

SCIENCE MUSEUM GROUP

HOW TO MAKE THE MOST OF YOUR MUSEUM VISIT

With inspiring stories, authentic objects and hands-on experiences, museums are a rich learning resource offering many enrichment and personal development opportunities. A visit to a museum can fuel curiosity and interest in science and maths – and much more, creating memories that will last a lifetime.

Here are our tried-and-tested tips to help you make the most of your visit...

BEFORE YOUR VISIT

MAKE YOUR PLAN



PREPARE AND BUILD ANTICIPATION



- Think about what you want your group to get out of the visit. Will its purpose be to explore specific topics or subjects, or personal development and enrichment – or a mix of both?
- There are many unique and diverse activities that you can take advantage of during your visit – including shows, workshops and self-led activities. Look at the museum’s website for booking details and practical information.
- If you can, visit the museum before you bring your group to familiarise yourself with the spaces and the experiences which will enhance your visit.
- Don’t try and pack too much in. Plan one or two activities and leave plenty of time for exploring the museum, as well as lunch and toilet breaks.
- To build anticipation and spark interest, use images and films to familiarise your group with the galleries and objects they will see and explore during their visit.
- Prepare your group for their visit by running a previsit activity. Introduce the key skills that they will use and develop during the visit, including making observations, asking questions, creative thinking and discussion.
- Encourage your group to think of questions they would like to find the answers to. This will inspire them to explore the stories behind the objects.
- If you are bringing a large group, your supporting group leaders are key to enhancing the experience in the museum. Brief them on the logistics and be clear what their role on the day will be. Reassure them that they don’t need to know all the answers to questions they may get asked – the most important thing is that they help make the day memorable and inspiring.

DURING YOUR VISIT

PUT YOUR PLAN INTO ACTION



- Use your journey time as an opportunity to introduce the learning from your visit on the way to the museum and extend it on your way home.
- When you arrive at the museum, take some time to get your bearings. Museum staff are there to help you and answer any questions you have.
- Your visit should make the most of being in a unique place surrounded by, and in front of, real objects. Any activity in the museum should promote exploration of the museum, and not focus on finding facts or information which you could just as easily find out from a book or the internet in school or at home.
- Remember it's OK if you don't see everything that you planned. Focus on up to three objects in any one gallery to create a more manageable and memorable experience.
- Record your visit with photos, videos or drawings. Make note of anything which sparks your group's interests and any questions they ask to follow up and discuss later.

AFTER YOUR VISIT

EXTEND THE EXPERIENCE



- Your journey of discovery shouldn't end once you leave the museum. Run activities linked to and inspired by your visit to extend the experience back at home or in school.
- Encourage your group to talk about their experience with each other and with their families. What interested them? Did anything surprise them? Was there anything that they wanted to find out more about?
- Share and display pictures from the visit and find opportunities to talk about the experience in future lessons or meetings.
- Take time to reflect on your own experience of the visit. What worked well? Did it achieve what you wanted? Would you do anything differently next time? Use your insights to help you plan your next visit.