

QUEENSLAND MUSEUM

Making the most of your school visit

Before visiting the museum

Identify the purpose of your visit

Integrate the museum visit with a topic or unit of work. This provides students with an effective learning experience because it provides them with a context and purpose for the visit.

Browse our [exhibitions](#) and [school programs](#) to identify relevant topics. Some of our exhibitions include a learning resources section with curriculum links and ideas for before, during and after your visit.

Visit the museum for a Teacher Preview to familiarise yourself with the museum's exhibitions and facilities. [Book online](#) to arrange your free entry.

Share the purpose and discuss objectives of the visit

It is important for students to understand the purpose and specific objectives of the visit, including any intended outcomes after the visit. This helps students to focus during their visit.

Establish prior knowledge and understand key concepts

Your visit may come at the start, middle or end of a unit of work. If at the start, then it would be important to establish the students' prior knowledge. The visit to the museum and the unit of work would aim to build on that prior knowledge.

Complete activities in class that develop student understanding of the topic and key concepts.

Use information and resources on the museum website.

Loan sets of museum specimens and objects from [Queensland Museum Loans](#) to assist student learning.

Develop questions that students would like to find answers to, during their visit to the museum.



Organise groups

We encourage students to be organised into small groups before they visit the museum. For Primary Schools, we recommend five students or less per group, with one adult helper.

Student groups are a useful teaching strategy and enable:

- Clear roles to be established for each group member e.g. Leader, reader, recorder, timekeeper, collector, reporter and photographer,
- Increased opportunities for student discussion, questioning and investigating,
- Increased free-choice and input into decisions,
- Support and following of student curiosity,
- Opportunities for teamwork skill development, and
- Greater access to exhibits, objects and interpretation.

Familiarise students with the museum

Familiarising students with the museum prior to their visit enables students to spend more time focused on learning during their visit.

Explore themes such as:

- What is a museum? What is the role of a museum and the people who work there?
- What do you expect to find at a museum?
 - Loaning objects from [Queensland Museum Loans](#) can be a great way to explore the types of artefacts and specimens found in a museum.
- What types of experiences might you have in a museum (include interactive STEM experiences if visiting *SparkLab*)?
- How do you find out information at a museum?
 - Explore the different types of interpretation used in museum, including written, audio, multi-media and the role of staff and volunteers.
- How do you behave in a museum?
 - This is a good opportunity to talk about the value of objects and how to handle materials in a museum.
 - Encourage social learning – students should talk, share ideas, ask lots of questions, get hands-on with touch specimens and interactive exhibits, use multi-media and ask questions of museum staff.
 - The museum is a public space and members of the public will also be using the exhibits.
- What is the layout of the museum?
 - Knowing the nature and location of facilities and exhibitions ensures that students will have a more focused and relaxed day. A [museum map](#) and our website will help students with this task.

Share the museum visit itinerary

Students will have a more focused visit and feel more relaxed if they know what they are doing for the day. Discuss with students the full timetable for the day, from the moment they leave school to the time they return. This can include:

- How they will get to the museum.
- What time they will leave school and when they will arrive back.
- What time they will arrive at the museum and what will happen on arrival.
- What exhibition(s) and programs they will participate in and how long they will spend in each.
- What activities they will be expected to complete at the museum, if any.
- When breaks will occur and for how long.
- If they are able to purchase from the [museum shop](#).

When creating your itinerary with School and Group Bookings, build time in your itinerary for:

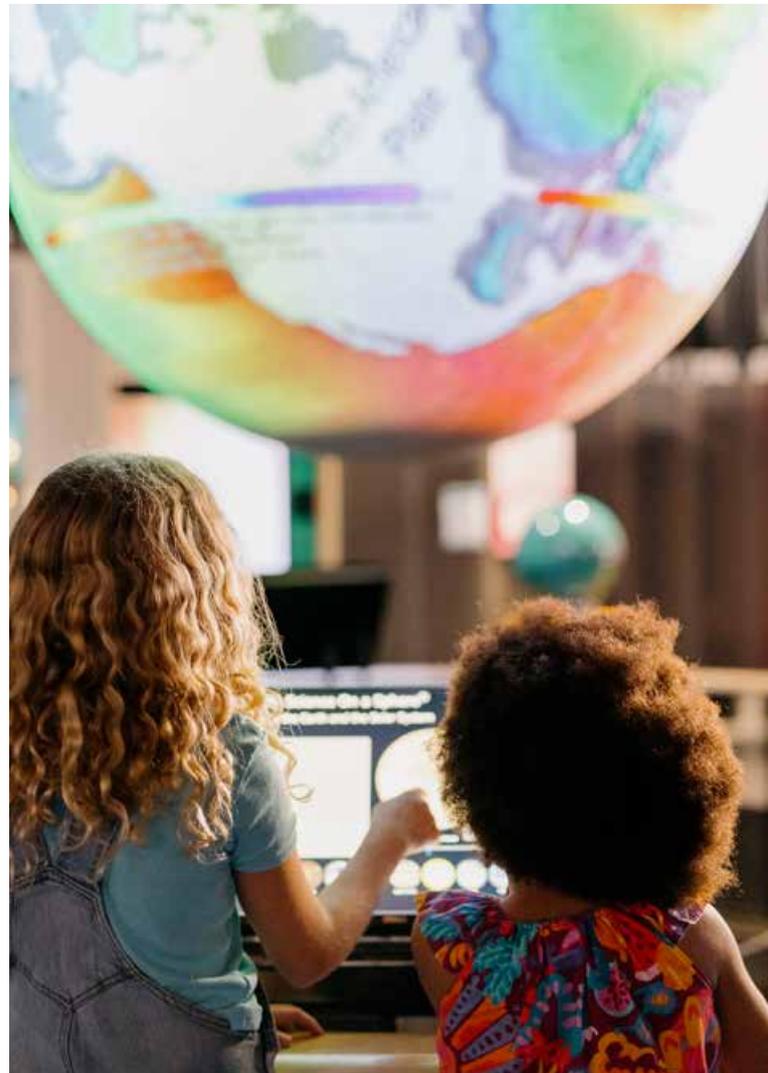
- Orientation
- Rest pauses
- Reflection and discussion
- Re-visiting students' favourite exhibits.

Identify and inform adult helpers

Adult helpers provide the vital role of facilitating student learning, especially if your class is working in small groups.

Inform adult helpers about the purpose, objectives and concepts that will be covered during the visit. Provide an itinerary and information covered when familiarising students with the museum.

Provide adult helpers with strategies for facilitating learning, such as questioning techniques, utilising student roles within the group, encouraging curiosity and supporting student inquiry.





During your visit to the museum

When you arrive

A Visitor Experience Officer (VEO) will welcome you when you arrive. The VEO will:

- Confirm the details of your visit
- Welcome and brief your students about their visit.
- Show students where to store their bags
- Direct you to the area of the museum where you are starting your visit

Learning at the museum

Museum exhibitions and activities are developed to support diverse learners. Exhibitions use visual displays, real objects, hands-on activities, multi-media and reference materials.

Adults can support group learning by:

- Encouraging students to work in small groups and adopt specific group roles.
- Asking questions that facilitate inquiry.
- Demonstrating curiosity and encouraging wonder.
- Encouraging students to talk, ask questions, share ideas.
- Directing students to ask questions of museum staff.
- Modelling for students how to engage with displays and hands-on experiences and demonstrating how to follow instructions when interacting with multi-media and available technologies.
- Encouraging students to engage with interactives and touch specimens.
- Responding to students' queries.
- Guiding students to exhibits relating to classroom learning.
- Making suggestions about how students can approach any tasks they have been assigned.
- Suggesting students record difficult questions, differing views, favourite exhibits and objects for further research or discussion back at school.
- Expressing feelings and encouraging students to share theirs.

After visiting the museum

Reflection and debrief about the visit

Provide an opportunity for students and adult helpers to reflect on and debrief about the visit: what they liked, what was visited, the itinerary, the pre-visit activities and information, and more.

Comparing new and old knowledge

- About the museum - Discuss students' understanding and expectations about the museum before the visit and how that compares to their understanding after the visit.
- About an exhibit, object, person, feeling or belief - Discuss something new that students may have found out during their visit and discuss how that differs to what they knew or believed before the visit.

Follow up and further investigation

- Use post visit activities suggested for some of our [exhibitions](#) and in our [resources section](#).
- Ask each group to report on one activity they completed (if activities had been set for the visit).
- Encourage the groups to comment on their findings and discuss any questions, differing views, favourite exhibits, objects or stories.
- Report their answers to questions formulated during discussions and activities before they visited.
- Conduct further investigation or debate any issues that arise in discussions after their visit.
- Loan objects or specimens from [Queensland Museum Loans](#) to assist student investigation or to create a museum exhibition.
- Research questions by seeking information on the museum website.
- Use their findings to write information reports, newspaper articles, create a webpage or digital story, make a video or presentation.
- Collate the information gathered at the museum into a class booklet.
- Make posters, models or create a museum exhibit or exhibition and invite other classes to visit your museum.