

Key messages and learning outcomes are two key elements that are essential for developing and shaping all types of engagement experiences.

### WHAT ARE KEY MESSAGES?

Key messages are the core content ideas which tell the 'story' of your event, exhibition or activity.

Aim to have three or four short statements that will be memorable for you and your audiences.

### WHAT ARE LEARNING OUTCOMES?

Learning outcomes describe what you want visitors to feel, do or understand as a result of your experience.

Learning is a process of active engagement with an experience. It is more than just gaining new knowledge; it may involve the development or deepening of skills, understanding, awareness, values, ideas and feelings.<sup>1</sup> A good learning experience helps people to make sense of a subject, feel ownership of it and will fuel a desire to find out more.

There are five generic learning outcomes<sup>2</sup> (detailed on the next page) that can be used to describe the different benefits that can come from an experience.

Learning outcomes can be used to:

- Plan and shape the development and delivery of an experience which puts the visitor at the centre
- Define and evaluate the success or impact of your experience

### WRITING LEARNING OUTCOMES

A good learning outcome is observable and measurable. Think about what you would expect or hope a visitor to say or do following your experience in order to know that your outcome has been achieved.

Have up to three learning outcomes – any more will be hard to achieve.

Include one knowledge and understanding outcome that is linked to your key messages and up to two further generic outcomes that your experience will offer.

### MEASURING SUCCESS

There are many ways you can observe or measure if your outcomes have been achieved. These include:

**Observation** – are visitors behaving in the way you might expect?

**Feedback forms/interviews** – what types of things would you expect visitors to say about your experience if you asked them?

**Voting** – capturing visitors' views and opinions as part of your experience

1. See [artscouncil.org.uk/defining-learning](https://artscouncil.org.uk/defining-learning)

2. See [artscouncil.org.uk/measuring-outcomes/generic-learning-outcomes](https://artscouncil.org.uk/measuring-outcomes/generic-learning-outcomes)

## THE FIVE GENERIC VISITOR LEARNING OUTCOMES

Learning outcomes define what you want visitors to feel, do or understand as a result of the experiences you create.

Learning opportunities can be put into five different categories. Below are a few examples of each. The **bold** outcomes will help to increase visitors' science engagement and help to build science capital.



### Knowledge and understanding

- Learn something new
- Reinforce or make sense of prior knowledge
- **Understand the relevance and application of STEM in everyday life**
- **Understand the engagement and learning opportunities of museums/informal science settings**
- Make new links and associations

### Skills

- **Knowing how to do something**
- **Recognise using (STEM) skills, eg observation, asking questions, using evidence, communication, creative problem-solving, teamwork**
- **See the transferability of skills to everyday life (and future jobs)**
- Being able to do new things
- Use wider subject skills, eg numeracy, literacy, IT skills, physical skills

### Attitudes and values

- Challenge beliefs and values
- **See that museums/informal science settings are a 'place for me'**
- **See there is a wide diversity of people who use science in their work**
- **See STEM as something 'I can do' (in my life today and in the future)**
- Appreciate a range of viewpoints and empathise with other people
- Increase motivation/self-worth

### Enjoyment, inspiration and creativity

- **Become more interested and curious**
- **Make a personal/emotional connection with a STEM experience**
- Experience awe and wonder
- Having fun
- Being surprised
- Being creative
- Exploration, experimentation and making

### Activity, behaviour and progression

- **Increase self-confidence and self-efficacy (belief you can do it)**
- **Become motivated to investigate further**
- **Inspired to take part in STEM-related activities in their own time**
- **Talking about STEM with others**
- Share/recommend experiences with others
- Return or intend to return after a visit