

Smithsonian Learning Lab Setup Checklist

1M+ primary sources — the deepest social studies artifact library

Sign up	https://learninglab.si.edu/account/signup
Home	https://learninglab.si.edu
Cost	Free educator account, no subscription.

Before you start

Learning Lab is a resource library, not a curriculum. Resources span K–12, so filter for Grades 3–5/4–6/Elementary. The platform expects adult guidance — you select the Collection and facilitate the analysis. There is no auto-grading.

Setup checklist

- ☐ **Step 1.** Create a free educator account at learninglab.si.edu/account/signup.
- ☐ **Step 2.** Add your child as a student (you'll manage their login).
- ☐ **Step 3.** Filter Collections by grade band: 3–5, 4–6, or Elementary.
- ☐ **Step 4.** Bookmark Native Knowledge 360° (NK360°) for Indigenous perspectives.
- ☐ **Step 5.** Star starter Collections aligned to GD social studies Units 1–4.

Primary-source close-look workflow

- ☐ **1.** Pick a Collection aligned to the GD social studies unit.
- ☐ **2.** Monday: project 1 artifact. Child does 'See / Think / Wonder' for 10 min.
- ☐ **3.** Tue–Wed: read the artifact label and any linked context resources.
- ☐ **4.** Thursday: child writes a short response integrating visual + text evidence.
- ☐ **5.** Friday: discuss; this is RI.5.7 (integrating information from visual sources) in practice.

Quarter-by-quarter plays

- ☐ **Quarter 1:** Foundations of the Western Hemisphere — Native Knowledge 360° collections + Maya/Aztec/Inca artifacts.
- ☐ **Quarter 2:** Exploration & Columbian Exchange — primary sources from National Museum of the American Latino + portrait analysis.
- ☐ **Quarter 3:** Government & Economics — National Portrait Gallery, founding documents, and Constitution-era artifacts.
- ☐ **Quarter 4:** Modern Western Hemisphere + Space — Air & Space artifacts paired with GD Unit 4 (Space Systems).

Where it fits in your toolkit

GD = the spine. Khan = math + ELA practice. PBS = video. CommonLit = leveled reading. Smithsonian = primary-source artifacts and historical-thinking practice.

Notes
