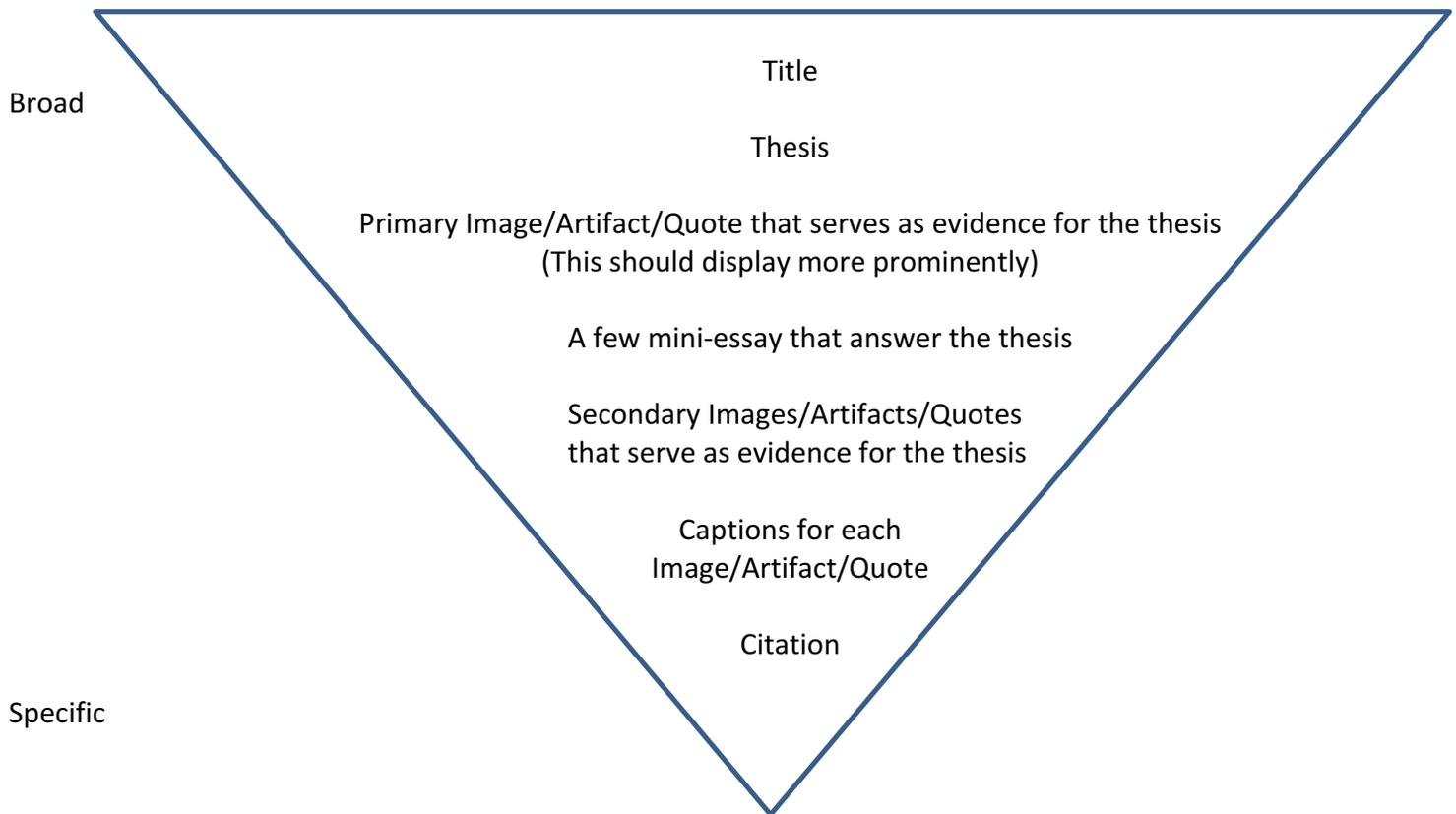
Supporting Questions:

- How did Getz construct this narrative?
- Getz has stated that his goal is to “create pasts that are authentic. He defines “authentic” as: If the people we’re talking about were to read our narratives, they would recognize themselves within them?” What about the narrative might make it “authentic?” What concerns might make it less “authentic?”
- How “true” is the narrative? Does this matter?

“Abina and her World” Curatorial Design Elements

Section/ Pathway/ Lens

Each of the sections/pathways/lenses should follow the same general format. As previously stated, the goal is to inform the public; that means peaking their interest; providing simple yet powerful explanations of the pathway/lens; and providing artifacts or other evidence through which to understand those explanations. As such, you should provide a format that focuses their attention and brings along their understanding from broad to specific. Think of it as a triangle that draws the public’s attention along a logical path:



“Abina and her World” Curatorial Design Elements

Title - Titles have been suggested in the previous section, but do your best to create something more descriptive and accessible to the public. You may wish to follow this general format: *Broad Title: Descriptive element that gives the public a sense of where it will take their thinking*

For example:

LeBron James: 10,000 Hours of Practice

Thesis - Your thesis should help the public to further understand what it is that they will learn. Answer the “central question” while providing a “because” statement that gives broad evidence of to support it.

For example:

LeBron James became one of the greatest NBA players of all time through a commitment to practice, with over 10,000 hours before the age of 18 and the gift of natural athleticism and size.

Primary Image/Artifact/Quote - Select the best evidence that will help the public to understand the thesis. The evidence should speak to the thesis and be compelling. Use it to grab the public’s attention.

Formatting:

Image: 8” X 10” or bigger

Quote: 26 pt. font or bigger

Mini-essay that answer the thesis - Each mini essay should answer each of the “supporting questions” posed on the previous page for each section. The essay should be very brief, 1 to 2 paragraphs and 500 to 1000 words

Formatting:

The text should be easy to read so use a simple font, between 18-24 pt.

Secondary Images/Artifacts/Quotes/Video/Audio - Select evidence that will help the public to better understand the ideas presented in the mini essay. You may wish to include more than one piece of evidence. The evidence should illuminate key points made in the mini essay. *This evidence should be noticeable smaller than the

Formatting:

Image: Roughly 5” X 7” (or noticeable smaller than the primary image)

Quote: 24 pt. font (or smaller than the primary quote)

Artifact/ Video/ Audio: Each should be presented in a manner that is accessible to the public

Captions for each Image/Artifact/Quote/Video/Audio - ALL evidence, whether it is an image, artifact, or quote must be have an accompanying caption. The caption should make an explicit reference to an idea in the thesis and/or mini essay and help the public to better understand the connection between the two,

Formatting:

The text should be easy to read, but not take away focus from the essay. Use a simple font, roughly 4 pt. smaller than the font used for the mini-essay between (14-20 pt.)

Citation - Each piece of evidence should cite general facts about it that would enable the public to find it for future reference: Title, Author, and Date of Publication in parentheses at the end of the caption.

Formatting:

(Getz, *Abina and the Important Men*. 2011)