Vocabulary Guide

Historic objects have a language of their own. Your class will learn some new vocabulary during their visit to Bayou Bend. Here are definitions of a few terms that could be used during your tour. You may want to share them with students in advance!

Gothic Revival  
design borrowed from European history, specifically using pointed arches, stone, four-petaled flowers, and other details to create a “medieval” look to modern eyes

Girandole  
a dome-shaped mirror hung on the wall (often with candleholders attached)
or a fancy candelabra

Temperance  
the movement in American society protesting the use and abuse of alcohol. In the 20th century, it resulted in Prohibition (the total ban of alcohol) during the 1920s.

Basaltware  
black dishes with a nonshiny surface that looks a little like basalt, a type of rock

Textiles  
fabric or things made from fabric (like curtains or clothes)

Porcelain  
pure white dishes that have a glassy surface and, if made thinly enough, let light through

Pier glass  
a mirror made to hang between two windows

Commode  
a chest of drawers with a curved front

Tambour desk  
a desk with sliding doors made of thin slats of wood glued to a fabric backing

Composition  
a moldable material made of a mixture of ground chalk and glue. It is soft when it is warm but hardens when it cools off.

Wainscot chair  
a chair made of panels of wood

Monteith bowl  
a bowl with deep scallops on the edge

Caned chairs  
chairs with seats and back made of woven plant material

Concertina-action table  
a table that folds like an accordion

Sinumbra lamp  
an oil lamp specially designed not to cast shadows

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