

***Subject Access to Visual Materials
VRA Conference Workshop 1
March 12 2:00-6:00***

Trainee's Workbook

Subject Access to Visual Materials

Summary

In this workshop we will cover selected topics from CCO chapter 6, CCO Part III Authorities, and information presented by today's speakers. You will learn about the issues associated with identifying, describing, and analyzing the subject content of a work using standard authorities.

Unit Outline

- Identifying various types of subject matter [Exercise 1]
- Analyzing subject content [Exercise 2]
- Selecting terminology based on such factors as specificity/exhaustivity and type of audience [Exercise 3]
- Using standard authorities and identifying appropriate sources for controlled vocabularies [Exercise 4]
- Distinguishing between the Subject and Concept Authorities [Exercise 5]

Unit Objectives

At the end of this unit you will be able to:

- Demonstrate a methodical approach to subject assessment and to distinguish between the three levels of subject analysis -- description, identification, and interpretation.
- Describe various types of subject content and identify standard sources of controlled vocabularies appropriate to that content.
- Use standard authorities to develop local lists and files
- Understand the distinction between specificity and exhaustivity in subject indexing and learn how to select terms based on a diverse user audience

At the end of this unit you will have been introduced to:

- Standard sources and controlled vocabularies for subject content
- Subject and Concept Authority files











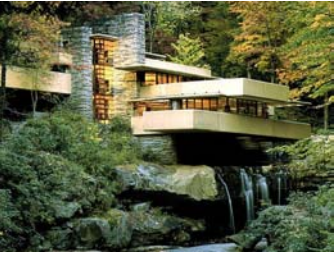

EXERCISE 1: Identifying Types of Subjects

The objective of the first exercise is to identify common types of subjects depicted in or by a work or object using some of the basic subject types described in Harpring's presentation. This material is also covered in CCO Chapter 6, pages 207-288, 217-223.

1. Using Harpring's examples of subject types listed below, select one or more for images A-L:

1. **Representational narrative subject [tells a story or episode in a story]**
2. **Representational non-narrative subject**
EXAMPLES:
figurative subjects - portrait, figure, animal;
locations - landscapes, seascapes, cityscapes;
depicted objects and still lifes;
events and genre scenes
3. **Non-representational abstract subject**
4. **Non-representational decorative subject**
5. **Non-representational functional subject**

- A _____
- B _____
- C _____
- D _____
- E _____
- F _____
- G _____
- H _____
- I _____
- J _____
- K _____
- L _____

A. 	B. 	C. 
Work/Object Type: Relief Title: Creation and Fall	Work/Object Type: Bridge Title: Severn River Bridge, Coalbrookdale, England	Work/Object Type: Chandelier
D. 	E. 	F. 
Work/Object Type: Carpet Title: Shiraz Carpet	Work/Object Type: Painting Title: Henry VIII	Work/Object Type: Photograph Title: Abstract 2
G. 	H. 	I. 
Work/Object Type: Figurine Title: Seated Harp Player	Work/Object Type: Mask Title: Bwa Plank Mask	Work/Object Type: Painting Title: Flower Still Life
J. 	K. 	L. 
Work/Object Type: Hanging Scroll Title: Autumn Colors	Work/Object Type: Building Title: Edgar Kaufmann House	Work/Object Type: Pottery Title: Acoma Water Jar

EXERCISE 2: Analyzing Subject Content – Methods of Analysis

The objective of this exercise is to be able to analyze subject content using methods discussed in Harpring and Layne's presentations. This material is also covered in CCO Chapter 6. The images and accompanying information about the works in this exercise are from Stokstad's *Art History*, revised 2nd edition, page 776, 510-11, 935.

1. Describe the difference between "of-ness" and "about-ness."

2. Based on the information you have been given about the picture below, analyze the subject listing terms that describe what the work is of (description and identification) and what it is about (interpretation).

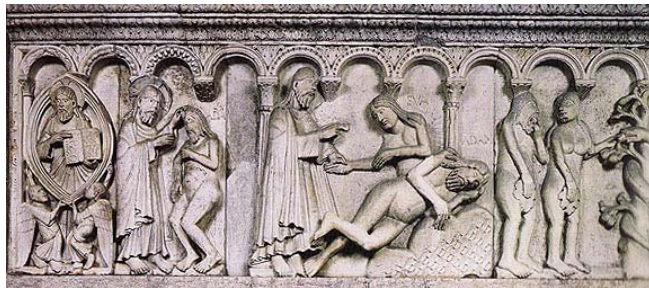


Work/Object Type: Painting
Title: Woman Holding a Balance
Creator: Jan Vermeer (Dutch painter, 1622-1669 or 1670)
Date: 1664

Comments from text: Another popular art form among the Dutch was the genre painting. Generally painted for private patrons, genre paintings depict scenes of contemporary life. Vermeer worked in the genre tradition... His genre paintings are frequently enigmatic scenes of women in their homes, alone or with a servant, who are occupied with some cultivated activity such as writing, reading letters, or playing a musical instrument.

In *Woman Holding a Balance*, perfect balance creates a monumental composition and a moment of supreme stillness. The woman contemplates the balance and so calls our attention to the act of weighing and judging. Her hand and the scale are central, but directly over her, on the wall of the room, hangs a large painting of the Last Judgment. Thus Vermeer's painting becomes a metaphor for eternal judgment. The woman's moment of quiet introspection before she touches gold or pearls also recalls the vanitas theme of the transience of life, allowing the painter to comment on the ephemeral quality of material things.

3. Based on the information you have been given about the picture below, analyze the subject matter using a top to bottom, left to right method of analysis, and list terms for the **specific** subject matter—proper nouns—that identify persons, places, time-periods, events, or allegorical or religious stories or themes.



Work/Object Type: Relief
Title: Creation and Fall
Creator: Wiligelmus
Date: 1106-1120

Comments from text: Horizontal bands of relief on the west façade of Modena Cathedral, in north-central Italy, are among the earliest narrative portal sculpture in Italy. Wiligelmus, the sculptor, must have seen the sculpture of ancient sarcophagi and may also have looked at Ottonian carving. He took his subjects from the Old Testament Book of Genesis and included events from the Creation to the Flood. The panel shows the Creation and Fall of Adam and Eve. On the far left is a half-length God with a cruciform halo, indicating two persons—father and son—framed by a mandorla supported by two angels. The scene to the right shows God bringing Adam to life. Next, he brings forth Eve from Adam's side. On the right, Adam and Eve cover their genitals in shame as they greedily eat the fruit of the forbidden tree, around which the serpent twists. Wiligelmus used the arcade to establish a stage-like setting. Rocks and a tree add to the impression that figures interact with stage props.

4. For the same work, list terms for the **general** subject matter that describe objects, persons, roles, places, aspects of nature, activities, events, and that interpret abstract or symbolic concepts.

5. Based on the information you have been given about the picture below, analyze the subject matter in terms of the object's function and form.



Title: Severn River Bridge,
Coalbrookdale, England
Creator: Abraham Darby III
(British engineer, 1750-1791)
Date: 1779

Comments from book: The bridge itself is important because it represents the first use of structural metal on a large scale, with iron replacing the heavy, hand-cut stone voussoirs used to construct earlier bridges. Five pairs of cast-iron, semicircular arches form a strong economical hundred-foot span. In functional architecture such as this bridge, the available technology, the properties of material, and the requirements of engineering in large part determine form and often produce an unintended and revolutionary new aesthetic. Here, the use of metal at last made possible the light, open, skeletal structure desired by builders since the twelfth century. Cast iron was quickly adopted by builders, giving rise to such architectural feats as the soaring train stations of the nineteenth century.

EXERCISE 3: Analyzing Subject Content – Specificity and Exhaustivity

The objective of this exercise is to be able to understand the concepts of specificity and exhaustivity and to select terminology describing subject content based on methods discussed in Harpring and Jorgensen's presentations. This material is also covered in CCO Chapter 6, page 208-209. The image and accompanying information about the work in this exercise are from Gardner's *Art Through the Ages*, 5th edition, page 116-117.

1. What are some factors that may govern the number of terms and the degree of specificity used by the cataloger in analyzing subject content?

2. Based on the information you have been given about the picture below, analyze the subject considering both an expert and a non-expert end-user. This material is also covered in CCO Chapter 6, page 208-209, and Harpring and Jorgensen's presentations. The images and accompanying information about the works in this exercise are from Gardner's *Art Through the Ages*, 5th edition, page 116-117.



Title: Francois Vase
Creator: Kletias and Ergotimos
Date: ca. 570

Comments from book: The early black-figure painting is one of the finest existing examples of an early Archaic krater, with its volute handles and extensive decoration. The Francois Vase is named for the excavator who uncovered it (in an enormous number of fragments in an Etruscan tomb at Chiusi in Italy, where it had been imported from Athens. The Francois Vase is signed by both its painter ("Kleitias painted me") and

potter ("Ergotimos made me"). The Francois Vase is ornamented with over 200 figures distributed in bands around the vessel. Representing almost the entire Greek pantheon, the figures provide us with one of our first pictorial glimpses of the forms and personages of Greek religion: The subject is the wedding of Peleus, with the gods in attendance. In addition, to the scene of the gods and Peleus, father of Achilles, are depictions of the Calydonian boar hunt and the funeral games for Patroklos. On the foot of the vase is an account of an animated battle between cranes and pygmies. The scenes are organized in six bands of varying widths...a return to the discipline and formality of the Geometric style.

EXERCISE 4: Using Standard Authorities and Identifying Sources

The objective of this exercise is to help students understand how to use standard authorities to control terminology and how to identify appropriate sources for various types of subject matter based on information and handouts discussed in Harpring's presentations. This material is also covered in CCO Chapter 6, page 210-215, and CCO Part III Authorities, page 279-369.

1. What is the difference between a simple list of terms such as a drop-down or pick-list and an Authority? What is the advantage to in an authority record over a pick-list?

2. What four authority files are recommended in CCO?

3. Which of these authority files would you use when selecting subject terminology?

4. List two standard sources for generic terms.

5. List two standard sources for iconographic terms.

6. List two standard sources for geographic terms

7. What types of terms are not found in the Getty vocabularies?

EXERCISE 5: Distinguishing between Subject and Concept Authorities

The objective of this exercise is to understand the different types of authorities recommended by CCO and to distinguish between the types of terminology found in the Subject Authority and that found in the Concept Authority based on information discussed in Harpring's presentations and material covered in CCO Part III Authorities, page 279-369.

1. For each example below, circle the authority where you would expect to find the term.

Personal and Corporate Name Authority (NA)

Concept Authority (CA)

Subject Authority (SA)

Geographic Place Authority (GA)

Technique, process, or type of activity, e.g.	NA	CA	SA	GA
Type of work or object, e.g. cathedral	NA	CA	SA	GA
Corporate name, e.g. I.M. Pei & Partners	NA	CA	SA	GA
Fictional character, e.g. Felix the Cat	NA	CA	SA	GA
Animals including Latin name, e.g. Felis domesticus	NA	CA	SA	GA
Type of style, period, or culture, e.g. Ojibwe	NA	CA	SA	GA
Type of agent or creator role, e.g. priest	NA	CA	SA	GA
Name of an agent or creator, e.g. Maqsood of Kashan	NA	CA	SA	GA
Type of material, e.g. Cor-Ten steel TM	NA	CA	SA	GA
Name of Building, e.g. Parthenon	NA	CA	SA	GA
Events, e.g. World War II	NA	CA	SA	GA
Events, e.g. war	NA	CA	SA	GA
Physical attributes, e.g. red	NA	CA	SA	GA
Named iconographic or religious subjects, e.g. Bastet	NA	CA	SA	GA
Places--physical features of the planet, e.g. Amazon River	NA	CA	SA	GA
Places—physical features of the planet, e.g. river	NA	CA	SA	GA
Literary works, e.g. Jane Eyre	NA	CA	SA	GA
Authors, e.g. Charlotte Bronte	NA	CA	SA	GA