

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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