

# SCIENCE MUSEUM GROUP

## TOP TIPS: CREATING AND DELIVERING TOURS

Face-to-face tours are a popular feature of museums. They can enhance visitors' experiences, provide unique insights, and help share and unleash the stories behind objects and collections.

Here we share some of our top tips and considerations for creating and delivering museum tours...

### PLANNING AND DEVELOPING YOUR TOUR

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# 1

#### THINK ABOUT YOUR OUTCOMES

What would you like your audience to feel, do or understand as a result of your tour? What would success look like? Consider this before you develop your tour to help focus your content and ensure that your audience remain at the heart of the experience.

# 2

#### TELL A GREAT STORY

Museums are full of stories and guided tours are a brilliant way to share them and the objects that represent them. Include information such as what it is; what it does; how it works; whether there is a modern equivalent or everyday link; a personal-interest story such as who made, owned or used it; and what makes it exciting.



# 3

#### CRITICALLY REFLECT ON YOUR CONTENT AND LANGUAGE

The way that your content is communicated, both verbally and visually, is extremely powerful. Ensure that your choices of stories, objects and examples are inclusive and reflect the widest possible audience. Be conscious not to reinforce stereotypes that exist around STEM topics. Keep your language clear and simple, and avoid – or explain – any jargon or technical terminology.

# 4

#### THINK ABOUT YOUR TOUR ROUTE AND SPACE

What route and highlights will help you tell your story? How many people can participate? How busy is the space? Will everyone be able to see and hear you clearly? Are there areas you must keep clear? Are there opportunities to sit down or use facilities? How accessible is your tour, and how will you support participants unable to access certain parts?



# 5

#### PLAN HOW YOU WILL EXTEND THE EXPERIENCE

How can you help participants build longer-lasting connections with the content? Can you relate to things in the museum or things to do at home? Can you share links where the audience can find out more or leave them with a discussion-sparking question? If photography is allowed, let participants know. Allow time for this and for them to explore by themselves.

# 6

### USE A BASIC PRESENTATION FRAMEWORK

Remember Aristotle's principle 'Tell them what you are going to tell them, tell them, then tell them what you told them.' Introduce yourself and provide a brief overview of your tour route and content, and finish with a recap. You don't need to know everything off by heart, but if you carry notes or prompts, avoid reading directly from them.

# 7

### TAILOR THE TOUR TO YOUR GROUP

This will help make it a memorable, unique experience. Everyone is different and will connect with you and your content in different ways. Be prepared to adjust your tour to appeal to different people. Ask questions to find out their interests, where they are from and why they joined the tour. Are there stories or objects that might therefore be especially appealing?



# 8

### GET EVERYONE INVOLVED

Tours should not be a passive experience. Think about how to engage your group. Could you use a prop or include simple activities? Invite people to look around them and use all their senses to experience the space. Ask open questions which invite them to think, contribute and reflect.

# 9

### AVOID TALKING WHILE WALKING AND ENJOY THE EXPERIENCE

Talking while walking makes it difficult for people to hear you and follow what you are saying. It's OK to have moments of silence and to allow people to take in their surroundings; it also means you won't get out of breath! Be yourself, sharing some interests and personal anecdotes. Passion and enthusiasm are infectious and go a long way.



# 10

### PREPARE FOR THE UNEXPECTED

You might get asked things that are nothing to do with the tour, eg where facilities are. Familiarise yourself with your surroundings and don't be afraid to say 'I don't know'. Just find out in advance where to direct participants to get their answers. If possible, get a colleague to help look after the group, making sure no-one gets lost and helping answer questions.

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## EXPLORE MORE

To find out more about Science Museum Group Learning, including resources to use in informal learning experiences, at home and in the classroom, training opportunities, and insights and research around STEM engagement, visit: [learning.sciencemuseumgroup.org.uk](https://learning.sciencemuseumgroup.org.uk)

For further information, contact us at: [SMGAcademy@sciencemuseum.ac.uk](mailto:SMGAcademy@sciencemuseum.ac.uk)

Please write 'Top Tips: Creating and Delivering Tours' in your email subject line.