

Annotation Assignment Sample

This term, we are reading Laurence Sterne's challenging novel, *A Sentimental Journey through France and Italy* (1768). This novel is challenging not only because it is written in what we might today call an "experimental" style, but also because it is steeped in the material culture of the eighteenth century—and that's a world we're not familiar with. So, our final project for the term will be focused on adding annotations to your online edition of Sterne's novel that focus on the material objects referenced throughout the story.

As you read the novel, note down references in the text to material objects. Use context clues to help you identify whether they are actually material, physical objects. At the very least, they will be nouns!

Then, browse the web for sites that contain information about or examples of these objects. Your biggest job is to figure out what in the world Sterne is talking about!

After you have educated yourself a bit, find a reliable, representative visual example of your material objects—a photograph, a painting, or an engraving, most likely. At the very least, that means you'll be looking for:

- Objects that hail from the time period we're studying (so, early 1700s to, say, 1770 or thereabouts)
- Objects that hail from a country that is relevant to our text
- Citation clues—a creator, an artist, and so on. Who made this? When?
- Visual examples from quality sources

You should *only* use sites like the following:

- The Victoria and Albert Museum (<https://www.vam.ac.uk/>)
- Other museums or cultural organizations
- University library exhibitions
- Wikimedia Commons, provided the image you use is from a museum or cultural organization

Finally, you will be responsible for crafting an annotation that contains the following information about Sterne's referenced material object:

- One to two well-written sentences that explain, briefly, what this thing is, and any interesting historical points that you think it's important for readers like you (college students reading an old novel to understand something of the human beings that lived then).
- Your image will be included in your annotation, with alt text, a caption, and a link back to the original source. Your image must be legally usable—this means you

need to find information about that on the museum's or library's website. You'll submit to me:

- Alt text describing the image for readers who have difficulty seeing. For instance: "A group of people of different ages and sexes against a very dark background surround an illuminated table upon which an experiment is being conducted by an older man." Your alt text need not be a complete sentence, but it should be descriptive.
- A caption that explains something of the image. At minimum, you will need a caption that contains the creator's name, a title for the object, the date of the object, and where the image was found. For instance, "Joseph Wright, *An Experiment on a Bird in the Air Pump* (1768), Oil on Canvas. National Gallery UK."
- A link to the image in its original web location; this should be the place where interested people can go to see the object and learn more about it. For instance, <https://www.nationalgallery.org.uk/paintings/joseph-wright-of-derby-an-experiment-on-a-bird-in-the-air-pump>
- A statement of the copyright status of the image. It must be licensed through an open license of some sort—public domain, copyleft, creative commons, and so on. For the image referenced above, I would write: Creative Commons Non-Commercial. I found that information on the National Gallery's website, when I attempted to download the image of the painting by Joseph Wright. NOTE: This will be in different places depending on your site! If the image is copyrighted, you cannot use it unless you get the copyright owner's permission to use it.