

When planning activities think about what will make your experience enjoyable. Your audience will be inspired by different types of activities depending on their learning and engagement style.

WHAT MOTIVATES VISITORS?

Challenges and competition: Invite people to learn something new or to use their skills

Curiosity: Surprise and intrigue your audience

Control and free choice: Help visitors feel 'in charge' of the experience

Play: Encourage playfulness and sensory exploration

Personal relevance: Link to people's everyday lives, interests or cultural experiences

Positive reinforcement: Help visitors feel safe and clever (not stupid)

Social interaction: Get people talking and stimulate meaningful conversations



TYPES OF ACTIVITIES

Make and take

People create something they can take away with them. This provides a great opportunity for people to use their imagination and creative skills.

Use simple, easy-to-follow making instructions which use pictures and text.

Quizzes

Quizzes are a great way to get families or groups of people to talk and work together.

Make your quiz varied and interesting by using images and mystery objects linked to you topic.

Hands-on experiments

Short and simple experiments can help build people's skills and knowledge and will give them control over their experience.

Provide clear, simple instructions so that the activity can be completed with minimal support. Ideally the results will be instant, but if not this should encourage people to come back later.

Digital technology/games

Games, VR experiences and interactive technology are an exciting way to engage people with your content.

Think about how the experience could work if you had a large group to avoid generating long queues – eg use a big screen so that more people can see the action or gameplay. Prepare an alternative activity equally well – just in case the technology fails.

Competitions and challenges

Challenges, such as puzzles, bingo or physical tests, work well with groups as they encourage playfulness and can help people to recognise what skills they have and use.

Reward everyone who gets involved in some way, but you could also create a leader board with a prize for an overall winner. A live commentary will also engage people who want to watch.

Creating a theme

Theme your activities and information by decorating your surroundings or by wearing costumes. This will attract interest and attention, spark people's imagination and get them talking.

Encourage visitors to get involved by adding their ideas to the stand or having props they can take photos with.

Object-handling

People like having the opportunity to experience real and authentic objects for themselves. Curious and nostalgic objects also generate interest and spark discussion.

Allow time for people to explore the objects and to ask questions. If any objects require special handling in any way, explain the reasons why to reassure people. Avoid using anything that would cause you a problem if it was lost or broken.

Group tasks

Engage groups of people by getting them to work together to complete a problem-solving task or a game.

Get everyone involved by assigning people different roles and to avoid the experience being dominated by one or two people.

Demonstrations

Engage a larger audience with a larger-scale experiment or performance.

Get your audience actively involved by using volunteers or inviting them to vote and share their ideas. Display a timetable showing when your demonstrations will take place.

