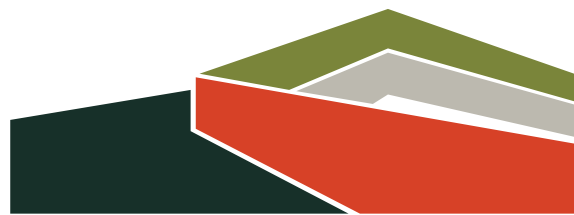


Museum Learning

Information and Resources

The purpose of museum learning is to engage audiences with objects and exhibitions through meaningful interactive practices that create positive connections between museum content and the visitors life and interests.

Museum learning offers a diverse and targeted way to communicate museum content to audiences.



ORANGE REGIONAL MUSEUM

Sharing stories and collections

The Theory

Museum learning can broadly be divided into two categories – FORMAL AND INFORMAL.

FORMAL LEARNING is learning that has a defined structure and set learning outcomes. Generally formal learning within museums is learning programs with school groups that are planned alongside curriculums and have set outcomes to achieve. Formal learning can also encompass planned programs with other formal learning organisations (U3A groups, TAFE, University etc). The key is that learning outcomes are set and should be measurable.

'INFORMAL LEARNING is the learning that takes place in a heritage organisation, planned or otherwise, by non-school groups or those not in formal education. It is informal learning both in the sense of the groups who are learning but it can also be informal in the sense of the learning itself – perhaps it is unstructured or ad hoc'
GEM, Informal Learning and Community Engagement

Why is informal learning important?

- It is accessible learning for all – school programs and formal learning are not always accessible to all audiences.
- Museums provide a unique learning environment which is multi-sensory and allows for different learning styles.
- Informal learning encourages social inclusion between family groups and wider groups not otherwise affiliated.
- Informal learning helps develop a sense of identity within wider community. It can give an understanding of history of place and community
- Develops skills both practical, personal and knowledge based.
- Develops positive attitudes towards heritage.
- Informal learning has the potential for life-long learning outcomes.

Programs do not need to be either formal or informal but can be a combination of both.

School holiday workshops are an excellent example of this, they do not have set learning outcomes but do encourage the acquisition of educational information. They encourage families to communicate and work together, they generally emphasise fun, sensory based activities that families can draw their own outcomes from.

Whether the learning is formal or informal it should always incorporate components of SELF DIRECTED LEARNING. Self directed learning allows visitors the opportunity to actively participate in learning, rather than passively reading information.

'By visitors' taking responsibility for their own learning and taking an active role in their learning activities, they will be more likely to learn as part of museum visits'
GEM, Informal Learning and Community Engagement

SELF DIRECTED LEARNING is important in museums because if audiences are able to discover something for themselves they are more likely to retain the information and have positive associations with the museum and the heritage that it cares for.

This is where LEARNING FROM OBJECTS comes in. LEARNING FROM OBJECTS can engage all senses – sound, sight, touch, smell and taste.

Learning from objects is the main strength of a museum in comparison to other educational institutions.

Learning from objects applies key principals of 'active learning' or learning from doing. Audiences will absorb more information if they are able to use their senses to discover the information. They become actively involved in the learning process through engagement with objects.

Learning from object key practices:

- Discovery – allow the students to handle and puzzle out the object themselves.
- Questions are key – have a list of questions ready about each object and encourage students to ask questions. These should be designed to get the students thinking – but not necessarily get the 'right' answer. No answer is ever wrong, they are just opportunities to generate discussion. Ask questions about: physical features, construction, function, design and value
- Know the object yourself. Have a cheat sheet of object information and be prepared for any and all questions! You don't need to be an expert just be prepared with the basics
- Encourage students to observe the object and use this observation to generate discussion.

REMEMBER BARRIERS TO PARTICIPATION

Different visitors interact with exhibits and the content of museums in many different ways.

Barriers to participation prevent visitors from engaging fully in museum activities. Awareness of these barriers and the variations of participation in museums needs to be addressed in the development of programs.

Barriers can include - disability (mental and physical), prior knowledge and the height of learners. Before planning a museum learning program a list of possible barriers to participation should be noted and addressed. These barriers will be different for each audience group and in each museum.

The Basics

What your organisation needs to think about before advertising museum learning programs.

1. Do your staff and/or volunteers have the time to lead/ facilitate school programs?

If not then think about creating self guided worksheets that schools can use without volunteers or staff leading the group. Schools will not always want to visit on set days so it is important to have flexible options.

2. Is the interpretation (text/image content) appropriate for school aged children?

It may be necessary to add additional interpretation to help school students understand complex topics.

3. Does your venue have a risk assessment and emergency procedures in place?

Teachers visiting a museum will ask for an up-to date risk assessment including emergency procedures. It is important that your venue maintains these documents. If you require assistance in developing a risk assessment please contact the staff at Orange Regional Museum.

4. Does your venue have a location to safely place school bags and for students to eat lunch?

If not think about creating this space as it will help visits run smoothly. A location for bags is especially important to protect museum objects from damage.

5. How do schools get in contact with the museum?

A single contact - email, web address or phone number - is vital for museum learning programs. The booking process must be simple and efficient. It is recommended that booking and confirmation documents be created so that you know exactly what information to gather from the teachers during the booking process. These documents should include:

- contact information for teacher
- date and time of visit
- school name
- number of students visiting
- age/year group
- current unit of study
- any special requirements

6. Before developing programs think about your strengths.

Do not try to cover all year groups and all topics. Pick a couple of key areas, technology or cooking for example, and run targeted but high quality programs.

Have a read through the relevant curriculum to find units and topics that best suit your museum.

Learning from Objects activities

Below are examples of activities that can be used with museum objects.

<p>OBJECT INVESTIGATION WORKSHEET Use the object investigation worksheet (see resources section) with students to discover what an object might be and what it could have been used for.</p>	<p>JIGSAWS Print object images onto card chop them up into pieces and then rebuild as jigsaws. Use as a starting point to talk about reconstructing objects from the past.</p>
<p>THE PRICE IS RIGHT Can be done with one object and one group or with multiple objects and groups. Group is not told what the object is. This activity is about creating an object biography.</p> <p>Student to work in groups to design an advert to sell the object. They can be selling the object now or in the past. The advert should include: What it is used for? Why a person needs it? Where can you get it from? How is it made? Why it will improve the buyer's everyday life?</p> <p>Adverts can be created using basic art and craft materials.</p> <p>Each group to present their advert at the end of the activity. Once presentations are finished revealed what the object actually is and discuss with students what they might have done differently.</p>	
<p>HOT SEATING Either a teacher or museum staff member takes the role of the owner of the object. The class prepares questions to ask the owner about the object and how they used it. This could also work with students in pairs or small groups. Similar to a 'who am I' game where the students have to figure out what the object is through asking questions.</p>	<p>CLASSIFICATIONS Can be done with one object and one group or with multiple objects and groups. Group is not told what the object is.</p> <p>Object/s placed in the middle of the room and students given a set of classification cards, 20-30 per group. Challenge is to create a classification mind map using the objects as a starting point. Students must use all classification cards.</p> <p>Result should be a large mind map with different connections being made.</p> <p>Once activity is complete can discuss with class their decisions and if the identity of the object would have changed their choices.</p>

<p>PEOPLING THE PAST Can be done with one object and one group or with multiple objects and groups. Group is not told what the object is. Aim is to create an object biography and to get the students thinking about the many lives of objects and the diverse meanings they can have for people.</p> <p>Each member of the group handles the object. One member of the group starts by picking a character and explaining their connection to the object. The next member of the group then has to pick a character in the next stage of the objects biography and explain their connection to the object. For example if group member one says 'I am the manufacturer of this object I worked the metal to create the handle'. The next member of the group could be the first owner of the object or first tradesmen to use the object. The story then continues with each member of the group helping create an object biography.</p> <p>The activity could be extend with the students creating a visual time-line of the object based on each of their characters.</p> <p>Once the activity is complete ask students about why they chose certain stories and certain connections. Draw out particular stories that show how historical objects can be relevant to modern day life.</p>	<p>CREATING A MUSEUM TRAIL A museum trail is a simple and effective way to encourage learning within a museum space. Museum trails are an excellent type of self directed informal learning that can involve the whole family.</p> <p>Trails can include three main types of questions and activities for visitors to engage with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information type questions: Collecting answers - Read the labels/ find the place on the trail. Passive requiring the user to walk, or travel by other means, whilst gathering information, or simply enjoying the experience. • Discovery type questions: Adventure and experience - Use the clues. Some sort of test in finding or using the information provided • Creative type questions: Inspiration and connections - Actively creating responses to objects. Drawing objects, adding to historical pictures.
<p>DOCUMENTING Create a documentary about the discovery of the object explaining what it was used for with demonstrations of how it was used. Group is not told what the object is. Documentary can be created as a storyboard with students drawing the scenes.</p>	<p>WHAT'S IN THE BOX? Single object in a box. Group is not told what the object is.</p> <p>Students are given a series of clues/ riddles to figure out what the object is. Students to work in teams and clues are timed to create a game show type atmosphere.</p> <p>Once the activity is complete discuss any incorrect answers with students and why they might have come to those conclusions. In this activity no answer is incorrect simply a method to encourage discussion.</p>

Resources

Over the next few pages you will find the following resources:

- Object Investigation Worksheet, can be edited to suit collection
- Classification Cards, examples that can be edited to suit objects

Additional Resources

Examples from Orange Regional Museum – *Journeys: people place stories* learning resources and activity pack for teachers, http://www.orangemuseum.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/Journeys-Pack_Complete_reduced.pdf

Group for Education in Museums, learning resources, http://www.gem.org.uk/res/advice/ball/res_lfo.php

Generic Learning Outcomes, framework for developing learning programs, <http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/measuring-outcomes/generic-learning-outcomes>

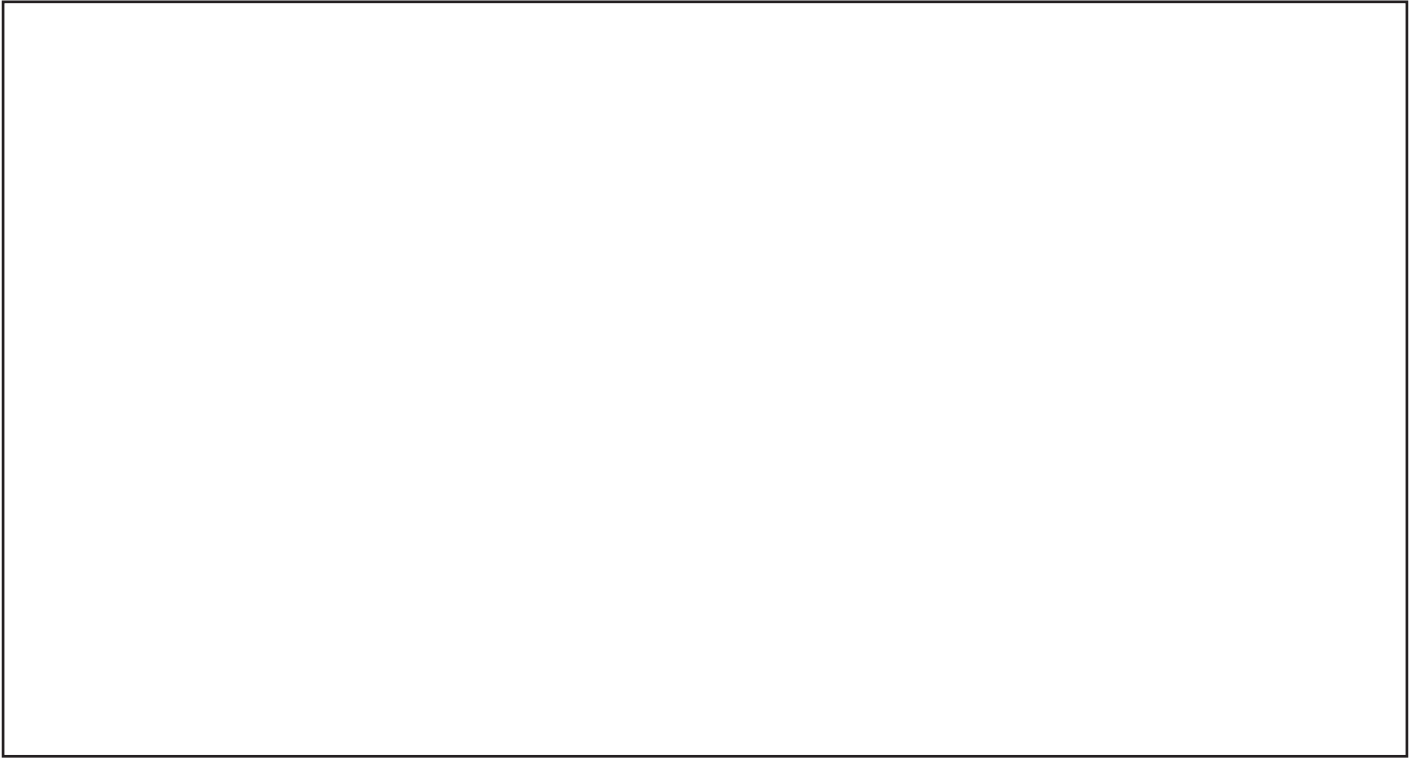
Young Archaeologists Club UK object activities and worksheet, http://www.yac-uk.org/userfiles/file/1429014915_Artefact_investigation.pdf

Galleries and Museums NSW learning from objects resource, http://mgnsw.org.au/media/uploads/files/how_to_object_based_learning_for_school_groups_in_museums.pdf

OBJECT INVESTIGATION WORKSHEET

Worksheet can be copied and used for any object investigation

1. Draw a picture of your object.



2. What is it made from?

Tick the appropriate boxes.

<input type="checkbox"/>	WOOD	<input type="checkbox"/>	BARK
<input type="checkbox"/>	COTTON	<input type="checkbox"/>	WOOL
<input type="checkbox"/>	LEATHER	<input type="checkbox"/>	STONE
<input type="checkbox"/>	GLASS	<input type="checkbox"/>	PAPER
<input type="checkbox"/>	PLASTIC	<input type="checkbox"/>	CLAY
<input type="checkbox"/>	METAL	<input type="checkbox"/>	FIRBE

3. Draw any markings, patterns or words that you see on the object in the box below.



4. Is the object complete?

Yes/No

5. If the object is incomplete, draw what you think the missing parts are.



6. What do you think the object was used for?

7. Do we use the same object today?

Yes/No

8. If we do not use it, what object do we use instead?

9. What are the differences between the modern object and this object?

10. What do you think this object could be?

MEASURE

DISTANCE

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NAVIGATION

STARS

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ORANGE REGIONAL MUSEUM

INDIGENOUS

COLONIAL

ORANGE REGIONAL MUSEUM

ORANGE REGIONAL MUSEUM

NEW

OLD

ORANGE REGIONAL MUSEUM

ORANGE REGIONAL MUSEUM

WOOD

METAL

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PLASTIC

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