

Student Activity - I Left a Trace!

We all leave many traces in the historical record. Sometimes we don't realize it, but when we go about our daily lives, we leave objects behind, official and unofficial records, even clues about some of the things we did during our lives. Everyone else leaves similar clues. When these clues are combined together, they form what historians call the *historical record*. As you might imagine, the historical record is very large—just imagine how many traces have been left of events that have occurred throughout time. Even so, however, the record only provides a peek into the past. So much of what we do is lost or never recorded, either in writing or by other means. As you might also imagine, some of what is “left behind” is accidental, and some is purposeful. What can we learn from these accidental and purposeful traces? How does the historical record become so large and so limited at the same time? What traces do *you* leave that contribute to the historical record? Find out in the activity that follows.



Procedure

- 1.) Think about the different things you have done during the past 24 hours. Use the table provided in Part A (page 2) to record a list of seven items. For each, answer the following three questions. Use your own paper if you need more space, and be prepared to discuss these with your classmates.
 - What trace evidence might have been left? Briefly describe.
 - Would the trace be purposeful or accidental?
 - Would the trace evidence have been preserved? (yes or no) Why or why not?
- (2.) Either working alone or with your small group, consider each of the things you have listed as you answer the questions in Part B (page 3) following the chart. If you are working in a group, you may discuss the questions and your answers, but your responses should refer to your own listed items (except for question “d”).
- (3.) Together with your group (or alone if your teacher has not assigned groups), think of a major event that is presently taking place. It may be local, national, or international. Complete the chart on Part C (page 4) and respond to the questions provided. Be prepared to discuss your group's responses with the rest of the class when you are finished.

Part A

Complete the chart below as instructed in procedure step 1.

Complete the chart by recording seven things that you have done during the past 24 hours!		My Daily Record		
Activities				
1.				
2.				
3.				
4.				
5.				
6.				
7.				

For each activity listed, briefly answer each of the following questions. You may use your own paper if you need extra space to write.

What trace evidence might have been left? Briefly describe.

Would the trace be purposeful or accidental?

Would the trace evidence have been preserved? (yes or no) Why or why not?

Part C

Complete the map below as instructed in procedure step 3.

