

What will happen at the British Museum?

Description

- A sequence of 11 slides which introduces students to some of the things they will be doing during a visit to the British Museum.

Teaching ideas

- The presentation can be used on a whiteboard with the whole class or could be followed by individual students or small groups.
- The presentation can be printed out for students to work with individually.
- The presentation can be downloaded and slide vocabulary amended to meet the particular needs of the students.
- Additional pictures may be added to the presentation to reflect activities specific to the needs of your students. For example, if they use a touch pad you may want to include a picture of this so that they know they will be working with familiar support equipment at the Museum.
- Students can consider whether they do activities such as looking, listening, meeting new people at school/home to establish which activities they are already familiar with and which activities will be a new experience.
- Students can reflect on what they think other people at the Museum may be doing - such as walking around, looking at objects, talking, taking photographs - to help familiarize them with other behaviours they will encounter in the Museum.

Notes on the pictures

All slides: all photographs were taken at the British Museum and show students from a number of special schools during a visit to the Museum. The vocabulary on the slides refers to the third person 'You ...' which is the student. You may prefer to use the first person 'I ...' and you are welcome to amend the wording on each slide to suit the needs of your students. In the notes for each slide the 'You ...' refers to yourself as the teacher.

- **You will work with your teacher.**
A student using a torch to explore light and dark with their teacher in a museum gallery.
You can talk to the students about which adults will be with them on the trip and which specific adult they will be working with on the day.

- **You will learn with your friends.**

Two students from the same class in the Great Court during an exploration of different spaces in the building.

You can discuss the group organization for the visit, for example if the students will be in pairs, and who is going on the trip from the class.

- **You will meet new people.**

A student and their accompanying adult using an access lift to move between two floor levels in a gallery. They are being helped by a member of Visitor Services. Visitor Services staff are on duty in all the Museum spaces to assist the visitors.

You may like to discuss the non-school people who the students will meet on the day of the visit. If you are using public transport, this may start during the journey to the Museum. At the Museum itself the students will see/meet Museum staff and will encounter lots of members of the public (including other school groups who have also come to learn about the past).

- **You will look at things.**

Students looking at Greek sculpture in a gallery.

Explain to the students that the things in a Museum are usually called objects or artefacts. Explain that there will be lots of other people looking at the objects in the galleries. The objects will be displayed at different heights. The objects will be different sizes. Sometimes the objects are by themselves and sometimes they are displayed in a glass case with lots of other objects. There is more information on the types of objects they will see in the galleries in the 'Look inside' presentation which can be found at http://www.britishmuseum.org/learning/schools_and_teachers/access_and_sen.aspx

- **You will handle things.**

A student handling an object (replica ancient Greek jumping weight) with the support of her accompanying adult during a workshop in one of the Museum classrooms.

Discuss the different types of information the student will access when handling objects, for example texture, weight and temperature.

- **You will smell things.**

A student smelling something (a spice used in Roman cooking) during a workshop in one of the Museum classrooms.

If you have students who are particularly sensitive to smell, you can talk about what smells they might encounter in the Museum such as food smells near the cafés. The Museum is unable to provide things for the students to taste but if you feel that your students would benefit from combining a taste experience with the smell activities during the classroom workshop you will find tasting suggestions in the teacher support notes for each of the taught handling sessions at

http://www.britishmuseum.org/learning/schools_and_teachers/sessions/sen_handling_sessions.aspx

- **You will listen to things.**

A student listening to a sound (a horse neighing) recorded on a touch button sound box during a workshop in one of the Museum classrooms.

Explain to the students that they will hear lots of different noises in the workshop and in the galleries. In the workshop most of these will relate directly to the theme which the students are exploring, for example music, the spoken word, sounds. In the Museum itself there will be lots of background noise. Ask the students what they might expect to hear at the Museum, for example people talking, cameras clicking, footsteps, lift buttons beeping, echoes.

- **You will touch things.**

A student touching an object as part of a touch tour of the ancient Egyptian gallery on the lower floor of the Museum.

The usual Museum rule is 'please don't touch the objects'. You may wish to explain to the students that the British Museum has over 5 million visitors each year and if all the visitors were allowed to touch the objects they would get very dirty and worn away. However, during the workshop in the classroom the students will be touching lots of different objects (real and replica) and materials. In addition, the students may take part in one of the Museum Touch Tours (currently available for the ancient Egypt and ancient Greece workshops only) during their visit. Objects included on the tour may be touched and the students will be able to explore size, texture and temperature. If you have students who feel more comfortable holding something you are welcome to bring a handling object/toy for them to hold when they are in galleries where they are expected not to touch. Most of the gallery objects are displayed in glass cases; this means that the students can move around the gallery spaces and get close to the objects without adults having to worry that the objects themselves may be touched.

- **You will move around.**

A student and his accompanying adult moving through the Museum galleries.

Students with mobility needs will be able to use their usual mobility supports in the galleries - for example a wheelchair, walking frame, walking with a supporting adult - and the group will move through the Museum at a pace which suits everyone. This image also introduces the idea that there will be lots of other people moving around in the public spaces. There will be school children in the school lunch room and in this image they can see some of the other visitors who will also be looking around the public galleries.

- **You will talk about things.**

A student and his teacher talk about what they can see in one of the galleries.

You may want to talk to the students about the different modes of communication they will encounter at the Museum. Information will be presented to the students via the spoken word, signing and printed symbols. Students are welcome to bring any communication supports which they usually use at school such as touch pads or sets of pecs. You may take photographs of your students during the workshop and in the permanent galleries in order to record the day and collect images to reflect on back at school.

- **And finally... we hope you will have fun!**

A student, his accompanying adult and a member of Museum staff during a workshop in one of the Museum classrooms.

You may like to discuss with the students what they think the British Museum will be like. It is a good idea to discuss Museum behaviour with the students and decide on a set of Museum rules to keep safe and ensure that everybody enjoys the visit. The Museum is a place to learn about the past around the world but it is also an exciting place to explore, meet new people and enjoy an out of school experience with your class mates.