

Sensory needs visits to the British Museum

The Museum building

- If you would like to see what a visit to the Museum might look like, you are welcome to download the *Look inside the Museum* social story presentation on the school Access and SEN webpage. You can view the presentation on screen or print it out.

www.britishmuseum.org/learn/schools/access-and-sen

- You can look at the layout of the Museum and think about which galleries you might like to visit (and work out where they are and how to get to them) using the Museum floor plans which are available on line. You can collect a paper copy of this map in the Great Court.

www.britishmuseum.org/sites/default/files/2019-09/BritishMuseum_Freeplans_Map_May_2019_0.pdf

- A sensory map of the Museum building is available online. You can use this map to plan your route around the Museum and decide which areas of the Museum you might find particularly welcoming or challenging. You are welcome to print a copy out and use it during your visit.

www.britishmuseum.org/sites/default/files/2019-11/British-Museum-Sensory-Map-PDF-Download.pdf

- Information about each of the galleries at the Museum can be found online. This includes information about what you will find in the gallery and key objects on display.

www.britishmuseum.org/collection/galleries

- Please be aware that for everyone's safety all bags, rucksacks, packages and personal items may be searched before entry. The north entrance to the Museum (Montague Place) is usually quieter with less people queuing to come into the Museum at busy times. Wheeled cases and large items of luggage are not allowed on Museum premises.

- You are able to put your coats and bags in one of the lockers in the School Lunch Room at weekends and during school holidays. At other times there is a cloakroom at the front of the Museum (charges apply).

- There are toilets which families can use in the School Lunch Room at weekends and during school holidays. There are additional public toilets in the Great Court.

- If you are bringing your own food and drink there are tables for eating in School Lunch Room at weekends and during school holidays. You can also eat in the Great Court and out on the forecourt lawns but please be aware that no food or drink is allowed in the galleries.

www.britishmuseum.org/visit/family-visits

- There are cafes (charges apply) in the Great Court, by the north entrance and at the top of the south stairs. There are also two restaurants (charges apply) at the Museum.
www.britishmuseum.org/visit/food-and-drink
- If your child uses support resources such as noise cancelling headphones, a chew toy or a pressure blanket please feel free to bring these with you for use in the Museum.
- You are welcome to move through the Museum at your own pace and there are benches across the Museum where you can sit and pause. Small folding stools are available for use within the Museum and can be collected/returned to the stool racks in the Great Court. You are also able to sit on the floor but please respect any requests from Visitor Services staff to keep through routes and fire exits clear. The Great Court is the perfect place to sit and watch the world go by.
- You will usually find that the side areas of galleries are quieter as most visitors move through the central area of a gallery as they journey around the Museum.
- If your child feels overwhelmed by the Museum environment and you are approached by a member of Visitor Services staff just explain that you are a family with additional needs so that the member of staff knows how they can best help you.
- All Visitor Service staff carry a radio which they can use to call a first aider or speak to other colleagues if your child has moved away from you and you have lost sight of them. The Museum has a full lost child procedure. Just ask any member of Visitor Services or Security staff if you need help.
- Additional information about access for all visitors to the Museum can be found online
www.britishmuseum.org/visit/accessibility

Family resources

- Family museum explorer trails (to keep and take home) are available from the Families Desk in the Great Court at weekends and during school holidays, or from the Information Desk at other times. These can be previewed online and also printed out at home before the visit.
www.britishmuseum.org/visit/family-visits/museum-explorer-trails
- Family activity back packs (returnable and deposit needed) are available from the Families Desk in the Great Court at weekends and during school holidays.
www.britishmuseum.org/visit/family-visits/backpacks

- Additional information about what is in each activity back pack can be found online so that you can check to see if the hands-on resources in each back pack are suitable for your needs.
www.britishmuseum.org/sites/default/files/2019-10/Whatsinsidethegallerybackpacksdownload_2019.pdf
- Art backpacks with materials for drawing (keep your drawings, return the art pack) are available from the Families Desk in the Great Court at weekends and during school holidays (deposit required). There are two art pages – one for artists aged 3-7 and one for artists aged 8+.
www.britishmuseum.org/visit/family-visits/backpacks
- Sensory support backpack with ideas and resources for mediating the busy and varied Museum environment (returnable and deposit needed) are available from the Families Desk in the Great Court at weekends and during school holidays. These backpacks are most suitable for young visitors aged 3-11.
www.britishmuseum.org/visit/family-visits/backpacks
- Family audio guide is available from the audio guide desk in the Great Court (charge applies).
www.britishmuseum.org/visit/audio-guide
- British Sign Language and audio description guides are available free of charge from the audio guide desk in the Great Court.
www.britishmuseum.org/visit/audio-guide
- There is a Touch tour in Gallery 4. The booklet for this tour can be borrowed (and returned to) the Information Desk in the Great Court. A large print version of the tour can be downloaded from the Museum website.
www.britishmuseum.org/learning/access2/egyptian_touch_tour.aspx
- There is a model of the Parthenon and a set of wall mounted replica friezes which can be touched in the slip galleries next to Room 18 (Parthenon sculptures).
- There are a number of object handling desks across the galleries where you can handle objects and talk to Museum volunteers about the objects and how they help us understand the past.
www.britishmuseum.org/visit/tours-and-talks
- There are a number of family apps for particular galleries in the Museum - the Parthenon Sculptures gallery (room 18), the Waddesdon Collection (Room 2) and early Egypt (Room 64).
www.britishmuseum.org/visit/family-visits

- Photography is allowed in all our permanent galleries so you can take pictures of objects on a digital camera or a tablet to look at back at home.

Family activities

- Family activities usually run during school holidays and on selected weekends. They are mostly drop in so you can stay as long as you wish and just leave if it is not working for you.

www.britishmuseum.org/exhibitions-events/family

- Digital activities in the Samsung Digital Discovery Centre each weekend. Please be aware that some of these have limited places and open on a first come, first service basis.

www.britishmuseum.org/exhibitions-events/family

- Activities for under 5s (Little Feet) run on selected dates across the year. These drop-in sessions are suitable for all under 5s and their adult carers

www.britishmuseum.org/exhibitions-events/family

- Please note that the British Museum follows the school holidays for the London Borough of Camden

www.camden.gov.uk/term-dates

- If you have a specific enquiry please feel free to email your question to either the Access Manager at access@britishmuseum.org or the Schools and Young Audiences team at learning@britishmuseum.org

Visiting times

- The Museum is a very busy building and gets particularly busy at weekends. School holidays and public holidays tend to be busy too.

- Some of the most popular galleries can get very crowded making them difficult to move through, particularly for wheelchair users. This also means that it can be difficult to see all the objects in these galleries. The side areas of a gallery are usually quieter, particularly if there is a busy route through the middle of the gallery to other Museum spaces.

- The Museum tends to be less busy between 10.00 and 11.00 when the galleries first open and again in the afternoon after 16.00. The middle of the day is usually the busiest time in the Museum galleries, cafes and shops.
- The Museum is open late until 20.30 on Fridays and this is often a quieter time.
- The Great Russell Street and the Montague Place Entrance can get busy with queues waiting to pass through the security areas for the bag search required before going into to the Museum.
- Every day in the Museum is slightly different depending on factors such as the time of year, the day of the week, the weather and the number of visitors onsite that day. However, there are some general trends which you may find useful when planning your visit. These are listed below and individual room numbers are shown on the online Museum map.

www.britishmuseum.org/sites/default/files/2019-09/BritishMuseum_Freeplans_Map_May_2019_0.pdf

Some of the busiest galleries include:

- Room 4 – ancient Egypt (Level 0)
- Rooms 6, 6a & 6b – Mesopotamia (Level 0)
- Rooms 17, 18 & 23 – ancient Greece (Level 0)
- Room 33 – China and South Asia (Level 1)
- Rooms 61, 62, 63, 64, 65 & 66 – ancient Egypt (Level 3)

- Room 24 – Oceania (Level 0)
- Rooms 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58 & 59 - Mesopotamia (Level 3)

Some galleries that can be quieter include:

- Room 1 – Enlightenment (Level 0)
- Room 2 – Collecting the world (Level 0)
- Room 2a – The Waddesdon Bequest (Level 0)
- Rooms 15 & 16 – ancient Greece (Level 0 +mezzanine)

- Rooms 19, 20 & 20a - ancient Greece (Level 0 + mezzanine)
- Room 21 – ancient Greece (level 0)
- Rooms 42, 43 & 43a – The Islamic world (Level 3)
- Rooms 46, 47 & 48 – Europe: 1400 to the present (Level 3)
- Rooms 90, 91 & 91a – Prints and drawings (Level 4)
- Rooms 92, 93 & 94 – Japan (Level 5)

Galleries that can be loud

- Room 4 – ancient Egypt (Level 0)
- Rooms 6, 6a & 6b – Mesopotamia (Level 0)
- Rooms 17, 18 & 23 – ancient Greece (Level 0)
- Room 33 – China and South Asia (Level 1)
- Rooms 61, 62, 63, 64, 65 & 66 – ancient Egypt (Level 3)
- Room 24 – Oceania (Level 0)
- Rooms 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58 & 59 - Mesopotamia (Level 3)
- Rooms 38 & 39 - Clocks and watches (Level 3)
- Rooms 61, 62, 63, 64, 65 & 66 – ancient Egypt (Level 3)

Galleries with natural light

- The Great Court (Level 0)
- Room 1 – Enlightenment (Level 0)
- Room 2 – Collecting the world (Level 0)

- Room 4 – ancient Egypt (Level 0)
- Rooms 7, 8 & 9 – Mesopotamia (Level 0)
- Room 33 – China and South Asia (Level 1)
- Room 67 – Korea (Level 2)
- Room 95 – The Percival David Collection (Level 2)

Galleries with low light

- Room 2a – The Waddesdon Bequest (Level 0)
- Room 25 – Africa (Level -2)
- Rooms 26 & 27 – The Americas (Level 0)
- Rooms 61, 62 & 63 – ancient Egypt (Level 3)
- Rooms 90, 91 & 91a – Prints and drawings (Level 4)
- Rooms 92, 93 & 94 – Japan (Level 5)

Special exhibitions

- Entry to special exhibitions in Rooms 30 and 35 is by timed tickets.
- These exhibitions are usually charging and tickets need to be bought before entry.
- Special exhibitions are immersive spaces where light levels, sounds, audio visual elements and use of space vary for each exhibition to support the nature of the specific exhibition.