

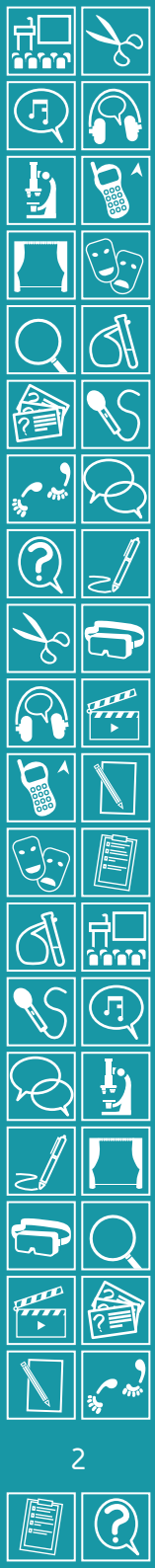


# EDUCATION TOOLKIT

methods & techniques  
from museum and heritage education

Arja van Veldhuizen





# CONTENTS

## foreword

3

## introduction

how can this publication be used?

4

## overview of methods

subdivided by:

- type of visitor / user experience
- target group
- investment of time and budgetary resources

6

## methods

1. Guided Tours

10

2. Dialogue

12

3a. Scavenger / treasure hunts – without questions

14

3b. Scavenger / treasure hunts – with questions / activities

16

4. Activities from a central distribution point

18

5. From activity to discussion

20

6. Visitors guiding each other

22

7. Learning by doing

24

8. Photography, drawing and film activities

26

9. Creative processing

28

10. Associative activities

30

11. Visitors asking questions themselves

32

12. Object analysis

34

13. Interviews

36

14. Storytelling

38

15. Recital / lecture / presentation

40

16. Theatre / improvisation / dance

42

17. AV and digital media at heritage site

44

18. E-learning / distance learning

46

## colophon

48

# FOREWORD

All over the world museum educators are actively engaged in their profession and in applying didactic methods or techniques. The majority of people have heard of guided tours and scavenger hunts, but there are so many more! As an (emerging) educator in museums or other heritage institutions, it's useful to have a toolkit filled with a wide range of methods and good practices that you can draw upon when you need them.

For the students of the Reinwardt Academy, I was on the lookout for a publication in which a variety of techniques were described. I found quite a lot of literature about guided tours but very little about other museum-based didactical methods. Educators are doers, rather than writers, it seems...

That's why I've compiled this Educational Toolkit and would like to share it with my colleagues. This booklet describes 18 working methods in a fairly random order. They partially overlap each other and are also often used in combination together.

I've described them as a sort of culinary recipe, inspired by the recipe cards in my local supermarket.

The execution of each recipe can be carried out in many ways, large or small, meticulously or watered-down, and in ways I have yet to discover. Every educator also has their own personal style, their own touch. So use this publication your way!

## Structure

In the first paragraph I explain how you can use the techniques; that they are just one of the ingredients in the development process of new educational programmes and they are the means with which you try to reach your programme's goals. Then follows summaries with an explanation of the characteristics of each method; intended as a helping hand in choosing suitable formats. Next, come the 'recipe cards' themselves with a description of each working method.

This toolkit is not exhaustive – there are many more good working practices and I welcome additional ideas and examples from practice.

Good luck and have fun experimenting with these working methods in your own work!

I would like to thank the colleagues who have encouraged me to publish this toolkit, and everyone who has overseen its creation: Nicole Gesché-Koning, Agnes Vugts, Michelle van der Sluis, Kiki van Keulen, Marlo den Haan and Annemarie Pothaar. Studio Flip for providing great illustrations, Jolijn van Keulen for a fresh design and Claire Bown for the translation into English. They have contributed enthusiastically to the result. Finally, a special word of thanks to Liesbeth Tonckens and Gundy van Dijk, my editorial group. Their input was essential and the toolkit was only better as a result. It was a pleasure to work with them.



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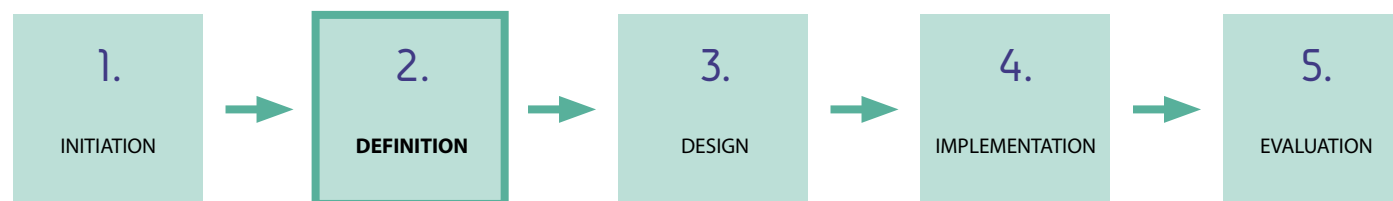
# INTRODUCTION

how can this publication be used?

This educational toolkit is written for people with some experience in museum / heritage education. The toolkit focuses on a specific aspect of museum education work, namely the choice and application of didactic methods and techniques.

A didactic technique is only one of the ingredients in the creative process of making educational programmes. The choice of technique depends on the context in which the programme is being developed and must contribute to the achievement of any pre-defined goals.

A simple step-by-step plan for the development process of an educational programme is outlined below<sup>1</sup>. This toolkit is particularly applicable in Phase 2.



The most important decisions are made in the Initiation phase taking into consideration the context in which the organisation operates (including its own policies and client requirements). In this phase the target group is determined, along with the objectives in coordination with the proposed partners. The decision to proceed (or not) is based on an estimation of relevance.

In the second phase, the plans are elaborated upon in terms of content and practical matters and tested for feasibility (time, money, space, human resources, available knowledge and technology, etc.). On the basis of the target group and content, the first ideas for techniques / methods are brought to the table. Which formats are the most suitable for achieving the desired effects within a particular context? Thus, this is the phase of the process in which this Educational Toolkit will be of most value.

In the Design phase, the programme is developed, produced

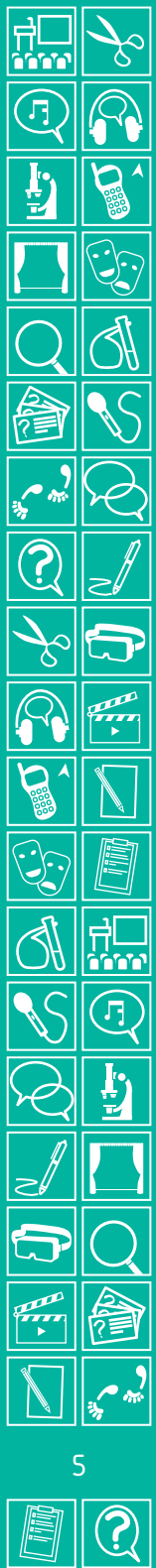
and piloted. After that, it can be implemented and then evaluated.

Within ICOM / CECA (the Museum Education Committee of the International Council of Museums) a 'Best Practice Tool'<sup>2</sup> has been developed – an elaborate and detailed model for developing an educational programme. The choice of technique is included in Phase I-9 of the 'Best Practice Tool' and called 'Means of Delivery'<sup>3</sup>. It deliberately selects the best way of conveying the information on the basis of a good understanding of the wide variety of choices there are and the criteria for the project itself. 'Means of Delivery' also helps to identify the best structure for the programme. How does it work with the beginning and end of a programme, where does each technique fit in? How can you get the best structure for an optimal learning experience?

This Educational Toolkit is an aid for making choices about ways of conveying information in the implementation of the plan. With these choices, all kinds of considerations play a role. Is it story-driven or object-led? What scientific connotations does the project have? What vision of learning is there at the museum or heritage location? In addition, the best choice is mostly determined by the question: WHY? Will taking visitors through this format achieve what you want and have the desired effect / learning goal?

Some of the working methods in this toolkit cover a whole visit, such as in 'From activity to discussion' or in 'Visitors guiding each other'. Others are (also) suitable for being incorporated into other techniques. This applies, for example, to associative activities, interviews, photography assignments or 'Learning by doing'.





## Finally, some tips

- Combine the techniques from this toolkit to your heart's content. Do your own thing! (NB there are overlaps between the 18 formats).
- Using a variety of methods often works well, especially for visitors with a limited attention span.
- Make choices in a team together with your colleagues, each of whom will have their own perspective.
- Test choices with representatives from the target group.
- Be aware of differences within the target audience. School classes, for example, are becoming more diverse (not only because of different cultural backgrounds, but also because more and more students with learning / behavioural difficulties are staying in regular education).
- Keep a close eye on the prerequisites. Is there for example someone available to show groups around, to distribute materials, etc.? Is there any money to repair equipment after the initial purchases? Is there storage space for any materials produced?
- Think about how the programme will perform on the 10th or 100th time. Will the concept still be as challenging and fresh? Are the people running it still just as motivated? Try to keep this question in mind whilst you are designing and all will be well in the implementation phase.

And pitfalls:

- Beware of choosing a fun working method and only thinking about why you chose it afterwards. Strange as it may seem, this sequence of events happens often, because, for example, 'the councillor wants to have a game' or because you can apply for funding specifically for the development of an audio tour.
- Involving the technique's practitioners (museum docents, hosts, mediators) either too late or insufficiently so that it doesn't become 'their thing'.
- Techniques that are ineffectively or improperly implemented. Think perhaps of the all-too-familiar example of the tour guide who just transmits information, or of a teacher who forgets to divide the class into small groups, causing thirty students to stand together in front of one painting.

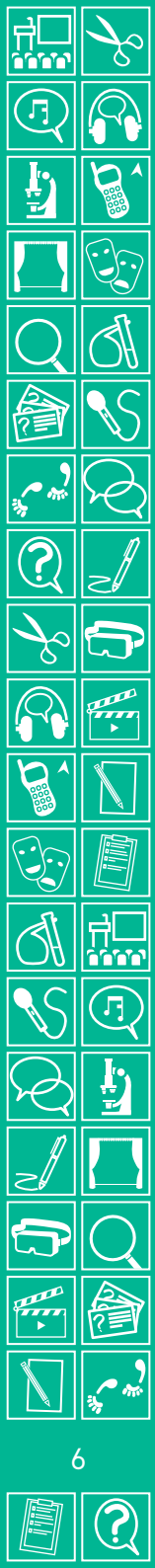
The working method itself is therefore not a guarantee of success! Everything depends on HOW it is executed. In practice, the creator of the educational programme is often not the one who carries it out. Therefore, a careful and inspiring handover to the 'workhorses' who are in actual contact with the visitors is essential.

To follow are summaries in which the characteristics of the 18 methods are compared. Their 'score' is based on three aspects:

1. Type of experience for the visitor / user;
2. Suitability per target group;
3. Required investment in time and money.

The granting of such a score is actually impossible. First of all, the above criteria do play a part in the choice of working methods, but of course there are other criteria. Secondly, everything depends on the implementation and context in which the method will be applied, determined always by the WHAT of the relevant programme component. Finally, in practice, techniques that might usually be unsuitable, can all of a sudden appear conversely appropriate for your situation, due to a twist. Therefore, don't take this all too literally, it's a tool to help you make a more informed choice.

1. Step-by-step plan developed by Arja van Veldhuizen for Landschap Erfgoed Utrecht and Kunst Centraal in the context of 'Cultural Education with Quality' in 2016.
2. 'Best practices in museum education and cultural programmes: Planning, developing and evaluating a programme', formulated by Marie-Clarté O'Neill and Colette Dufresne-Tassé, see the page about Best Practice at <http://network.icom.museum/ceca>; the users-guide is available for download here.
3. Means of delivery is the 9th aspect of phase 'I. Design stage', which contains a total of 14 aspects. After the Design stage, there are three more phases: II. Delivery of the program, III. Evaluation and IV. Implementing the evaluation.

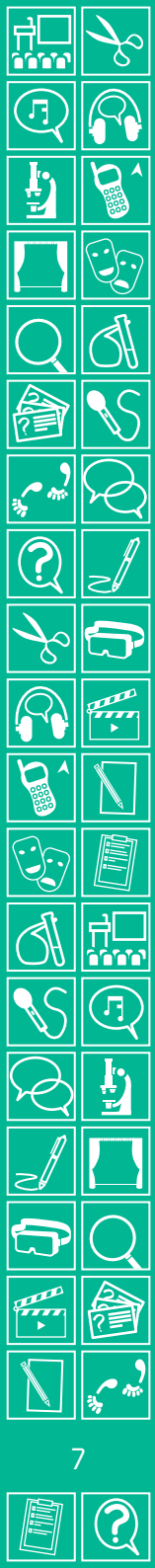


# OVERVIEW OF METHODS

by type of experience for visitor / user

	1. Guided tours	2. Dialogue	3a. Scavenger / treasure hunts – without questions	3b. Scavenger / treasure hunts – with questions / activities	4. Activities from a central distribution point	5. From activity to discussion	6. Visitors guiding each other	7. Learning by doing	8. Photography, drawing and film activities	9. Creative processing	10. Associative activities	11. Visitors asking questions themselves	12. Object analysis	13. Interviews	14. Storytelling	15. Recital / lecture / presentation	16. Theatre / improvisation / dance	17. AV and digital media at heritage site	18. E-learning / distance learning
Heritage site support required	++	++	-	-/?	++	±	-/?	+	?	+	+	++	-/?	-/±	++	++	++	±/?	-/?
Independent	-	-	++	++	+	+	++	+	+	+	-	±	+	+	-	-	-	+	+
Collaboration	-	±	±	+	+	++	+	?	?	?	?	±	?	+/?	-	-	-/?	?	?
Inquiring	-	±	-	-	+	++	++	±/+	±	±	+	±/+	+	+	-	-	-	?	+/?
Visitor / user contribution	±	++	-	-/±	+	+	++	±	++	++	++	+	+	+	-	-	?	?	+
Knowledge transfer	++	+/?	+	+	±	+	+	±	±	±	±	±	+	±	+	++	±	+	+
Importance of collection / heritage	++	+	+	+	+	++	++	±/?	+	?	+	±	++	-/?	?	?	?	+/?	?

? = possible, but not necessary



# OVERVIEW OF METHODS

by target group

		1. Guided tours	2. Dialogue	3a. Scavenger / treasure hunts – without questions	3b. Scavenger / treasure hunts – with questions / activities	4. Activities from a central distribution point	5. From activity to discussion	6. Visitors guiding each other	7. Learning by doing	8. Photography, drawing and film activities	9. Creative processing	10. Associative activities	11. Visitors asking questions themselves	12. Object analysis	13. Interviews	14. Storytelling	15. Recital / lecture / presentation	16. Theatre / improvisation / dance	17. AV and digital media at heritage site	18. E-learning / distance learning
Primary and Secondary school	4-5 years	-/±	+	-	-	-	-	-	++	±	++	-	-	-	-	+	-	++	±	±
	6-9 years	-/±	+	-	±	±/+	-	-	++	+	++	±	-	±	-	++	-	++	±	±
	10-12 years	±	++	-	++	++	±	+	++	++	++	+	+	+	+	+	±	+	+	++
	12-14 years	-/±	++	-	++	+	++	++	+	++	+	++	+	+	++	-	-	±	++	++
	15-18 years	±	++	+	+	±	++	++	±/+	++	+	++	++	±	++	-	±	±	++	++
	Adults	++	+	++	±	-	+	+	±/+	+	+	+	+	±	-	±	++	±	±	+
	Families	+	+	+	+	+	±	±	++	±	++	+	±	±	-	++	±	++	+	±

# OVERVIEW OF METHODS

by investment of time and budgetary resources

		1. Guided tours	2. Dialogue	3a. Scavenger / treasure hunts – without questions	3b. Scavenger / treasure hunts – with questions / activities	4. Activities from a central distribution point	5. From activity to discussion	6. Visitors guiding each other	7. Learning by doing	8. Photography, drawing and film activities	9. Creative processing	10. Associative activities	11. Visitors asking questions themselves	12. Object analysis	13. Interviews	14. Storytelling	15. Recital / lecture / presentation	16. Theatre / improvisation / dance <sup>5</sup>	17. AV and digital media at heritage site	18. E-learning / distance learning
Definition and Design Phases	Number of preparation hours	±	-/±	++	+++	+	+	++	+	-/+	+?	±/+	-	+	±	+	+	+	+++	+++
	Budgetary preparation	-	-	+	+	±	-	-/?	+/?	?	+?	-/+	-	-/+	-	-	-	++	+++	+++
Implementation Phase	Number of implementation hours	++	++	-	-	++	±/+	-/±	+	-/+	++	+	++	-	±	++	++	++	+	-/±?
	Budget implementation (excluding human resources <sup>4</sup> )	-	-	±	±	-/+	-	-	+/?	?	+	-/+	-	-/+	-	-	-	+++	+/?	-/±?

<sup>4</sup> If implementation is accompanied by paid staff (e.g. Museum freelance teachers / mediators), the scores in this row will change significantly.

<sup>5</sup> This overview assumes that the heritage organisation has no expertise in theatre / improvisation / dance performances.

# 1. GUIDED TOUR

...the transfer of a large amount of information in a short period of time, adjusted to the level and needs of the group, thus providing a pleasant shared experience

## explanation

Traditional form: a guide leads a group of people around various sights (e.g. museum objects, buildings or artworks) and provides information about them.

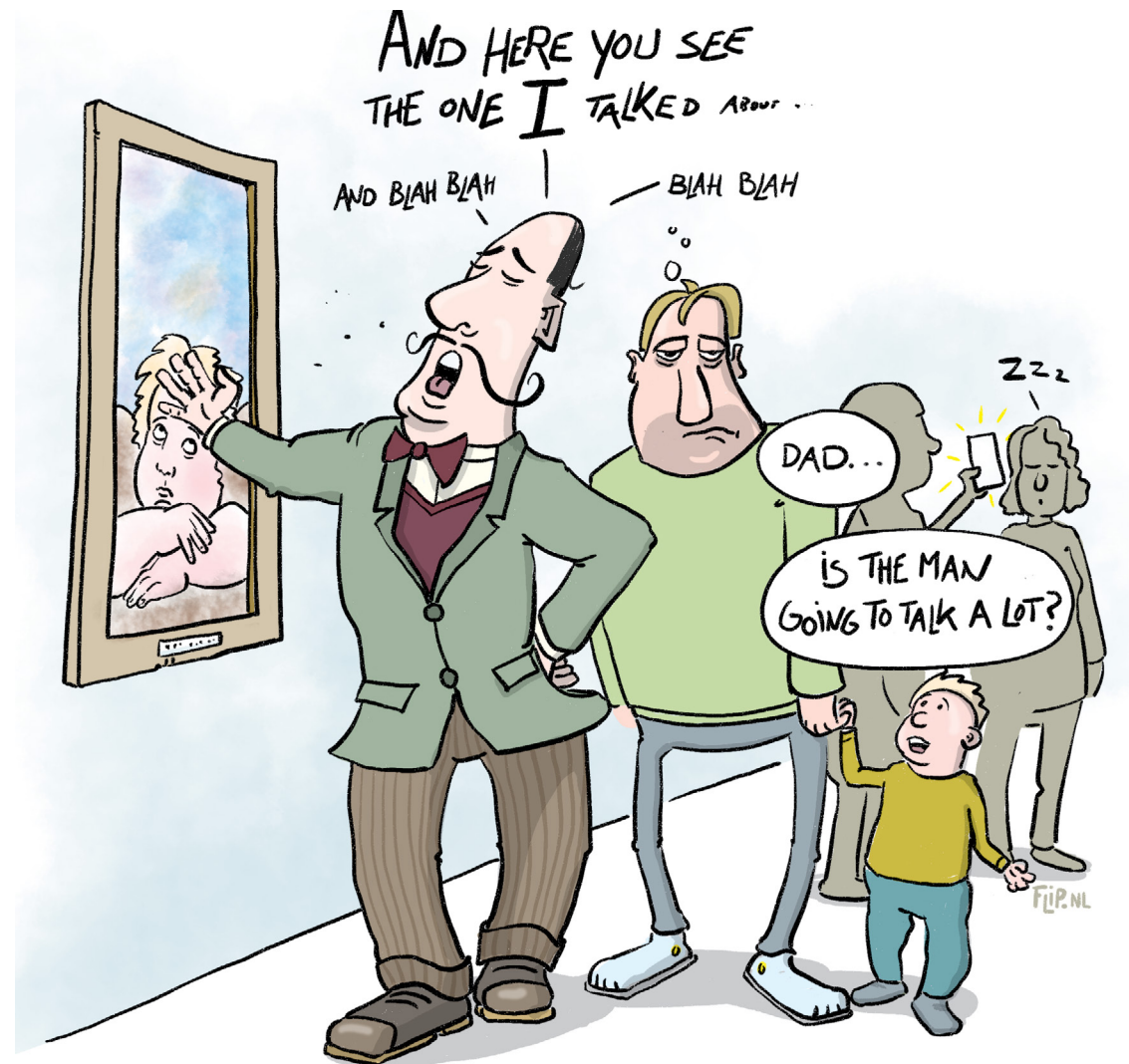
The oldest didactic method in the museum and still the most popular.

## variations

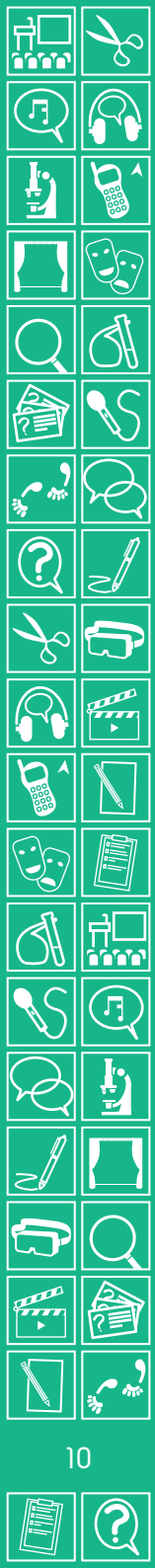
- Mandatory guided tours because the general public are not allowed to be unaccompanied at the heritage site (for example, in historic houses).
- Interactive guided tours (actively engaging the public with a variety of methods).
- Stationing guides in one place to offer their explanations to groups in-situ, whilst the public moves around all the different locations.
- (City) walks.
- Peer educators: guided tours given by your (almost) peers.

## potential target groups

Can be used for almost all target groups. Be careful with schools groups - this method can quickly become too dull or passive for them.







## advantages

- Can be used flexibly.
- Customisable!
- Significant information transfer.
- Social nature (it is a group process).
- A guide makes connections, provides a framework (expansion) and points out details (focus).
- Good guides can also convey emotions and enthusiasm.

## disadvantages

- Audience plays a passive role.
- Under the direction of the guide for the duration without personal control.
- Variable quality of different tour guides.
- Some guides don't seem to know when to stop.
- People standing at the back hear the least.

## when to use

- Can be applied very broadly with all kinds of heritage and even on the streets.

## success factors

- A good guide who understands his craft.
- Groups of maximum 15 persons, so that every group member feels personally involved by the guide.
- Good group interaction, a guide who doesn't talk for too long.
- Knowing why a group is there and responding accordingly.
- Keeps focusing on the objects (what there is to be seen) – a good tour includes guidance in LOOKING.
- Allowing sufficient time to look.
- Not too long – for example, one hour (adjusting the time to the audience).

## examples

- Visit to a country house / castle, houses in an open-air museum, factory etc.: the guide *literally* opens the attraction to the public but also *figuratively* by talking about it.
- A fixed tour on the x-th Sunday of the month: group on-site composed of visitors who want to take part.
- Guided tours for specific groups with a wide variety of visit objectives, ranging from study purposes to company days out or the celebration of grandma's birthday.
- Holiday tours with a specific focus on children, with use of hands-on materials (including a chance to get dressed up, for example at a castle).
- Torchlight tour in the dark.

## 2. DIALOGUE ...to actively engage group members and to connect fully to their (inner) world so that they are really affected by the heritage experience

### explanation

All forms of conversation and dialogue.

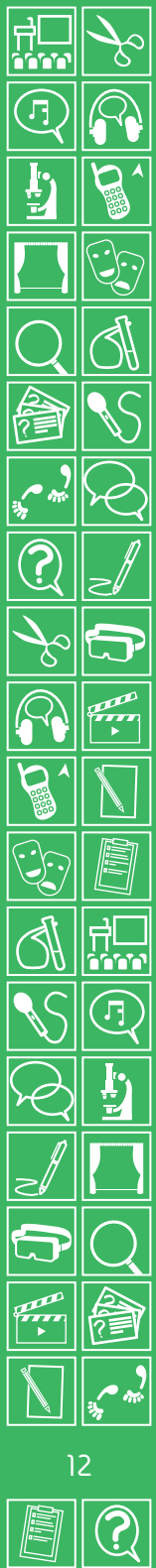
### variations

- As part of a regular guided tour.
- Question-based conversation (a facilitator conducts a conversation with a group by asking questions).
- Socratic conversation.
- I Ask, a question-driven method that encourages visitors to open up, is about the process of the entire visit from arrival to departure.
- Transfer techniques such as Visible Thinking and Visual Thinking Strategies, based on slow looking, so that the visitor interacts with heritage and museum objects in a very intensive way. A dialogue between visitors is triggered from observations.
- Philosophy: heritage / museum objects engender reflection with group members jointly examining questions of a higher order. A deeper level is reached through reasoning.
- Large or small-scale debates, on the basis of statements or propositions made by the conversation-leader or visitors.
- Artist talks, where artists talk about their work and then chat to visitors.

### possible target groups

Works with a variety of age groups. Works well with middle to upper secondary school students, a time in which young people are engaged with their identity and when forming their own opinion is important.





## advantages

- Visitors stay active, constantly activated by questions (even by rhetorical questions).
- Lots of personal input from the visitor, which makes it more customised.
- Deeper conversation techniques can be very personal.
- Visitors are encouraged to reflect and learn to look at things from multiple perspectives.
- In a debate visitors are challenged to process information directly into their own contribution to the debate.

disadvantages

- Requires excellent interactive skills from the facilitator.
- Content transfer more limited than in a 'regular' tour, less objects / locations 'tackled'.
- You have no way of predicting which way it will go in advance.
- Only asking questions (in the same way) can become tedious.
- If visitors are not well prepared for this method, misunderstandings may occur.

## when to use

- To actively involve visitors, appeal to their personal values and connect to their prior knowledge and interests. Can be great as part of an interactive tour.
- To cultivate thinking skills and critical thinking.
- To clarify that things have multiple perspectives, to add nuances and to demonstrate that different people experience things differently.

## examples

- On a tour: students give their opinion time and again with a sign ('for'/'against'/'neutral'), afterwards something is done with that information.
- I Ask is a visitor approach developed by the Jewish Historical Museum and TACTeducation in Amsterdam. The starting point is connecting to what moves visitors. I Ask is available in both English and Dutch.
- Visible Thinking. This method was developed in schools and consists of more than 20 'routines' that stimulate different ways of thinking: observing, deeper questioning and summarising. Visible Thinking is flexible – you can combine routines and add contextual information to stimulate a dialogue. It can be used individually or in groups (or in worksheets). See: <http://thinkingmuseum.com/> <http://www.visiblethinkingpz.org/>
- Visual Thinking Strategies is a method that has been developed in (art) museums, with the goal of teaching

visitors how to better observe thus promoting cognitive and visual thinking skills. The museum docent or guide plays the role of a neutral facilitator. He / she makes use of a fixed set of 3 questions and does not (usually) add any contextual information. See: <http://www.vtshome.org/>

- Philosophising (with art) is actively used in art museums such as the Kröller-Müller Museum and De Pont Museum of Contemporary Art in The Netherlands.
- Parliament-style debates about art, according to fixed rules and with a winner.
- Debate between young people following a visit to an exhibition with a stimulating social theme, led by debate leaders from the target group (peers). For example, the Blikopeners youth group at Amsterdam's Stedelijk Museum: young people with cultural diverse backgrounds who are trained to start dialogue with (other young) visitors.

## success factors

- ❑ Questions that make it possible, avoid questions about the questions.
- ❑ Genuinely working through replies from the group in the tour.
- ❑ Sufficient time.
- ❑ Surroundings that are not too distracting.
- ❑ A facilitator that is a good 'mediator' and can bring the group onto a higher plane through questions and answers.

## 3A. SCAVENGER OR TREASURE HUNTS – WITHOUT QUESTIONS

...offering the right amount of structure so that visitors can independently discover the museum / heritage in a clear and fun way

### explanation

Written tour along various points of interest. A brief explanation is provided per point.

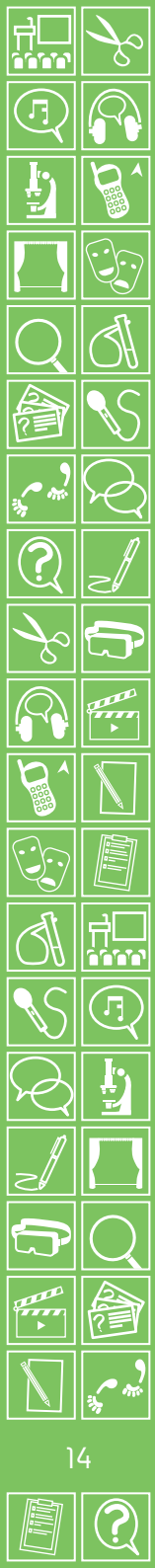
### variations

- Focus on the search element with the accent on finding the route / right place / object.
- Focus on what can be seen (focus on objects themselves and the themes around them).
- Independent topics, or interrelated (thematic).
- Using quotations.
- Photo hunt (also suitable for small children).
- Treasure hunt with two versions: set up in such a way to demonstrate at the end that collaboration or comparison adds a certain something.

### possible target groups

Can be used in theory with all kinds of target groups, also for individual visitors. Popular with families with children. The ability to read is often a prerequisite thus this is not suitable for younger audiences.





## advantages

- Visitor plays an active role.
- Information in small doses.
- Work independently at your own pace.
- Not dependent on the quality of the facilitator.
- You know what you're getting.
- At the start you have something in your hands that you can take away with you.
- With only a one-off (large) time investment, a virtually unlimited number of visitors can work with it.

## disadvantages

- No customisation.
- Running from place to place.
- Looking and reading at the same time is tricky.
- Sometimes a lot of reading is required – therefore linguistic in nature.

## when to use

- If guiding by a person is not possible for financial or other reasons.
- When visitors want to do something independently but are looking for some kind of structure.
- Can also be used in relatively large groups. If so, ensure that multiple starting points are possible.
- Good to combine with other methods.

## success factors

- Work from the object to the background information instead of vice-versa.
- Emphasise the visual aspect (i.e. what can be seen).
- Testing is essential! In terms of:
  - 1) Content concept development: is the text clear, does the central meaning come across?
  - 2) Routing: are the instructions clear? Do people know where they should be?
  - 3) Design: is the design clear? Does the design support looking?
  - 4) Logistics: time-sequence when divided into multiple groups, rotations.
- Good organisation is essential: group division, different starting points or start times.
- Good distribution.
- Attractive design.

## examples

- Highlights tour.
- Discovery hunt using objects that are often overlooked.
- Thematic route (e.g. Dutch East India Company tour, Art Nouveau city walk, or a hunt inspired by all the different kinds of yellow objects in the museum etc.).
- Searching for all the X secrets of Castle Y.
- Visitors find the solution to something mysterious based on all the different 'stations' en route.
- Viewing guide for parents which focuses on creating conversations with their children about what there is to see (combination of dialogue and written format).
- A hunt with two versions, for example, a version for children and an version for adults, which invites exchanges between generations.
- The route to different treasure hunt locations is not text-based, but is based on objects (for example, modern objects point the way to their older counterparts in the museum).



## 3B. SCAVENGER OR TREASURE HUNTS – WITH QUESTIONS / ASSIGNMENTS

...enabling users to do something active and be challenged by assignments to independently (alone or in groups) discover and learn more

### explanation

Written tour along various points of interest. At each point there is a short explanation and one or more questions / assignments.

### variations

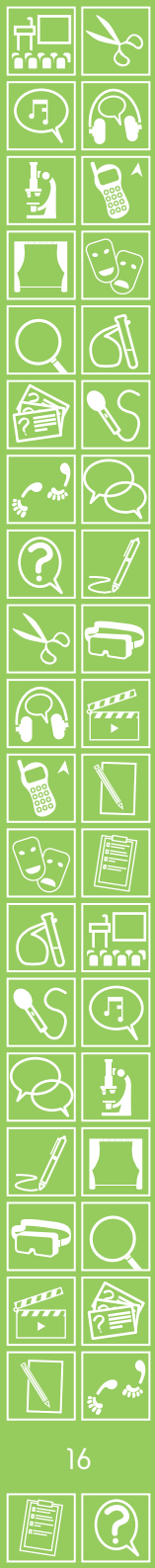
- Variation in the types of questions / assignments.
- Variation in the types of required answers to questions / assignments (open answers, drawing, ticking, adding, connecting, circling answers, photographing, etc.).

### possible target groups

Widely used in educational contexts with questions / assignments.

Children should be able to read, so not suitable for a younger audience.





## advantages

- The teacher sees exactly how it connects with the course material.
- Can see in advance if the level of the questions is good and what is being asked.
- The teacher can give a grade or mark if required.
- Possibility of discussing further at home or at school.

## disadvantages

- It's difficult to ask really good questions.
- Young people run from question to question.
- 'School-like' nature.
- Copying from each other / parents telling you what to say.

## when to use

- If guiding by a person is not possible for financial or other reasons.
- When visitors want to do something independently but are looking for some kind of structure.
- Can also be used in relatively large groups. If so, ensure that multiple starting points are possible.
- Good to combine with other methods.

## success factors

- Variation in questions.
- Variation in response format.
- Asking questions in a certain way so that you really need to see the object / building.
- Constructing questions to allow for the possibility of more depth.
- Testing is essential! See method 3a, and in addition:  
5) Are the questions clear? Varied enough?  
6) Do the questions achieve what you set out to achieve? Are the questions sufficient?
- Clear, inviting design.
- Availability of an answer sheet.
- Always discuss!
- Think about the distribution of pencils and clipboards.

## examples

- Earning letters by answering questions and thus cracking the code.
- Questions from two different perspectives (indicated in two colours / columns etc.) for example, from two different characters poor / rich, young / old etc. Half of the group follows the visit according to one perspective, the other half according to the other one. Then compare.

## 4. ACTIVITIES FROM A CENTRAL DISTRIBUTION POINT

...enabling users themselves to actively experience things and gain knowledge

### explanation

Visitors carry out short assignments, either alone or in small groups, which they receive from a supervisor at a central point. Whenever an assignment is completed, it is centrally approved and a new assignment is then received.

### variations

- An element of competition can be added

### possible target groups

Mainly used with children, either in or out of school.  
Works for primary schools once children are able to read.  
Can also be used for secondary schools (especially lower age groups).



## advantages

- Visitors are wholly active, which is often fun and exciting.
- Exert their own influence on the course of the visit.
- The energy lies with the students themselves (instead of with the museum docent, as is often the case with a tour).

## disadvantages

- ❑ Hectic, can lead to a rush to do as many assignments as possible which puts a strain on the learning outcomes.
- ❑ Requires employees at the central distribution point to keep a cool head.
- ❑ Pre-structured assignments that can't be adapted on the fly.
- ❑ No proper assessment of what each visitor is going to learn.

when to use

- In exhibitions where visitors can do a great deal for themselves. For example, science centres or installations with lots of things to do and multimedia.

## success factors

- Challenging assignments.
- Activities that maximise the use of the heritage setting.
- Relevant content.
- Variation in activities.
- Useful mini-reflection moments at the distribution point based on what the users have experienced and discovered.

## examples

- Example from Naturalis Biodiversity Center in Leiden: start with a guided tour for orientation, followed by the assignment-competition. Students receive their questions and hand in their answers every time at the activity table. The museum docent draws attention to what they are doing correctly. Students can choose from 3 levels of questions, allowing them to earn more or less points depending on the level they choose.
- In a disused military fort, children from the last two years of primary school can play an activity game during their visit. Each group goes on the hunt in the dark fortress with their assignment, map and hourglass. Once they have an answer, they return to the game leader and receive a 'payment' for every correct answer.
- The creation of an activity table by teacher-training students. For each assignment they give children a series of short, verbal instructions. After every activity, the pupils return to say what they've learnt, after which the students ask the children to draw conclusions.

## 5. FROM ACTIVITY TO DISCUSSION

...increased interest and insights from the independent execution of an assignment, where the outcomes are placed in a wider context with the help of a facilitator

### explanation

Combination of independent research and joint reflection in a controlled form of conversation. Participants develop under supervision to become an 'expert' in a certain aspect.

Each small group gets a different assignment to go and look at 'their' object(s) / location with the aim of finding things out and drawing conclusions.

Then the facilitator takes the whole group to each of the various items / locations. He / she asks the group of each location to talk about their findings. In this way, every group adds something different.

The facilitator then allows the participants to make links between the objects and the theme in the discussion.

### variations

- Assignments for the objects / locations are given verbally.
- Assignments are on paper.
- Degree of structuring for the requested feedback may differ per group.
- Possibly link to presenting practice, for example in another language or for new citizens learning a second language.
- The theme for the visit can be prepared in advance, but is not necessary.







## possible target groups

Formal and non-formal learning (e.g. during a course).  
For educational target groups, students must be able to work independently and report back, therefore in practice, particularly suitable for secondary students and for older primary school children.

## advantages

- Well suited to discovery learning.
- Visitors play an active role, they can directly influence the course of the visit.
- Through use of active techniques, it can leave a lasting impression.
- Optimal effect can be achieved through correct deployment of the objects / locations.
- Unconnected objects / places are brought together as a result of the connecting role of the facilitator.
- Preparation not always necessary.

## disadvantages

- Demands a certain amount of concentration from visitors.
- Reporting back on-site is a difficult skill for some.
- If group members do not listen to each other, transfer of information fails.

## when to use

- This method is particularly suitable for comparing objects / places, for example, a theme, a period, or an artist.
- Works well if cooperation is important.
- Works well for the higher age groups in secondary education, for dealing with independence and for the investigative role.

## success factors

- The supervisor is a good facilitator, creating a safe environment, stimulating visitors and making connections.
- The stronger the relationship between the 'mini-research' of the subgroups, the more successful the technique will be.
- For educational groups: relationship with teaching materials at school.

## examples

- Antique vase programme in a museum of antiquities, with each group studying vases from different cultures using specific questions based on looking, including the precise way in which humans are portrayed. During the joint walk afterwards, each group shows what they have discovered about their vase. Then, as a discussion, all vases are compared by aspects such as shape, material, colour, mode of production, representations, etc.
- International Exchanges (Secondary schools): school students who are guests and host-school students get mixed up in groups to work together.
- Students who are learning a foreign language use tangible heritage to increase their vocabulary. Through the assignment and then discussing their findings together, they practice conversation.

## 6. VISITORS GUIDING EACH OTHER

...visitors practice presenting to a certain level; they gain insights into one subject / object and thus become deeply involved

### explanation

Visitors prepare a mini-tour for an object / location alone or in groups.

After this, new groups are created with each of the members having prepared another object or location. All of the groups walk around all of the objects / places in this configuration with the 'expert' always leading the others.

If properly designed, all of the objects / places have a connection, so the stories of the different 'experts' will complement each other.

### variations

- Preparation in advance or preparation on-site.
- Preparatory materials on paper or via the internet (for example via e-learning / webquests).
- With or without supervision from the heritage organisation.
- Good to link to presentation practice. Presentations can be judged by the group leader or group members.
- Presenting can also be in another language or for foreign language lessons
- Collaborations are possible with, for example, libraries, archives, historical associations.
- Great for city walks.





## possible target groups

Formal and non-formal learning (e.g. a course).  
For educational target groups, students must be able to work independently and to guide themselves around. Therefore, in practice less suitable for young children.

Suitable for lower levels of Secondary school where students are often very visual thinkers.

## advantages

- Participants are heavily involved - the objects / locations really become 'theirs'.
- Well suited to discovery learning.
- Optimal effect can be achieved through correct deployment of the objects / locations.
- If done well, unconnected objects / places are brought together.
- Extremely memorable for the people who have taken part.
- Can be done independently by the group (without a museum docent).

## disadvantages

- Requires sufficient time.
- Concentration required, something that is not a given for every visitor.
- Doesn't work if the groups are too big and multiple visitors want to do the guiding for the same object. For example, if the teacher is not keen on dividing the group because then he is unable to keep an eye on all the students.

## when to use

- This method provides a good combination of knowledge acquisition, a way of increasing engagement and the development of skills such as researching, presenting, editing information into new formats and collaborating in groups.
- Appropriate for an in-depth visit, for example in the context of a theme or a project week.
- Very suitable for exchange programme between schools.

## success factors

- Good preparation materials based on visual thinking, i.e. on the basis of what can actually be seen. Connect this to background information.
- Requires good logistics! Dividing up groups, bringing them to the correct spots, reorganising the groups, rotation system for the groups. NB Supervision from the heritage organisation can help here.
- For educational groups: relationship with teaching materials at school.

## examples

- Project for Secondary school groups from the local museum in collaboration with the public library, with the theme of the city's main square. The museum selects appropriate paintings and objects, the library provides the background information. Throughout several lessons, students figure out information about 'their' object both at school and in the library. They receive instructions on how not to guide via a funny film.  
In the museum they first look at their 'own' object. After that, the groups are mixed up, so that there is an 'expert' in the group for each object and each expert gives his / her mini-tour.
- Programme for new citizens located in historic houses, in which speaking skills are practised based on the layout of the house with lots of utilitarian objects.
- Can be applied to school exchange programmes, where the students of the receiving school guide their guests (international exchanges can also occur in another language).

# 7. LEARNING BY DOING

...in-depth experiences and insight through self-discovery

## explanation

Actively experience themes covered by the heritage organisation for yourself.

## variations

- Integrated in the exhibition itself, for example in hands-on units.
- Can also be tried out in a small, casual way on a guided tour, allowing participants to touch or experiment with something.
- Mobile in the form of, for example, hands-on carts: carts with all kinds of things to do, such as objects to touch, dressing-up clothes, models to make, crafts, puzzles, etc.
- Making a large artwork with all visitors, a co-creation through the course of the exhibition period.
- In separate rooms or outside.

## possible target groups

Works in principle with all target groups, both for educational and non-educational groups, and also for individual visitors.

Widely used with (young) children.





- Experiencing for yourself creates a deeper form of insight and experience.
- Allows for more possibilities of identification.
- Not easily forgotten.
- Connects to ideas of the participatory museum.

- Often requires labour-intensive guidance (finishing, guiding, cleaning), which starts afresh with each new group.
- A large financial investment is often required to realise and maintain hands-on materials.

- To give an extra experience.
- Also suitable for children's parties and holiday activities.
- Learning by doing is a suitable means of creating greater understanding. There is a relationship with the method of creative processing, where the activity is an end in itself and the creative input of the visitor / user is central.

- Thematically relevant.
- Meaningful for the target group - not just 'occupational therapy'!
- If something is done with the experience and reflection takes place. Not just 'hands on', but 'minds on'!

- During a guided tour, feel for yourself how heavy a helmet, a knight's sword or a suit of armour is, how something smells, how much material is needed for a neck ruffle etc.
- First experience a guided tour in a gallery and afterwards have a chance to try out for yourself all the things that were behind glass, for example the operation of a steam engine and writing with a goose feather.
- Circuit about young people in 1900 where children rotate in small groups around 6 activities, such as doing the laundry, writing lines, grinding coffee, polishing copper, darning socks and stamping peat. A supervisor is present per activity.
- A race between the boys and the girls in the old sardine factory putting (plastic) sardines into cans: who are the fastest and how long did it take in the past? This is the inspiration for a discussion.
- A landscape survey in the context of the cultural-historical landscape with the aim of really understanding what land surveys are about and what value the landscape has.
- Workshop in historical hedging techniques for residents in a rural area aimed at reviving this craft.



## 8. PHOTOGRAPHY, DRAWING AND FILM ACTIVITIES

...by carefully looking and visually processing impressions, you come closer to the substance

### explanation

A supervisor gives a concrete assignment to draw, film or photograph certain things in the heritage organisation, with the aim of processing what is seen and experienced.

NB In this method, taking photos and making drawings / films is not an end in itself, but a means of processing (this is different to the technique 9. Creative processing).

### variations

- Photography.
- Drawing.
- Filming.
- Supplementation with a drawing / photo (a more contextualised assignment).
- Digital image processing.

### possible target groups

Most commonly used in education, can be used on many levels.

Also popular with adults, for example drawing in (art) museums.





## advantages

- Encourages better observation.
- Active format.
- Visual form (not through language), which serves visually-oriented people.
- Completed by the visitor, they can be themselves.
- The supervisor gets a surprising insight into the visitor's thinking through the photographed or sketched 'answers' and has a concrete framework for exchange and conversation.

## examples

- Photograph / draw your favourite item in the room (cliché ...).
- Several well-known art museums and galleries organise drawing campaigns, such as 'The Big Draw' or the Amsterdam Rijksmuseum campaign #startdrawing.
- Take a photo of an image that best suits you.... (something that is the subject of a visit).
- Find two objects that belong to each other / are the most different etc.
- Take a photograph of an artwork / object from an unexpected angle and let others guess what it is.
- Find the location where this old photo was taken and photograph what it looks like now.
- At a communication museum, students make films about ideal telephone behaviour.
- In the Dutch National Maritime Museum, students act as journalists gathering information for their own 'Golden Age News', which they then film with smartphones. In the end, groups view each other's news stories. At school these films can be used again or processed further.

## disadvantages

- Hassle with equipment / drawing tools.
- Some visitors need to get on track before they can really get started.
- How do you process the drawings / pictures / films on the spot?
- Not all museums / archives / monuments permit photography.
- Certain drawing materials cannot be used everywhere (risk of damage).

## when to use

- When a photo / film / drawing assignment, adds something to the experience of the heritage institution.
- To promote good observation.
- For relaxation (drawing in the museum).

## success factors

- When the content is relevant.
- Doing something with the pictures / films / drawings created, with, at the very least, some form of reflection about what visitors have been doing and how they experienced this.
- Well-arranged logistics (materials, setting up, cleaning, maintenance etc.) and keeping the technical side in order.

## 9. CREATIVE PROCESSING ...gain deeper experience by creatively processing acquired knowledge and impressions in your own way into something new

### explanation

Various forms of creative processing based on what is seen / experienced in an heritage organisation, such as making a story, poem, song, newspaper, poster, artwork, web page, film, play etc.

The goal is to create something new with what you've experienced. This is often linked to art education goals. NB If creating is not an end in itself, but only to report or to record what you have experienced, please see methods 8. and 17.

Studios are traditionally a well-known format in art museums.

### variations

- Making something yourself in the style of a particular artist.
- Making something using the same techniques.
- Making something about the same theme.
- During a museum visit / heritage experience.
- Afterwards in a separate space (workshop / atelier).
- Afterwards at home or in school.

### possible target groups

Works in principle with all target groups, both for educational and non-educational groups, but also for individual visitors.

Widely used with (young) children.





## advantages

- By having a go yourself and making something, the heritage theme becomes a part of yourself and creates a deeper sense of insight.
- Gives space to other types of talents not previously addressed in the visit.
- In education very suitable for cross-curricular work (combining school subjects).

## disadvantages

- Requires labour-intensive supervision (setting up, assistance, cleaning up), starting afresh with each new group.
- Suitable space is necessary for studios / ateliers.
- Dependent on learning style: some get started enthusiastically, whilst others freeze up when they have to be creative on demand.
- Not always possible for everyone to be creative in an environment that's not completely calm or feels strange.
- Do not expect pupils to make any great effort at the scene.
- It takes time.

## when to use

- To give room for expression and creativity.
- To provide the extra experience of an active component after the receptive part of a visit. Good to use with themes that are more complex / layered to promote a different sort of processing.
- Extra value is added if the student's processing can be re-used, for example in an exhibition at school, a presentation for parents, or through uploading to the museum's website / archive etc.
- A proven formula for holidays (children's ateliers) and children's parties.

## success factors

- Formulation of a sufficiently delineated and clear assignment.
- Organic relationship (content) with what is being said / displayed in the heritage organisation, so no loose threads.
- Meaningful for the group, rather than 'occupational therapy'.
- Make sure that as a visitor you know what you are doing and why. Build in reflection!

## examples

- First a tour of the gallery, then afterwards children draw / paint / work out etc. in workshops (classic formula).
- After-school craft time.
- Digital image editing inspired by the collection or location.
- Working with young children in the tradition of Reggio-Emilia, where children are seen as artists and scientists in the making. Creativity is their most important resource and also determines their learning process (see [http:// www. Randomfind.co.uk/](http://www.Randomfind.co.uk/)).
- Poetry competition in the museum to mark National Poetry Day.
- Based on oral history sources and a visit to the museum, students of the last two years in Primary school think about the noise that an old machine used to make. Which rhythms were associated with it? In doing so, they compose a rhythm piece and write accompanying lyrics about the working conditions of that time. Afterwards they listen to them all.
- Technical students record their own sounds to old film fragments from an historical association.



## 10. ASSOCIATIVE ACTIVITIES

...thinking freely about what you have seen on the basis of your own background; a longer lasting effect is achieved if personal connections can be made

### explanation

Visitors get something in their hands, e.g. photo cards, slogans / sayings or a newspaper article. On the basis of this stimulus, they are asked to make associations with what they see at the heritage site.

Can be an open association or scaffolded with a concrete question starter.

A conversation is created in which experiences are exchanged based on the associations of the visitors.

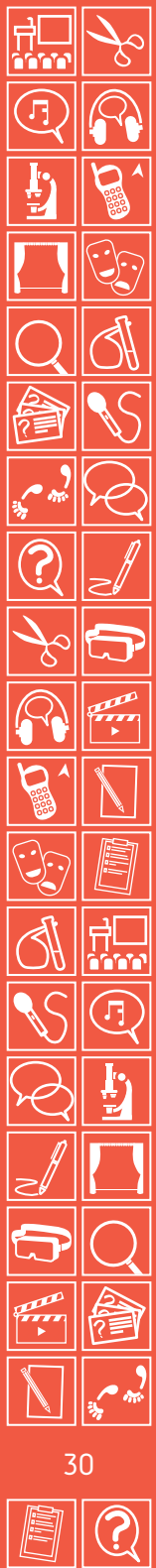
### variations

- ▢ Finding objects that best fit ....
- ▢ Which music fits best with work X?
- ▢ Or vice versa: which work fits best with this music?

### possible target groups

Possible with all target groups. Every visitor takes part at his own level.





## advantages

- Active and involved role of visitors: they determine their own associations and provide them themselves based on their own background and level.
- You can affect people directly in this way.
- Makes direct use of objects / areas.
- Flexible use.
- Relatively easy to incorporate.
- It is often surprising what people come up with.

## disadvantages

- Not all group members want to wait to hear the reflections of others.
- If everyone has his say, it can be a long process.
- It can go in any direction, which can cause confusion.

## examples

- Find a painting in the room that best suits the following saying X (could be on cards, each group of two/three takes one card). For example, what painting best fits the saying 'Clothes make the man'? After the selection has been made, there then follows a conversation about the paintings in the group.
- In the first part of the visit, visitors make descriptive associations that are then redistributed to the group in the second part with everyone on the lookout for a good match.
- Make associations from descriptions or poems that another class have made for certain objects.
- A card game where visitors take cards with general assignments that are not directly about the collection but rather encourage looking and reflecting. For example, find the ugliest object on this room, what kind of story does the title of the artwork suggest, what object do you find happy / angry / shy?

## when to use

- For variety in a guided tour.
- As a catalyst to get a conversation started.
- To actively engage visitors.
- When feelings play an important role.
- Can be a very open activity, but can also work as a closed assignment (certain sets of cards for certain set of objects, where one match is always right).

## success factors

- When the associations are open. Therefore, ensure that the activity is sufficiently open so that everyone can work with it. However, don't make it too open. The activity has to be appropriate so that associations can be made.
- A good facilitator who can make connections and summarise the associations.



# 11. VISITORS ASKING QUESTIONS THEMSELVES

...thinking about what you want to know stimulates active learning, fosters critical thinking and an inquiring mindset

## explanation

Here roles are reversed: visitors think of questions and pose them to the heritage organisation's facilitator.

He / she creates their programme on the spot and ensures that all questions are addressed.

## variations

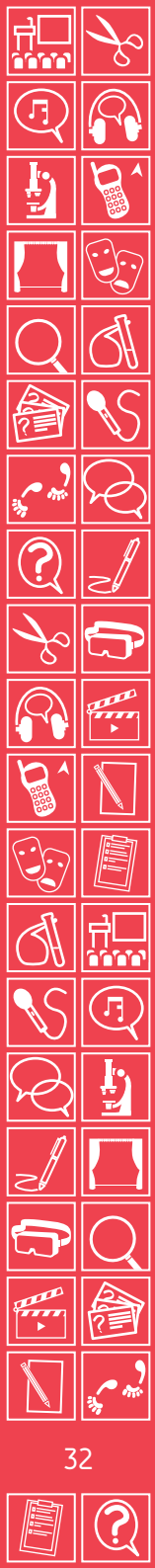
- Questions can be composed on the spot or in advance.
- Questions created in advance can be sent to the heritage institution in good time via Facebook / Internet.
- The tour guide can start with a short introduction and then give a specific task to think up some questions choosing whether or not to use a worksheet for structure.

## possible target groups

Can be used with almost all target groups from around 9 years and up.

Great for upper Secondary school students and beyond.





## advantages

- Visitors can directly influence the programme and the content is guaranteed to be of interest to them. This increases involvement.
- Asking questions is an important skill for students. This fits in well with critical thinking and discovery learning.
- Can be completely unprepared.

## disadvantages

- It may take a while before visitors get started asking questions.
- Requires a high quality facilitator: he / she must have a lot of knowledge, excellent improvisation and listening skills.
- The questions can be about anything, which can lead to a lack of coherence in the visit, and time wasted on things that are not as relevant (for example, questions about the shop or toilets).

## when to use

- During a familiarisation visit or a more recreational visit (where content plays a less important role).
- If there is enough focus on content, it is also suitable for other types of groups.
- You can combine this technique with a 'classic' guided tour to provide more variety and engagement.

## success factors

- A tour guide that can improvise and give the group the feeling that their questions have been taken seriously ('valued').
- Coherence in the visit is ideally required.
- Interesting, fun questions from the group.

## examples

- Visitors first look around and come up with one question about what they like most / most appeals, and one question about what most amazes them. The tour leader then takes this contribution as a train-of-thought for the visit.
- Visitors first ask questions about what there is to see. The facilitator collects the questions and divides them into small groups to find out the answers for themselves. Finally, the facilitator discusses the answers with the group as a whole.
- Event in art museums where young people are available for visitors to ask questions (peer education).

## 12. OBJECT ANALYSIS ...stimulates research skills

and provides deeper insight into the object, fosters curiosity about other objects

### explanation

Carefully studying of an object by means of an observation activity, e.g in the style of object registration.

For example, the completion of a (simple) inventory form.

### variations

- To supplement research through other sources (written sources, object registration system, documentation centre, internet, historical location).

### possible target groups

Suitable for educational groups, particularly the last two years of Primary school and for Secondary school students. For older students, it can quickly seem puerile unless you associate it with a research project or image analysis (assignment for cultural studies / art education).

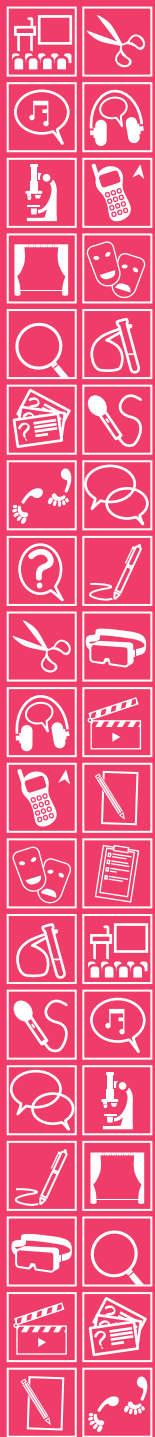
### advantages

- Improves viewing skills.
- Sharpens analytical ability.
- Stimulates a research mindset, provokes questions.
- Visitors work directly with heritage.
- Many students are amazed at how much can be discovered with one object.

### disadvantages

- Ask yourself what you want to accomplish with this, the point is not always obvious to the students and teachers (no observation just for observation's sake).





## when to use

- If learning-to-look or research is the learning goal.
- If the objects themselves are the main focus.
- Possible variation in a guided tour.
- Possibly as part of a viewing activity.
- As object research: as start of a broader research assignment combined with other types of sources (suitable for learning history).

## success factors

- If observation adds something contextually to the programme.
- When something is done with the observations themselves.
- When there is a thematic relationship between the various objects that have been observed

## examples

- Activity for upper Primary school students during a municipal school art day: on a well-designed registration sheet, students describe the badge or T-shirt that every participant has received today as the 'newest acquisition' for the city museum.
- Ask as many questions as possible about an object, who has the most questions?
- Write down 10 things that you see or notice. When you've finished, find 10 more things (from Visible Thinking).
- Then form the above observations into groups: which are about materials, shapes, size, condition, maker, function, or acquisition, etc.?
- In the context of a project about what a museum or archive is: describe an object and compare with the official description (see illustration for an example of an inventory card).
- In the context of research skills: after an observation assignment in the gallery, students find additional information about the object in the registration system.

**REGISTRATION CARD** **LEARNING FROM OBJECTS**

OWNED BY \_\_\_\_\_

HOW LONG HAVE YOU OWNED THE OBJECT?

SINCE \_\_\_\_\_

artist / maker: \_\_\_\_\_

material: \_\_\_\_\_

title: \_\_\_\_\_

age: \_\_\_\_\_

size: \_\_\_\_\_ width: \_\_\_\_\_

height: \_\_\_\_\_ depth: \_\_\_\_\_

description of your object: \_\_\_\_\_

is there any damage? \_\_\_\_\_

what makes this object special? \_\_\_\_\_

acquisition: purchase ☐ gift ☐ loan ☐

sketch of your object

value (in money): \_\_\_\_\_

Registration card for children, based on the English Heritage publication 'Learning from objects' from 1990

# 13. INTERVIEWS ...listen actively to others, to better shape your own opinions

## explanation

Visitors collect information for themselves by interviewing others. Often done in groups.

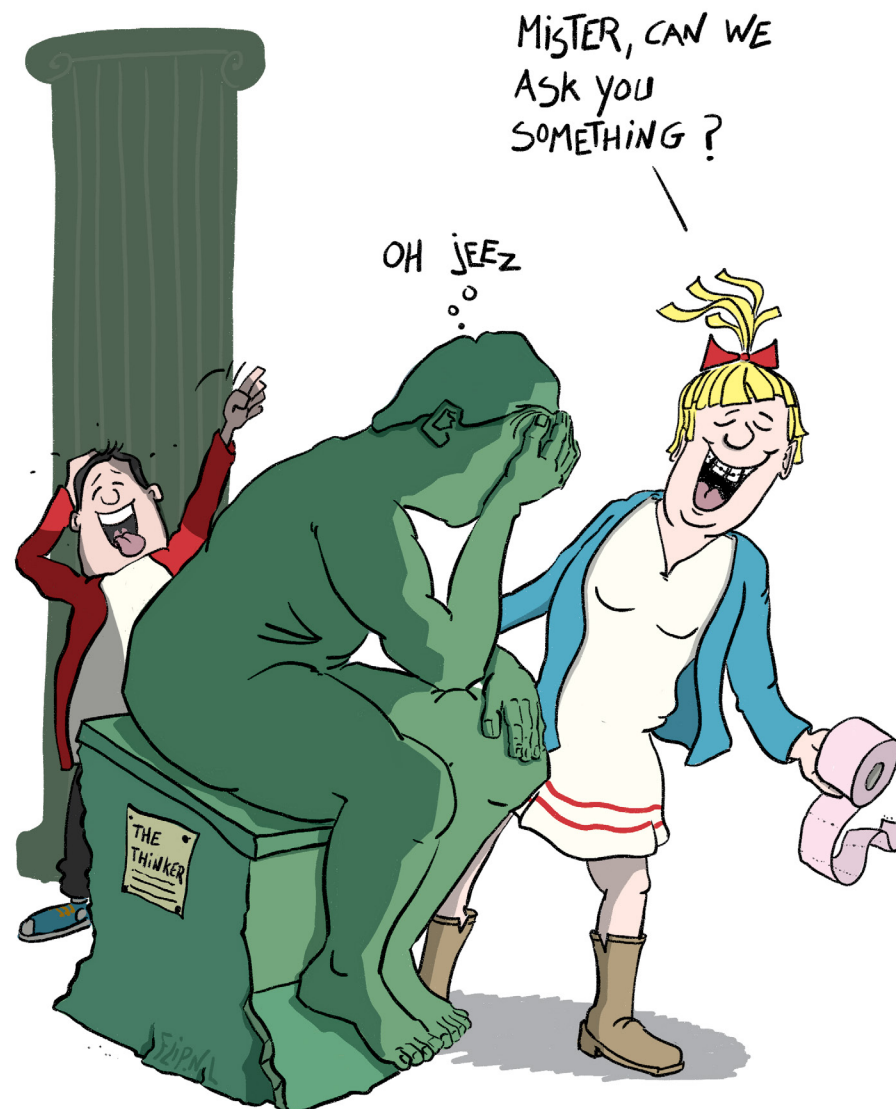
## variations

- Interviewing staff from the heritage organisation.
- Interviewing other visitors or bypassers.
- Foreign language interviews (e.g. during foreign travel, or interviewing tourists in your own country).
- Children first think about the questions they want to ask an artist or archaeologist, for example, and then the interview follows afterwards.

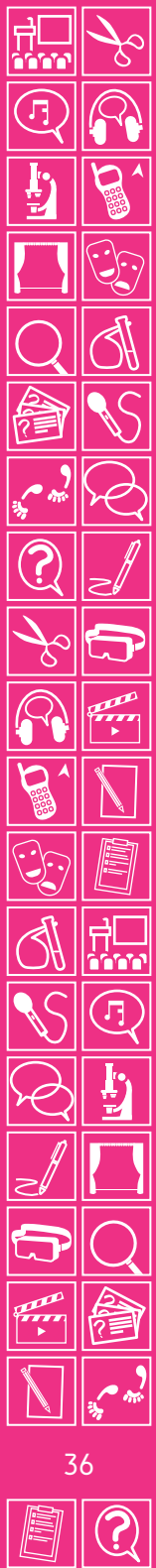
## possible target groups

For educational groups from 9 years and up.

Good for Secondary school groups (learning to research, collecting information).







## advantages

- Multiple skills are addressed (language, interview skills, information processing).
- Students work independently in their own way.
- Students gain experience with this method of research.

disadvantages

- ❑ Students need to cross a threshold which some may find disconcerting.
- ❑ Can go wrong if students are 'bothering people'.

## when to use

- As part of a research assignment.
- If collaboration is important.

## success factors

- Well-framed assignment.
- Well-prepared questions.
- 'Safe' environment for the students.
- When the content is relevant.
- Talking about it in advance in the heritage organisation so that colleagues are aware.
- Teacher tip: practice interviews in advance (questioning skills, but also approaches / politeness).
- Making sure that something actually happens with the interview results.

## examples

- Asking the same question to visitors in three different age categories (up to 25, 25-50, 50+) or from different areas / countries and then comparing the answers.
  - Street interviews with passers-by or residents, for example about changes in their city / village.
  - Old and young people go around the neighbourhood and interview each other about what they see there, what their experiences are and what has changed over time.
  - Students collect information in an open-air museum by interviewing employees, such as actors or the people who give demonstrations.
- Caution: make sure employees do not get too disturbed in their work or get annoyed by constantly answering the same questions.



...engaging visitors in stories and thus increasing emotional engagement

Telling stories and giving meaning to heritage.

- ❑ Reading out loud.
- ❑ As part of an interactive tour.
- ❑ Visitors finish the story for themselves: what would have happened next?
- ❑ Visitors write stories about a theme that fits in with the heritage organisation and the stories are then published (possibly as a competition).
- ❑ Theatrical storytelling (see: method 16. Theatre / improvisation / dance).

Often done with (younger) children, but a good narrator can engage with all ages.





## advantages

- Easy to execute in many places and situations and you can put your own spin on it as a narrator.
- Feels relatively safe to do because the narrator has no role to play.
- The storytelling itself costs nothing (but coming up with the stories takes time and money when the writing is outsourced).
- Can make a big impression that lasts a long time.
- Visitors remember things longer if they are attached to stories.
- Attention to intangible aspects of heritage (opinions, emotions, conflicts, etc.).

## examples

- Tell an exciting story that brings a place to life, such as life on board Dutch East India ships whilst sitting on board the 'Amsterdam', a replica of an 18th Century 'East Indiaman' in the Dutch National Maritime Museum.
- Read from a historical children's book about something that is relevant to the theme, or perhaps something that is actually happening at the heritage site.
- There are many good historical children's books. A children's author could also write a story for your location.
- Use stories in a pre-visit lesson at school as an entry to the theme and to stimulate curiosity and initiate insider knowledge.
- Collaborate with public libraries to promote reading.

## disadvantages

- Not everyone is a natural storyteller.
- Not everyone is a good listener, some calm and concentration is required.

## when to use

- To bring a situation to life and to feel the stories / emotions behind the heritage.
- When theatre is too ambitious.

## success factors

- A good story: not too long, with a good story arc, preferably with tension and / or a surprising twist.
- A good link with the theme of the heritage organisation; increasing engagement in the heritage so that it becomes more meaningful.
- With incentives to encourage looking so that visitors will really want to see things from the story afterwards.

# 15. RECITAL / LECTURE / PRESENTATION

...a coherent speech delivered in a familiar way for many visitors at the same time

## explanation

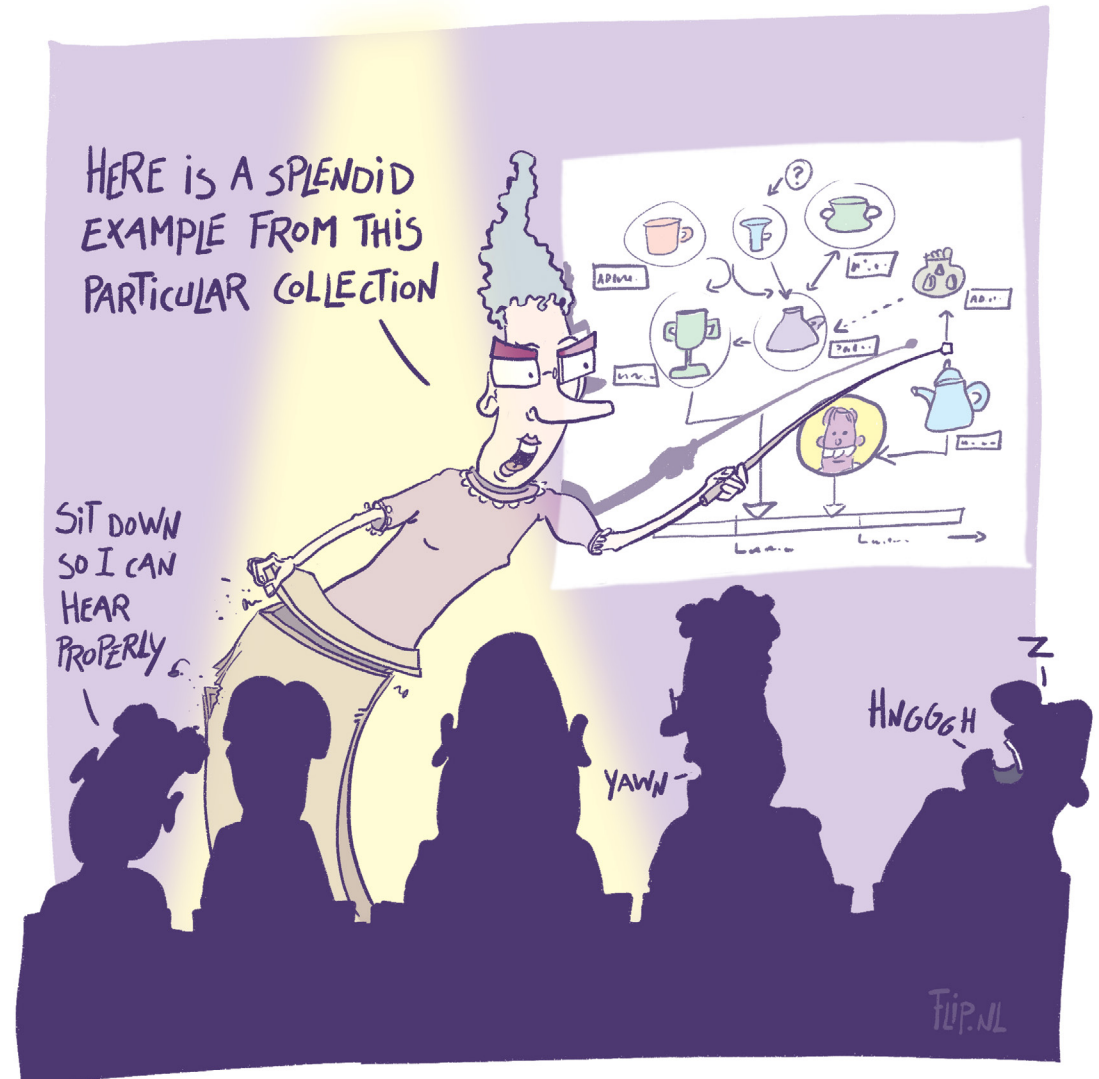
In a designated space visitors listen to a speaker telling a coherent story. May or may not be supported by visual materials (photos, films).

## variations

- Pure lecture / presentation.
- Introduction with time thereafter for questions / discussion.
- Introduction to an exhibition in which the exhibition's initiator introduces the theme and the backgrounds and gives the listeners hand-outs to get the most out of their visit. Afterwards visitors can see the exhibition independently.

## possible target groups

Usually aimed at interested parties. Popular with older audiences.  
Can also be used for children, for example in a special junior lecture series.





## advantages

- A lot of related information can be conveyed in a short time.
- A large group can be addressed simultaneously.
- Can enthuse and enrich.
- Visitors can sit down which promotes concentration.
- Is often picked up by the press and can then contribute to repeat publicity for an exhibition.

## disadvantages

- One-way traffic, can be static.
- Audience has a passive role.
- Many people find it hard to listen for a long period of time.
- Separate room is required.

## when to use

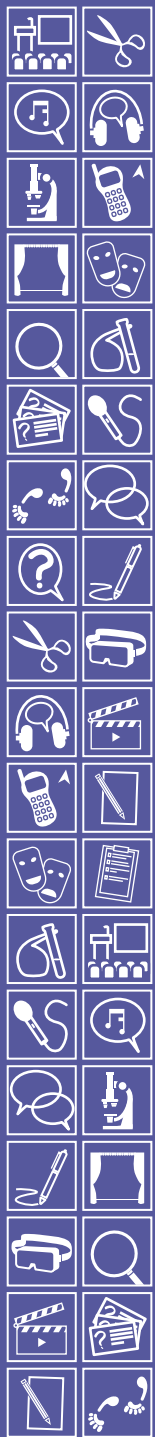
- To provide background information / greater depth.
- To share results of scientific research with public.
- As part of a meeting such as a conference, symposium or opening.
- If the number of visitors is too great to take part in a guided tour, a centralised introduction to a visit can work well.
- As above, if an exhibition is not particularly suitable for guided tours, for example, due to lots of AV elements or a tight space.

## success factors

- Appealing speaker, who stimulates his / her audience.
- Surprising twists in the argument.
- A sound system to ensure that everybody can listen in a relaxed fashion.
- Making good use of visual material that stimulates and supports the story.
- Above all, not too long.
- Place for an informal discussion area, in which one can talk about and process the information afterwards.

## examples

- Lecture series at a museum or archive. May or may not be linked to the theme of a temporary exhibition.
- Historical cafés organised on a monthly basis by many historical associations.
- Museum Academy for adults, adhering to the principle of lifelong learning.
- A collaboration between several university museums on a children's lecture series, e.g. a 'Museum Youth University'.



# 16. THEATRE / IMPROVISATION / DANCE

...intense heritage experience which stimulates the imagination and makes emotions apparent

## explanation

Various forms in which theatre is used to convey the message.

## variations

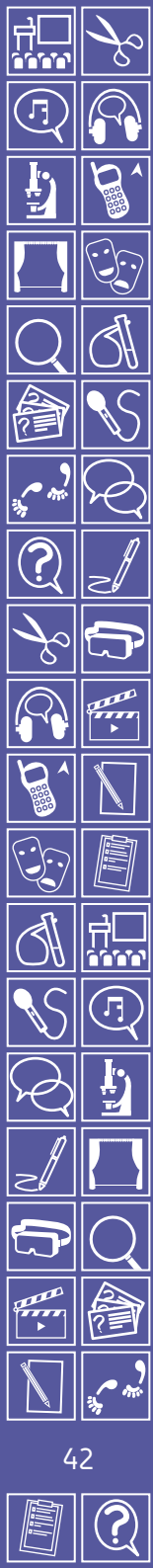
- (Part of a) theatre / dance performance.
- Dialogue between a museum docent and a hand puppet (character) who 'joins' the group (often for children).
- Living History in 1st person, in which the actor acts on the basis of the identity of a pictured person.
- Living history in 3rd person, whereby the actor talks about the person he is portraying without actually acting out the role.
- Role play: a very active role for visitors as they play a role.

## possible target groups

Can be used for all kinds of audiences.

For educational purposes, group visits or during a wide-ranging event.





## advantages

- Creates a large and long-lasting impression.
- In an active role-playing game, visitors are challenged to really immerse themselves in the role of the characters depicted.
- Attention to intangible aspects of heritage (opinions, emotions, conflicts, etc.).
- Small children are often a lot more spontaneous towards a theatrical character / puppet than they are towards an employee of the organisation.

## disadvantages

- Labour intensive.
- Expensive method, certainly if paid actors are used.
- Visitors can be cautious about taking part in an active role.
- 1st person living history can prevent a natural conversation between actor and visitor.
- A traditional theatre performance can put the visitor in passive mode.
- Can compromise the actual history (if performed incorrectly).

## when to use

- To bring situations to life and to create palpable stories / emotions behind the heritage.

## success factors

- Good actors, unforced drama.
- Relationship with heritage institution (content).
- Good entourage.
- Well incorporated into the visiting experience.

## examples

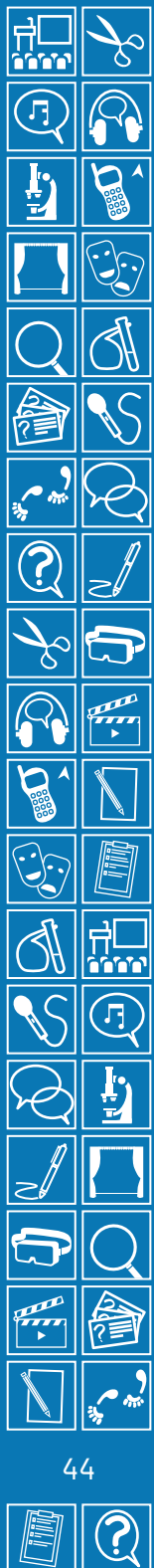
- Museum theatre.
- At the fragment of the Berlin wall in the 'Haus der Geschichte' in Bonn, Secondary school students role play an encounter between an East and West German during the fall of the wall in 1989.
- Museum teachers play the role of detectives solving a mystery with children in the museum.
- 'Cockroach' tour at the Science Museum in London: children dress up as cockroaches and follow the head cockroach (museum actor) through the museum, all experiences are from the cockroach's point of view.
- 'Staff Wanted' in historic houses: the museum docent plays the role of head of household (living history in 3rd person) and performs a story by him / herself. The 8 / 9 year olds 'apply' for the job and receive information about everything that needs to be done in the household by the servants and maids. With various active parts; concluding with students setting the table in the proper fashion.



...contemporary format for the transfer of information and experiences

Can be used for all audiences, both for individual and group visits. In practice, it is usually not used for younger children, because a degree of independence is required.





## advantages

- New medium which people are keen to try.
- Can call up information at the moment and location that you need it.
- Possible to offer information in small doses (with regular tours).
- Audiotours: looking and listening go well together.

## disadvantages

- Sensitivity to technical issues.
- Audio: often not very sociable.
- For many tours / games: patience is required, the duration of each component is determined by the content developer.
- There is scarcely room for personal input from the visitor.
- Large costs or time investment for handling: charging, issuing, returning, checking, repairs etc.
- Costs for purchase and maintenance.
- Large numbers required for use by school classes.
- Audio: listening is not always the best form of instruction for young people. They also want to be stimulated visually.
- Media with text and films can compete with the heritage objects themselves.

## when to use

- If the media aspect also adds something thematically.
- In the context of 21st century skills.
- Suitable for example on city walks and tours around buildings.

NB Numbers are often a practical limitation (difficult to do it together). It's useful for small groups or individual students when live guidance is not possible.

## success factors

- For group visits, good logistics are required (so that everyone is not in the same place).
- Content must be relevant.
- Technology has to work with (for example, network connections must work perfectly for Internet-based media).

## examples

- Download mp3 files and use them on mobile phones as an audio tour.
- Detective-like game with competition between groups and a centralised control centre (a central point that monitors progress and sends out follow-up missions in good time).
- Tablet tours for school classes with tailor-made assignments per group, managed by a museum docent via a centralised administration tablet.
- 'Restart' programme in the Dutch Open Air Museum, where the tablets do not provide contextual input, but are used to handle the logistics of the visit: the groups get regular instructions where they need to go, tailor-made per group. The tablets are also used to capture results, such as pictures, videos and answers. At the end, museum staff can quickly read the tablets and use the results directly in a discussion with the students as a whole group.
- Older students make an audio tour for students in lower classes.
- Weblog from a museum told from the perspective of someone who might have lived in the historic house, to show to a wider audience how the house was lived in.
- Database <http://www.diche-project.eu/resources>, with examples of the use of digital media, compiled in the framework of the Erasmus + project DICHE.

# 18. E-LEARNING / DISTANCE LEARNING

...a much greater reach through online contact, making distance irrelevant

## explanation

Collective term for all forms of learning via the internet, understood here as distance learning, where users do not actually have to go to the museum or other heritage site (unlike method 17. AV and digital media at heritage site).

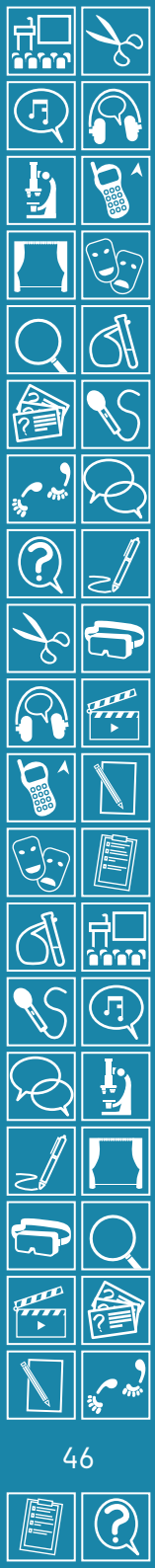
## variations

- Webquests.
- The digital environment of the heritage organisation, in which the user can find additional information, play games, answer questions, give feedback etc.
- Materials on electronic learning environments that schools use internally (such as Blackboard). Heritage organisations can prepare teaching modules for placement here by teachers.
- Digital environments that work with school smartboards.
- Virtual reconstructions.
- Museum lessons via an application such as Skype.

## possible target groups

A variety of target groups, including individual visitors. Appropriate for independent learning (from 10 years and up).





## advantages

- Can be used independently, actively and selectively.
- Different types of games can be motivating.
- Huge range of possibilities.
- Relatively easy to customise / update.
- Multiple target groups as people do not need to physically visit the heritage organisation. Suitable also for people who live far away or those with physical limitations.

## disadvantages

- Little insight into exact use by target groups, the 'learning outcome' is thus unclear.
- Labour intensive and costly to make.
- Users are not represented in the statistics via the traditional way of counting visitor numbers through entrance tickets.
- Difficult to position offerings as 'serious learning' - competition with real games.
- Not all (older) teachers are in favour - it makes them insecure.

## when to use

- To do research by yourself.
- To test findings (e.g. quiz).
- To cultivate 21st century skills (including digital skills).
- To (re-)imagine the heritage experience in a different way.
- In preparation for a visit (pre-visit).
- To process a visit (post-visit).
- To reach groups for which a physical visit is not an option (due to distance, physical limitations and the like).

## success factors

- Thematically-relevant content.
- Easy to find (promotion required).
- Matching the level to the level of the target audience.
- Clear assignments (not drowning on the world wide web ...).
- Maintenance / updating is well organised.
- Recording the number of users so that the results of these efforts are counted when reporting to stakeholders.

## examples

- Interactive lesson plans, may or may not have a protected web environment for the teacher and / or students.
- Assignments about digital resources, for example from the archives.
- Uploading the results of students own research. For example, they put their findings about certain heritage sites on the map through Google Maps.
- Walk through a 3D reconstruction of a medieval city online.
- Webquests where part of the solution must take place in the actual environment / in the museum / in the archive (combination using digital and a visit). For example, solving a (historical) murder.
- Classroom Videoconferences, with interactive museum lessons from a studio in the Smithsonian Museums, which schools across the U.S. can subscribe to (taking into account time zones).
- Online guest lecture from the Dinolab of Museum Naturalis in The Netherlands.
- Digital tear-off calendar from the Dutch Kröller-Müller Museum developed for digital blackboards. The application is a 'culture snack', which can be deployed at any time of the day outside of a museum visit.





# COLOPHON

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