Visiting the British Museum with EYFS

Reception class students
Taking photographs in Room 33

Guide for teachers
Early Years and Foundation Stage
Visiting the British Museum with EYFS

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Museum information

The British Museum
• The British Museum is a large national collection of objects from around the world.
• Objects on display date from ancient times to the present day.

Galleries
• There are over 50 public galleries across three floors.
• All galleries are numbered and locations are shown on a free Museum map available in the Great Court.
• All galleries are fully accessible.
• Objects are displayed in wall cases, free-standing cases and on plinths.
• None of the objects in the galleries may be touched.
• Groups may spend as long as they wish in a gallery and may move freely between different parts of the Museum at their own pace.
• Photographs of objects or your students may be taken in all galleries and public spaces at the Museum (except in special exhibitions).

Charges
• There is no charge for visiting the British Museum galleries.
• There is no charge for using the facilities in the Schools Lunch Room.
• There is usually a charge for attending a taught session.
• Pre-booked education groups may go in to special exhibitions for free.

Booking a visit
• Pre booking is needed for a visit to the Museum.
• Pre-booking is needed to ensure use of the School Lunch Room facilities.
• Pre booking is through the British Museum Ticket Office

By post: Ticket Office, British Museum, Great Russell Street, London WC1B 3DG
By telephone: 020 7323 8181
By email: tickets@britishmuseum.org
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Taught sessions
• The Museum offers a number of taught sessions for Early Years and Foundation Stage students. Details of these sessions can be found on the Learning pages of the British Museum website.

Museum staff
• All teaching staff working with students during a pre-booked taught session are CRB checked to enhanced disclosure level.
• There are Visitor Services staff in all public spaces who can be approached for directions around the Museum, to report a lost child or to contact a first-aider.

Traveling to the Museum
• The Museum has two main entrances – one at the front on Great Russell Street and one at the back on Montague Place.
• Coaches can drop off and collect at the Museum’s Montague Place entrance.
• The nearest London Underground stations are Tottenham Court Road, Holborn and Russell Square.
• The following buses stop near the Museum 1,7,8,19,25,38,55,98,242 stop on New Oxford Street 10, 14,24,29,73,134,390 stop on Tottenham Court Road (northbound) and Gower Street (southbound). 59, 68, X68, 91, 168, 188 stop on Southampton Row.

Facilities at the Museum
• School lunch area with long tables and benches.
• Cloakroom facilities for coats, bags and lunch boxes in School Lunch Room.
• Student toilets in School Lunch Room. There are also public toilets in the Great Court.
• Water fountains in School Lunch Room.
Learning links

A visit to the British Museum can support learning in the following areas.

**Communication and language:** encounter a rich language environment, develop confidence and skills in expressing yourself, speak and listen in a range of situations, e.g. museum vocabulary, discussing what you can see, remembering and talking about personal experiences, participation in small group discussion.

**Physical development:** make healthy food choices, e.g. visit lunch box contents.

**Personal, social and emotional development:** develop a positive sense of self and others and understand appropriate behaviour in groups, e.g. thinking about appropriate behaviour when travelling out of school and in a museum, how to work in a small group in an out of school environment, keeping yourself and others safe.

**Literacy:** begin to read and write a range of written materials, e.g. use of writing on signs, labels, leaflets to find information.

**Mathematics:** count, understand and use numbers, describe shapes, spaces and measures, e.g. use museum environment and objects for identifying and using numbers, shapes, patterns and measurement.

**Understanding the world:** find out about people, places, technology and the environment, e.g. countries of the world, thinking about how objects are made.

**Expressive arts and design:** express yourself through art, music, movement, dance, role-play, and design and technology, e.g. be inspired to create your own art work, look at the art work of others.
Before your visit

Structuring your visit
When planning a visit think about the themes which you would like to run through the visit and, in particular, how work before will support what the students do on-site and how information collected during the visit could be used afterwards.
An example of this three part visit structure is given below.

Before the visit
Introduce any concepts or themes which the students will be working with at the Museum. For example, there may be particular vocabulary that the students will need to understand when they are at the Museum, e.g. Great Court, galleries, forecourt, objects, display cases.
Explain what the students will be doing during the visit. This may include experiences they will have in the Museum, the type of objects they will be looking at, how they will be collecting information and what they are doing to do with this information after the visit. For example you may be asking the students to look at the African masks on display in Room 25 to collect ideas about the shape, materials and colours used to make the mask before they make their own mask back at school.

During the visit
The Museum has space for whole classes to gather so you may want to include times to speak to the whole class and the accompanying adults during the visit. Decide how the students are going to collect information e.g. drawing, taking photographs, talking about the objects with the group leader scribing their thoughts.

After the visit
Plan the activities which the students will undertake using the information collected during their visit. For example, an opportunity for the students to reflect on and talk about the visit and their experience of using the Museum as a learning environment, a making activity inspired by the Museum objects they saw, sharing their experience with other students through an assembly.
Suggestions for visit themes

The Museum galleries and spaces can be used in many different ways. A few examples of themes which can be investigated during a visit to the Museum are given below.

- Now and then – how were things different and/or the same in the past?
- Making things – what different materials are objects made from?
- New places, new experiences – what is it like at a museum?
- Buildings and their uses – what happens at a museum?
- Museum maths – what colours, shapes and patterns can I find?
- Around the world – where do the objects at the Museum come from?
Planning a visit

When you have decided what theme you would like to explore during your visit, such as colour or maths, to the Museum you can start to plan out the before, during and after activities. Planning sheet (1) is an example of how you can plan the different parts of the visit and what will happen on each occasion. Examples of different before, during and after activities are given throughout this guide or you may want to create your own set of activities. Share the planning with the students so that they know what activities they will be doing during the visit and why.

It is also useful to plan what you, the students and any adult helpers will be doing. For example if you have parents working with some of the students during the visit you may want to invite them to take part in the preparatory and follow-up work. Using Planning sheet (2) enables you to decide what role you would like the different groups of people to take, it can highlight where you may want to include accompanying adults in preparatory work so that they have a good understanding of what the students will be doing or where you may need to organize a particular stage of the visit around available adults. You may also want to note any particular requirements amongst the students or adults (such as mobility needs or supervision ratios) which will affect the visit.

As part of your planning assess any potential risks involved in making an off-site visit with the students. This risk assessment will reflect the particular needs of your group and will need to be completed in line with any institutional guidelines you are expected to follow. The Museum has information available which you may find useful when planning your visit and completing your own risk assessment.

www.britishmuseum.org/visiting.aspx

The Museum offers free twilight visit planning sessions once a term for teachers who are planning to bring a group to the Museum. Full details of these sessions can be found at

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Planning sheet (1)

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<th>Theme of visit</th>
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<td>Before the visit</td>
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<th>During the visit</th>
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<td>After the visit</td>
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Planning sheet (2)

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<th>Group leader</th>
<th>Students</th>
<th>Adult helpers</th>
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Any additional requirements
Preparatory activities

Preparatory activities will prepare the students for their visit to the Museum. Some examples of preparatory activities are given below.

**Treasure house**
Explain the role of a museum in collecting, looking after and displaying objects from the past. Think about how an object in the museum may be valuable/treasure because it is made from a precious material such as gold, is very rare or tells us something very interesting about people long ago. Have a go at creating your own treasure house which could be filled with things that are special to the class, things they think they might/hope to see at the British Museum or museum objects from Explore which the students can then try to spot during the actual visit.

**Museum rules**
Before your visit is a good opportunity to discuss appropriate museum behaviour and the all-important do not touch rule. Explain to the students that they will need to show respect for the objects and for other people using the museum. Discuss a set of Museum rules which the students think will help them make the most of their time at the Museum. These could be printed out and a copy given to each group as they set off into the galleries.

**Museum lunch box**
If your visit will be an all day trip the students will need to bring lunch with them to the museum. This will be stored and eaten in the Schools lunch room but what will go into each lunch box? Discuss healthy lunch options and what types of food will be easy to eat on a trip. Think about what drinks would be both healthy and refreshing. Create a healthy lunch box. Time could be taken before the visit to cook and some healthy snacks which could then added to everybody's lunchbox on the morning of the visit.
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**Museum rules**

These rules were agreed by ________________________________
Museum lunchbox

This lunch box was filled by _________________________________.

During your visit

Visit activities
Below are a few examples of activities which you can do during your museum visit with an indication of what you might do before and after. The accompanying sheets are designed to be filled in by the adult working with each group. There is space to record the names of the students in each group on the sheet so that they can review the information they gathered afterwards. The sheets are offered as suggested support for the activities and can be adapted in terms of layout and level of content according to the needs of the students.

Museum explorer
The Museum is a perfect building for exploring. The public areas are fully accessible and consist of galleries, both large and small, on three floors (all connected by stairs and lift).
This activity encourages the students to take their own journey through the Museum building to see what they can find. Discoveries can be recorded by the students themselves or scribed on behalf of the group by the accompanying adult.

Before: discuss what the students think they will see in the Museum and what the building will be like. Introduce the Museum explorer sheet so that they know what they will looking out for and recording during the visit.

During: free maps are available in the Great Court and will be useful for the adults working with each group. Adults could either take the students on a journey through the Museum using this map or allow the students to make decisions about which direction they take as they move through the Museum galleries. Record what is found on the Museum explorer sheet (can be completed in any order) and don’t forget to take photos as you go round.

After: ask each individual/group to review what they saw on the visit. This could be used as the starting point for a spoken presentation about what the class saw at the Museum, a dramatic travel report with individual contributions about the best thing to do/see at the Museum or the creation of
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a large illustrated map of the Museum using the thoughts, pictures and photographs collected during the visit.

Museum chat
The Museum welcomes around 5 million visitors a year so there is always plenty of talking going on across the building. This activity encourages the students to think about the different conversations which might take place in different parts of the Museum.

Before: talk about people having conversations – what do people say when they meet, when they want to buy something, when they are sitting with a friend. Talk about questions and answers and try some out as a class and find out if everybody gives the same answer.

During: use the Museum chat sheet to stop at specific locations in the Museum and think about what people may be saying. The accompanying adult can scribe thoughts and suggestions on to the sheet for review back at school.

After: review the different locations visited on the Museum chat sheet and discuss what sort of conversations the students saw taking place and what they thought was being talked about. Use this as a starting point for the students to create some imaginary conversations around museum activities such as looking at an object, going to the café or buying something in the shop. These could be presented as dramatic pieces or appropriate props such as a few object replicas, cups and plates or a till could be placed in the home corner to encourage role-play conversation across the week.

In the frame
The Museum is full of colourful objects in all shapes and sizes. This activity encourages the students to respond to the visual nature of a museum collection and record what they see as they move through the galleries in an informal manner.

Before: encourage students to respond visually to an environment by playing I-spy with initial letters, colours or shapes. Demonstrate how to record what you see in an informal manner by colouring a swatch of colour if you see
something bright red, or drawing the outline of an object with a striking shape. Remind the students that this activity is not about observational drawing but responding to the main visual element of an object.

**During:** as the students move through the galleries give them opportunities to pause and look around. As they see something which catches their eye they can record it on the *In the frame* sheet. Provide accompanying adults with some colour crayons as well as HB pencils so that the students can capture colours as well as shapes and outlines, e.g. a bright row of lights may be captures as a line of bright yellow spots.

**After:** put the students in pairs and ask them to discuss what they captured in their frame with a partner. The frames can be displayed as an example of immediate responses to the museum environment or each student could select their favourite motif to add to a large class frame.
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Museum explorer

At the British Museum I found …

something big

and

something surprising

something colourful

These discoveries were made by ________________________________.
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Museum chat

What might people talk about …

in a gallery

at the café

in the shop

These conversations were imagined by ____________________________.
This frame was filled by _________________________________.

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In the frame
After your visit

After the visit give the students time to reflect on their time at the Museum. Each of the activities discussed in the ‘During your visit’ section of this guide has a specific suggested follow-up activity which builds on information gathered during the visit. Below are some more follow-up ideas based on the experience of going to a museum.

Museum postcard
Provide each student with an A5 piece of white card. One side will be the picture and the other side will be for the message. The picture could be drawn by the students to show the class at the museum or something they saw at the museum or students could select their favourite object on the Museum website, print it out and stick it on the postcard. The writing side can be customized to suit the needs of the students, for example a single space for a short sentence about the museum visit, a line down the middle for a message on one side and practicing how to write an address on the other, space for a stamp design.

Talking of objects
The activity can take place using a small set of objects or suitable photographs of objects printed out from the Museum website. Create a small set of 5-6 objects. One student secretly selects and then carefully describes that object. Can the other student(s) work out which object the first student chose based on the information provided in the description? Variations could include: chose between two objects, provide facts one at a time and see how many facts it takes to identify the correct object, the students select an object in pairs and begin by spending some time discuss how best to describe their object before inviting another pair to listen to the description, discuss what they find and make a joint selection.

Museum tableaux
Ask the students to think about the different things they saw at the Museum and what people were doing in different areas of the building. Ask students to
work in small groups to create a freeze-frame tableau of some people at the museum. Perhaps they are sitting in the café having a drink, looking intently at an object, pointing up at a big statue, climbing the stairs to the upper floor. Can the other students guess what is happening and have they got any suggestions about what would happen next?

Additional information

Whiteboard presentations
These are available to download from the Learning pages of the British Museum website:
www.britishmuseum.org/learning
Particularly suitable for this age group are the presentations on colour, shape and pattern in the Museum.

Guides for teachers
There are two further guides for teachers aimed at an Under 5s and Key Stage 1 audience which you may find useful. They are both available to download from the British Museum website in the Learning section.

Explore
Objects from the British Museum can be seen online at
www.britishmuseum.org/explore/introduction.aspx
This area of the website includes over 5000 pictures and descriptions of Museum objects. The pictures can be printed out and pinned on a display board to familiarize the students with the type of objects they will see at the Museum, cut in two and then stuck back together randomly to make mismatched objects, stuck in a small book to make an instant I spy resource for the Museum visit, sorted occurring to colour or put in the home corner as part of a role play museum.