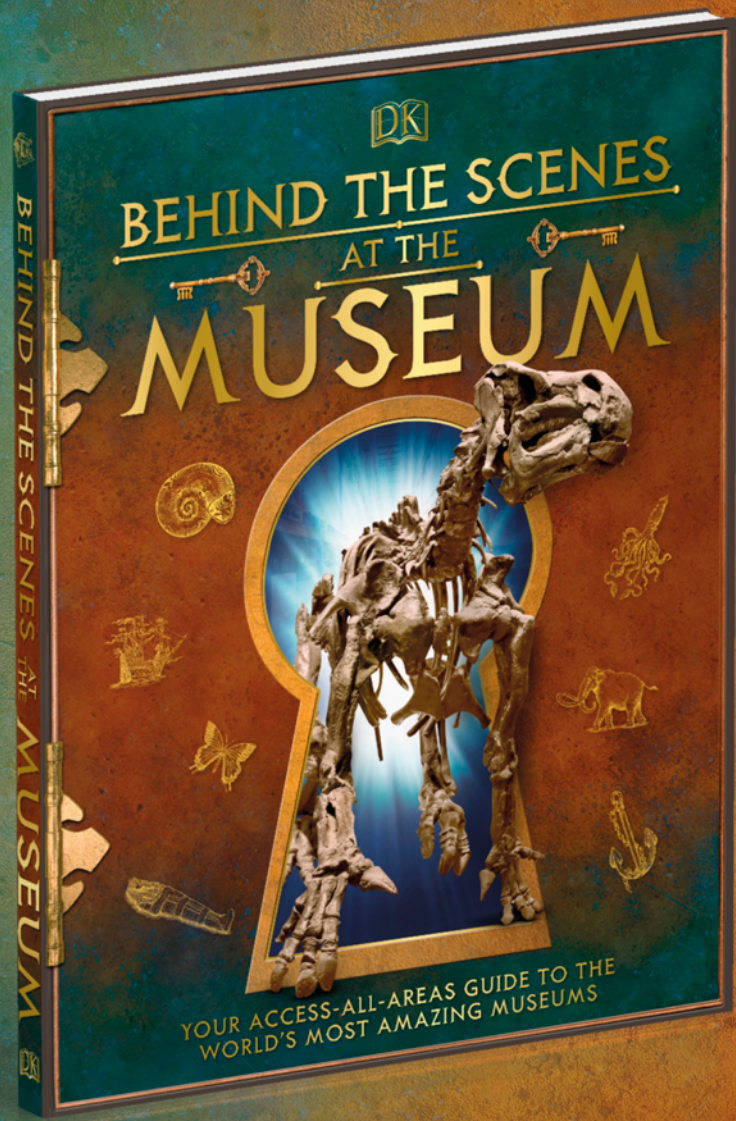


EXTRACT
& ACTIVITIES



BEHIND THE SCENES AT THE MUSEUM

Exclusive Tour Pack



WHAT IS A MUSEUM?

Museums are much more than buildings full of dusty, old objects – they are places that tell us the stories of humans and our planet. They protect enormous collections of artefacts (objects made by humans) and specimens (natural things, such as animals, plants, or minerals). Museum researchers investigate these objects to find out more about them – then they share their knowledge with us.

▼ Engaging exhibit

This eye-catching animal exhibit, visible from all the floors of the Museum of the Sciences in Trento, Italy, brings natural history to life, wowing the public and showcasing the museum's fascinating collection.



Why do they do it?

Museums around the world employ thousands of people to look after their objects. It takes a lot of time and patience to care for the often fragile items in a museum's collection, but why do they do it?

Learning about the past

Museums show us some incredible items and through them teach us about our planet's unique past, from prehistoric rocks and skeletons, to hand-made objects that show us how our ancient ancestors once lived.



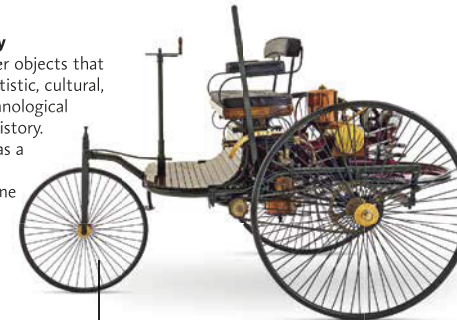
This 2,000-year-old jade burial suit from China remains in good condition thanks to museum preservation techniques.

JADE BURIAL SUIT



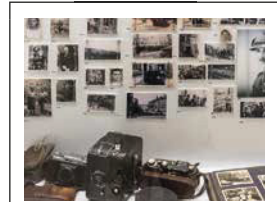
Preserving history

Museums look after objects that mark significant artistic, cultural, scientific, and technological developments in history. These objects act as a record of human endeavour over time and allow us and future generations to see how people have changed the world we live in.



This three-wheeled vehicle is a replica of the original automobile.

BENZ PATENT-MOTORWAGEN



Donations

Some items in museums are much more personal. This collection of photographs and memorabilia was donated to the Warsaw Rising Museum, Poland, by the families of World War II survivors.

Research for the future

Many museums are centres of research. Scientists and historians study specimens, like these ancient insects preserved in amber, to learn more about the history of our planet, which can help us to predict what might happen in its future.



This insect was caught in the tree sap and preserved when it hardened.

Amber is made of hardened tree sap.

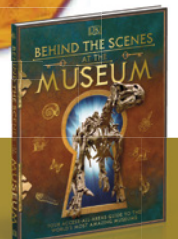
INSECTS IN AMBER



Write down what you would put in a museum – ready to create one of your very own at the end of this pack!

Suitable for 9-12 years

Content from: *Behind the Scenes at the Museum*
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MESSAGES IN BOTTLES

Biologists often use animal specimens held in museums to study different species from around the world. Museums sometimes preserve these specimens in jars, to keep them in good condition so that they can be studied. The Natural History Museum in London, England, has one of the world's biggest collections, with 27 km (17 miles) of shelves filled with jarred, or "wet", specimens, including some that were collected by English scientist Charles Darwin during the 1830s.

▼ Wet specimens

To make a wet specimen, a conservator first injects the dead animal with a liquid chemical that preserves and hardens the organs inside its body. They then place the specimen into a jar, submerging it in more preservative chemicals, which help it to retain a lifelike appearance.

The Natural History Museum's specimen jars are windows to the work of earlier scientists.

DID YOU KNOW?

The Natural History Museum in London has more than 22 million wet specimens in its collection.

The jars are sealed with air-tight lids to further protect the specimens from decay.

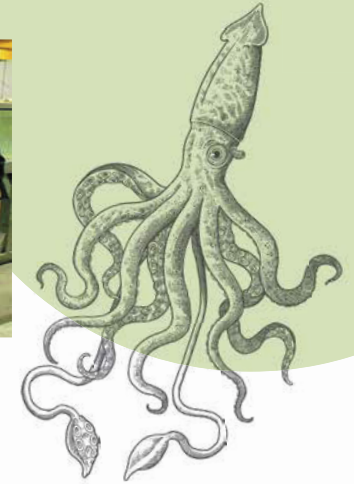


Giant specimens

One of the world's largest animals to be preserved as a wet specimen is a giant squid (*Architeuthis dux*). Known as "Archie", the squid is 8.5 m (28 ft) long and kept in a custom-made tank at the Natural History Museum. Conservators froze the squid after it was caught in 2004, while an enormous tank was built to store the specimen. They then injected it with formal saline (a mixture of salt water and formaldehyde), before submerging it in the chemical-filled tank.

The specimen jar is labelled with the type of species it contains and the date it was stored, as over time the specimen may change, potentially becoming unrecognizable.

The specimens are stored in jars of a suitable size and shape, so that they won't float around and get damaged inside.



Fresh liquid may be added to a jar a few weeks after it is made, as bodily fluids such as blood may leak out of the specimen, changing the colour of the liquid.



What things in the world today do you think museum visitors in the future would be excited to see?

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CREATING A DISPLAY

At Frankfurt's Natural History Museum in Germany, putting together the *Fascination of Diversity* display in 2019 was a huge task, requiring cooperation across many of the museum's departments. Curators started the process by developing the concept of the exhibit, which was to focus on the diversity of nature, and choosing specimens to represent that concept. They then worked with designers to create detailed plans about what the exhibition space should look like, before briefing a team of construction workers to build it. Finally, the curators arranged the artefacts in the space, providing detailed information about each one.



Building a frame

Once the concept and design plans were finalized, the construction phase began. Carpenters started to create a wooden framework for the exhibition space.



Assessing specimens

Curators checked over the specimens they had chosen to go on display. The selection included a wide range of objects to showcase the diversity of the museum's extensive collection.



Putting things together

Panelling, cases, and integrated lights were installed around the wooden frame, and the first specimens were put in place. The fragile specimens needed to be handled with great care.

Object placement

This fish skeleton has been placed upright on a mount so visitors can easily view it. If it were laid flat on the shelf, it would be much more difficult to see.



The display is designed to pack in lots of artefacts without being overwhelming.

► Completing the display

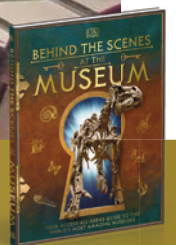
The arrangement of the specimens was carefully planned to make the exhibit as interesting and user-friendly as possible. As more and more artefacts are added, the display began to take shape.



Now you know how museum displays are created,
draw a museum display of your very own!

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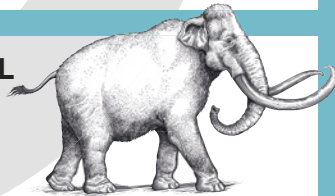
CREATE A MUSEUM!

Using the previous pages as inspiration, have a go at drawing and designing your very own museum in the space on this page! If you are stuck for ideas, have a read about some of the different types of museum below.

► NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUMS

From dinosaurs to insects, and fossils to meteorites,

museums of natural history are homes to all kinds of animal, plant, and mineral specimens.



► HISTORY MUSEUMS

History museums showcase artefacts that reveal the stories of people and events in the past.



► SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY MUSEUMS

In a science and technology museum, you'll find a breathtaking variety of objects – from science equipment to space suits.

► TRANSPORT MUSEUMS

From planes and boats to cars and trains, these museums reveal how transportation has developed over time.



Suitable for 9-12 years

Content from: *Behind the Scenes at the Museum*

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