

What is a Museum All About?

What is a Museum All About? | Grades K & 1

Hands-on, minds-on activities help children realize that a museum is a fun place to learn new things.

Learning standards will be met, as students:

- Experience the multiple uses of numbers including measurement and estimation
- Sort common objects into categories, or collections, and explain their reasoning
- Observe properties of various objects including size, shape, color and texture
- Explore the art of scrimshaw and have the opportunity to create their own on paper
- Put events in their own and their families' lives in temporal order
- Give examples of different kinds of work that people do

Introduction (All Groups) (Bob/Sarah/Brian can do this part, if necessary)

Gather students in the lower Jacobs Family Gallery. Introduce and discuss the following concepts by asking questions, demonstrating, explaining, or any other method that will help students focus on the theme of the program

- What is a **museum**? After a few responses ask what museums they have visited.
- What is a **collection**?
Accept students' definitions. (A collection is a group of objects accumulated for a particular purpose or reason)
"What kind of collections do you have at home?" (rocks, stamps, dolls, stuffed animals, baseball cards, etc.)
"Do you like to show your collection to other people, or do you hide it from everyone?" (Almost all will say they like to show people)
"That is what a museum does. We have lots of different collections that we show people so they can learn from them. What is this a collection of? (Point up at the bones.) Are they all the same? No – they are different sizes, shapes, colors and even smells. But they are all whale bones, so are they part of one collection? Yes! Today you will be learning all about our different collections and what we do here. But first, we need to go over some very important museum rules. Raising your hand, can anyone tell me a museum rule?"
- Briefly talk about **Museum Manners**
 - Raise hands to ask questions or say something
 - When the docent is talking, you're listening
 - Always stay with your group (or parent, chaperone, or partner)
 - Use quiet voices, do not scream/yell
 - No running
 - Keep hands by your side or behind your back. Only touch objects that the docents say you can touch
 - I generally ask them what a docent is at this time.
 - A docent is a tour guide, or teacher, here at the museum. Point out the docents, and give them a short round of applause.
 - Learn, Listen, and Have Fun

Jacobs Balcony (by Limpet)

- Ask students to look at the skeletons. What collection is this? Which one is the biggest? What is his name? How old do the students think he is (4-6 years old)? How old are the students?
- Show students the stuffed blue whale and the book to demonstrate what a whale looks like. How does the whale eat? What does it have instead of teeth? Let students touch the baleen. Point out that it is made up of the same stuff as their fingernails and hair.
- Ask “How many cups of milk will you drink today?” (Answer will probably range from 1-5). A blue whale baby drinks 100 gallons of milk a day! (show them the bottle)
- Use the 25’ yellow rope to demonstrate how big a blue whale baby is. Ask the entire group to hold the rope. How many students can hold this entire line?
- (Entirely Optional) Read “Do Whales Ever...?” Poem (see attached)
- Do not use the mirrors – they will be able to do this next year when they return

Sperm Whale Gallery

- Explain that this is part of the whale bones collection.
- Ask the students how many teeth are in the sperm whale’s jaw. Count one side. Ask them how many are in the other half. How many total is that? Let them pass around (or touch as you hold) the sperm whale tooth. Is it smooth or rough? Is it flat or curved? How does it compare to their teeth? Is there anything carved on it?
- Have the students feel their ribs, arm bones, etc. Compare these to the whale bones and human skeleton. Have them feel their hips and point out the little hip bones of the whale.
- What other collections can they find in the gallery? (as time allows)

Lagoda

- Ask the students to identify what they are looking at. What collection would this belong to?
- What shape do they see on the side of the ship (black squares)? Count them. Why are there black squares on the side of the ship? (pirates)
- Take students around the ship. They may need help going from stairs to deck.
- Gather the students near the carpenter’s bench for a brief discussion: how did a big ship like this move through the water? How do ships move in the water today?
- Optional: what shapes make up the different parts of the ship? Are they 2-dimensional or 3-dimensional (flat or raised)? What materials make up the different parts of the ship (wood, rope, cloth, metal, glass)?
- **Let the students smell the whale oil.** Does it smell good or bad? What color is it? Compare to the spermaceti oil – which one smells better? Which one is lighter?

Glass from the City of Light (Art Glass Exhibit by Fo’c’sle)

- Ask the students what they think this is a gallery of. (Glass)
- Do they know where glass comes from? (Melting sand)
- Art can come in all shapes and sizes. It can be on a flat surface or it can be on a curved surface. It can be clear (no color) or one color or many colors. It can be on paper, on walls, wood, glass, or even whale teeth.
- We are going to have a scavenger hunt. Have them work in partners (or triples). When they find the object, have them raise their hands (or touch their nose, or hold their earlobes, or hum, or whatever signal you wish to use)

- Find the following objects (as many as time allows):
 - One Turtle (left cases, 3rd window from right, bottom shelf)
 - Two Ducks (left cases, farthest window to right, bottom shelf)
 - One Polar Bear (right cases, 2nd window from left, 2nd shelf from bottom)
 - One Moon (lamp in middle of gallery)
 - A Goldfish (left cases, farthest window to right, bottom shelf or top shelf)
 - Two horses (right cases, farthest window to right, bottom shelf)
 - One Clock (right cases, farthest window to left, top shelf)
 - Two Grasshoppers (left cases, farthest window to right, bottom shelf)
 - One Bluebird (left cases, 2nd window from left, bottom shelf)
- Tell students they will now go see a very different kind of art collection – scrimshaw

Scrimshaw/Ship Model Exhibit Gallery

- Ask the students to identify the collection in the scrimshaw gallery (whale teeth, etc.)
- Have students look at images on the teeth. What are the pictures of? Tell them that a long time ago, young sailors would carve on whale teeth much like the students draw on paper today. Ask the students what they like to draw pictures of. Most likely, it will be things they saw, or family and friends, or pets, etc. Tell them the young sailors would draw the same things.
- Bring the students into the ship model exhibit and ask them to sit on the floor
- They will now draw a picture on a sperm whale tooth (outline on paper)
- They can take this with them and finish coloring it when they get to class (make sure chaperone collects papers)
 - Hint: if they're having trouble, ask them to draw something they saw today, like the whale skeletons, or the ship model, or themselves at the museum or on the bus

Ship Model Gallery (Sea Bags – near emergency exit in southwest corner)

- Ask students to pair up and sit in front of a bag (but do not open the bags yet!)
- If they were to go on a voyage on a ship for the next 3 or 4 years, what would they take with them? – you will likely get answers like “my parents” or “my videogames,” but someone will eventually say “a blanket” or “food”
- Discuss what they would need for general survival, as well as to occupy their free time (board games)
- Have them take one item out of the bag at a time, and describe how it was used.
- When they have pulled everything out and discussed the items, ask them to place them back one at a time in whatever order you choose (following step-by-step instructions is a big part of the curriculum for grade 1)

Braitmayer Family Gallery (the gallery formerly known as Dutch)

Chest activity – old and new

- Compare objects from long ago to objects from today.
- Five objects from long ago: lemon squeezer, captain's horn, iron, oil lamp, lunchbox)
- Five objects from today: lemon squeezer, cell phone, electrical iron, flashlight, lunchbox)
- Ask students to think what “long ago” means. Clarify that the objects we have are from over 100 years ago, before their grandparents were born.

You can present the objects in several different ways. One way would be to have the students pair up, with each group taking an object from long ago. They should discuss with their partners

what the object might be. Then have them explain what they think the object is or how it was used. Show them the modern day equivalent. What do they think it is now? Who would have used the object?

Harboring Hope in Old Dartmouth (Link) Alcove (Collections/Sequencing Activity – Sea Chest)

Making a Collection Activity

- ***Twenty*** items are located in the chest. When organized correctly, they will make ***four*** different collections (shells, whistles, rubber stamps, whales).
- Ask the children to sit facing the chest. Review the definition of a collection. Explain to the children that in the chest are twenty items and these items will make four collections. Place each of the four colored squares in front of the students. Explain that each collection will be placed on a different colored square. Demonstrate the activity by choosing one item out of the chest, ask the students to identify the object. Place the object on one of the colored squares.
- Invite a child to pick one item out of the chest, to identify the object and place it on one of the colored squares. If the second child picks something that can join the "collection" started by the first child, have the child place it with the first object. If not, have the child start a second collection on another colored square. Continue in this way.

Sequencing Activity:

- Introduce the second activity by asking students if they know what the term “order” means (to arrange objects in a certain way). Do they know the definition of the term “sequencing?” If not, begin by demonstrating the activity, and help them to discover the meaning of the word. Using the same objects as the *Making a Collection* activity, take one item from each collection and line them up in any order (i.e. shell, tooth, whistle, whale...).
- Invite the children to take turns putting the rest of the objects in the same order you have started. This is a kindergarten math experience called "sequencing".
- Ask the students to put the objects back in the chest before moving to the next stop

Do Whales Ever...?

Do whales have belly buttons?

Do they ever get fleas?

How do whales hiccup?

Can they possibly sneeze?

What color are whales' eyes?

How big are their ears?

Do they smack their lips?

How far can they hear?

Some questions seem silly,

But others do not.

Do whales ever sweat?
In fact, do they get hot?

Do they get sad?
Do whales ever cry?
What's it like to be wet,
And never be dry?

Do whales ever snore?
And how do they sleep?
Can whales taste their food,
Whether salty or sweet?

If they don't clean their teeth
The way you and I do,
Don't they get cavities
And bad toothaches too?

Whales eat fish and squid
And live in the sea,
But what I really want to know
Is...do they pee?

-From the book "Do Whales Ever...? What you really want to know about whales, porpoises and dolphins," by Nathalie Ward