

**An Example of a Written Lesson Plan for a Ten-Minute Room Lesson Plan
Hillwood Estate, Museum & Gardens
2022-2023 Mansion Docent Training**

Audience: intelligent, curious adults, most with little knowledge of the subject of the lesson

Room & Objects: French porcelain room; potpourri pair (24.78.3-4); B. Franklin cup & saucer (24.151.1-2)

Objectives: After participating in this lesson, visitors will be better able to:

1. Identify the French porcelain room's function and its connection to Marjorie Post;
 2. Discuss how Sèvres porcelain was supported by or associated with influencers of the 1700s;
 3. Describe how Sèvres porcelain catered to tastes of the wealthy of the 1700s.
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Introduction: Hook Question: **Who can tell me of a product that has a celebrity endorsing it?** (Oprah's Book Club, women's beauty products like Revlon or Clairol with movie star spokesmodels)

Introduction: Advance Organizer: This is not a new concept. This next stop on our tour will reveal how some celebrities of 1700s France influenced porcelain consumption of that time. And how the porcelain factory par excellence of the time, Sèvres, catered to the tastes of the wealthy of its time. First we'll discuss how Marjorie Post used this room.

Have any of you been in this room before?

Estate: Take a look around this room. This small room displays Marjorie Post's collection of French porcelain. The pieces in here were created at the renowned Sèvres porcelain factory outside of Paris, still in operation today.

When Marjorie Post renovated Hillwood before she moved in, she had these built-in, lighted display cases installed here and in many rooms. The cases have pullout drawers and though we can't open them today, they would have information about what was on display during Post's time. These modifications reveal her intent to have her home be a museum.

While she lived here, she enjoyed sharing her collection. She hosted dinners and teas and during those events provided her guests the opportunity to admire her collection.

Collection:

Transition: Just like guests did in Post's time, let's look closely at a few pieces of Sèvres.

Object 1:

Style: Take a look at the two containers near the top shelf in the center case. **Any volunteers...what do you see?** (turquoise, gold gilding, hand-painted flowers in white area, urn shape with domed cover pierced with 6 holes)

They are made by the Sèvres porcelain factory in 1757. What you just described is a pattern of decoration that became a hallmark of Sèvres porcelain---which you can see repeated on other pieces in this room. Creating that signature style was a way to differentiate Sèvres style from other porcelain being manufactured in Europe at the time.

Function: **Any guesses as to how these containers were used? A hint: the holes are a clue, and they are not vases for flowers!** They are potpourris containers. The six holes that pierce the top allowed the fragrance of the flower petals and scented oils to fill the room. They were considered indispensable in a luxury home for fighting ever-present unpleasant smells.

Production: These particular type of potpourris containers were called *Pots-pourris Pompadour*. They are named refers to Madame de Pompadour, who bought several of these potpourris. She was the renowned mistress of France's King Louis the 15th. She's our first celebrity associated with Sèvres.

Madame de Pompadour appreciated the French porcelain industry as: a source of revenue and cultural prestige for France. Her influence was felt in several ways. First she was an instrumental force in creating the Sèvres factory. What would become the Sèvres porcelain factory started as a private enterprise around 1740. It was thanks to her efforts that it became a Royal Manufactory in 1750s. Second, she was one of its greatest clients and promoters. She set an extraordinary example by spending huge sums on acquiring Sèvres wares, and wealthy nobles followed her example, with her cajoling.

Transition: Madame de Pompadour is not the only celebrity associate with Sèvres. Let's look at another piece of porcelain and see if we can find a familiar face.

Object 2:

Style: **May I get volunteer? Who is on this tea cup?** (point to it) Benjamin Franklin

Function: Some of you may already know that Franklin had a French chapter in his life. When this cup was made in 1779, America was fighting its war for independence from England. We needed an ally...France. We send Benjamin Franklin as an envoy to Versailles. He was instrumental in securing an alliance between France and America which proves to be a very important one. This cup was made to commemorate that Franco-American alliance.

Pretend you are a wealthy French person in 1779: **Why would you buy a tea cup with Ben's face on it?** (to show worldliness; support a cause; conversation piece; connect to an important moment in time) In summary, you would buy one because you want to be connected to Ben Franklin.

Production: You weren't alone... He was like a celebrity—mobbed wherever he went in Paris, who became a symbol of liberty. His likeness appeared on all kinds of memorabilia. Sèvres, the porcelain manufactory that made the tea cup, even made porcelain medallions with Ben's face on them at the same time as this cup and saucer.

Transition & Conclusion: Summary: From Franklin being commemorated to Pompadour and her support of the fledging factory, we've encountered some interesting "celebrities" of 1700s France associated with Sèvres porcelain. We saw how it catered to the tastes and interests of its wealthy clients.

Collector: Sèvres was one of Marjorie Post's earliest collecting passions. She began collecting in the 1920s, and retained a lifelong admiration for the turquoise blue, or bleu celeste, style you see here. She even displayed porcelain in her personal spaces, like her bedroom, which is the next step on our tour where we'll see how porcelain was incorporated into a piece of furniture.

Conclusion: Assessment of Visitors: **Before we move on, what is one idea will you take away from our discussion?**

Sources: Audio Tour Stop for French Porcelain Room; *A Taste for Splendor* pp. 121 & 161-162; *Sèvres Porcelain at Hillwood* pp. 56-57 & 60-62