

SMILE

NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM OF THE UNIVERSITY OF ZURICH

ZURICH

Learners will adore the huge woolly mammoth and be impressed by the bones, stuffed animals and fascinating world of animals!

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Level

A2 and up

Grades

Upper primary, lower secondary

Languages

English

Adaptations

These ideas can be used with any local natural history museum.

Curricular connections

Social studies

Museum website

<https://www.uzh.ch/en/explore/museums/natural-history-museum.html>

Before the museum

Delve into the topic

- Guess the skeletons: Start by having the learners guess animals by their skeletons (e.g. BBC's Spooky Skeletons Quiz or search for "guess the animal from its skeleton" for other sites). To do this, have the language "I think it's a..." or "Maybe it's a..." on the board and focus more on the guessing than on the names of the animals.

I think it's a....
Maybe it's a....?

- Create bones: For younger learners, bring salt dough or playdough for the students. Have some models of dinosaur skeletons around the classroom and have learners sculpt individual bones (e.g. skull, ribs, limbs) and then put them together to create a dinosaur. While the learners are working, play English music such as "I am a Paleontologist" by "They Might Be Giants. Afterwards, take some time for the learners to say what they have created with a speaking frame such as:

Here you see a [name of dinosaur].....

It livedyears ago!

This is / these are its [bones].

You can see....(it ate plants because....it ran fast because...)

- Play with animal names (in small groups): Students can first go to the website of the museum and list all the animals they find there onto pieces of paper to play the game. They can take turns acting like an animal without speaking, while others guess what it is. The focus here is for learners to guess by using the structures "Are you a....?". If the animal names are on post-its, they can also play "Who am I" by putting a random post-it on their forehead (they cannot see who they are) and use language such as "Do I have feathers?" "Am I bigger than a human?" "Do I live in the water?" to guess who they are. Another option is to play charades with full sentences, such as "A bear is eating some berries" or silly sentences such as "A bear is riding a unicycle" – make sure to have appropriate language support on the board so the focus is on the guessing and using the full sentences and not just on the animal names.

Museum Bingo Prep

The idea here is that when learners are AT the museum, they can play bingo! You can have the learners prepare these cards in advance, then mix them up and play at the museum.

List expected museum artifacts: Brainstorm items you might see at the museum, like “Dinosaur with sharp teeth”, “Animal with feathers”, or “Giant skeleton”. As support, give students a vocabulary list and clarify the words by paraphrasing, drawing, showing pictures or looking words up in a dictionary. For example, with the word ‘skull’, teachers can say “A skull is the hard, bony part of an animal’s head. It protects its brain. It’s like a “helmet” for the brain!” and show a picture.

Some useful words

- reptile
- feather
- horn
- scale
- insect
- bird
- bone
- fossil
- soft
- sharp
- skeleton
- teeth
- fish
- fur
- footprint
- skull

Create bingo cards: Write one item in each square on the grid. Leave space under what is written. Learners can create several of these cards and then the teacher should copy them to hand out randomly on the day of the museum visit.

Example:

Animal with feathers	Giant skeleton	Dinosaur with sharp teeth
A huge bone	Something that flies	Something that eats meat
A fossil	Something that still exists	A plant

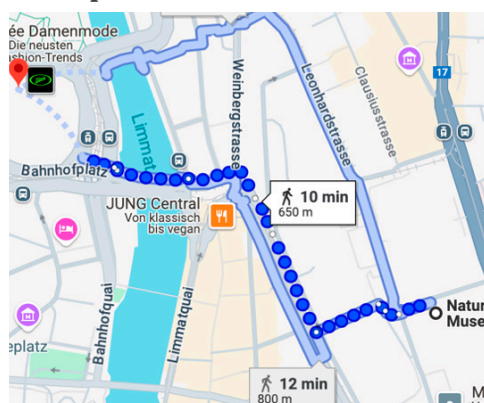
Map work

The students have to find the museum on the map and work out which is the best route from the school to the museum. They present their solutions with the correct directions.



Each group receives a map, and they have to decide which way they want to take as a class. The students first work in groups of four and then every group presents their ideas. At the end the best idea will be chosen by the students. The winning group then has to guide the other students to the right place on the day of the trip.

Example:



Here the students have found a good way to walk to the museum. They think about why they think it's a good route and why the whole class should take this route. They have to inform themselves where they walk by and where they have to be careful by using language such as "We have to cross the street by the station or perhaps we can use the underpass."

Helpful language:

- Let's pass by the ... because....
- It might be shorter to....
- First, then, after that....
- Cross (the bridge/street)...
- Go down the (underpass, street)....
- Take.....
- Turn left/right
- Continue straight on

The students then have to think about how they could ask someone for directions if they were to get lost. They write down sentences they might need.

Example:


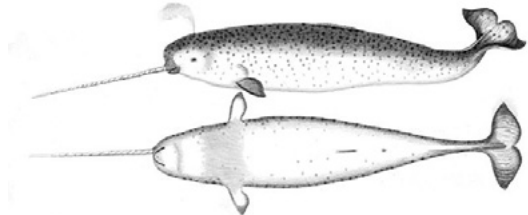
- "Excuse me! Can you help me! I am looking for the zoological museum at the University of Zurich."
- "Excuse me, I need to go to the zoological museum at the University of Zurich. I have a map here but I think I have lost my way. Can you show me where I have to go?"

At the museum

Museum Bingo

Now the learners have to search for the bingo items they described before. You can use this language “As you walk around the museum, try to find the bingo items. When you spot something that matches one of your bingo squares, add information to it. For each item, write the name of the animal or object you found in that square. Add a small drawing to help remember what it looked like! You can also add some information you find.”

Example:

Bird with grey feathers:	Fish with a horn:
<p data-bbox="421 958 560 992">Chickadee</p> 	<p data-bbox="1043 958 1161 992">Narwhal</p> 

Use these later in class for research and for comparing who found what.

Choose an animal to research

Each learner should individually choose one animal or fossil from the museum that interests them. At the museum they should spend time sketching out what they see there and taking notes in whatever language they want from the panel provided (if there is a description at the museum in English, they can copy that). They will use this later in the classroom.

After the museum

Animal/Dinosaur Research Project

For about one lesson, learners can spend time researching their selected animal further and can present their findings in fun formats, like:

- A poster with facts, drawings, and fun trivia
- A slideshow presentation using English sentences
- A creative video explaining their chosen creature

This can be used for a museum walk or short presentations whereby their classmates can take notes on each animal. Each student can create a quiz question that can be given to the teacher for a “test” later on after the presentations.

Museum Review Video

The following can be handed out to the learners to use and guide their own production and the texts below can be handed out for learners who are stuck and need support.

Example Review Text (Individual): (made by AI)

My visit to the museum was amazing! My favorite exhibit was the dinosaur skeletons, especially the *Tyrannosaurus rex*. It was so big and looked so real, I couldn't believe it. I learned that T. rex had very powerful jaws and could eat almost anything! I also learned about how fossils are formed, which was really interesting.

I also liked the stuffed animals, especially the lion. It was fascinating to see it up close and compare it to pictures I've seen in books. I didn't realize how big and strong it must be in real life.

I would definitely recommend this museum to anyone who loves animals or dinosaurs. The exhibits were fun and educational, and you can see so many cool things. I think it's a great place for kids and adults alike!

Example Review Dialogue (Pair Activity): (made by AI)

Person 1: Hey, did you enjoy the museum? What was your favorite part?

Person 2: Yes, I loved it! My favorite part was definitely the dinosaur skeletons, especially the *Tyrannosaurus rex*. It was huge! How about you?

Person 1: I liked the lion! The stuffed animal looked so real. It was much bigger than I expected. Did you learn anything interesting about dinosaurs?

Person 2: Yes! I learned that T. rex had very strong jaws, and it could eat almost anything. I didn't know that before. How about you?

Person 1: I learned how fossils are made. They take millions of years to form! It's amazing to think about how these animals lived so long ago.

Person 2: I agree! I think this museum is great for anyone interested in animals or dinosaurs. Would you recommend it?

Person 1: Definitely! I think it's fun and also really educational. It's perfect for a family trip.

Record a video about your museum visit! You can work alone or in pairs.

Step 1: Write Your Review

Before recording your video, write a short text about your visit to the museum.

Here are some questions to help you get started:

1. What was your favorite exhibit?
2. What did you learn about dinosaurs or animals?
3. Would you recommend this museum to others? Why or why not?

Let your teacher or another classmate correct your writing before you record.

You can also type it into the computer and use a correction tool.

Step 2: Practice Reading Your Text

Once you have written your review, practice reading it out loud. Focus on:

- Speaking clearly and at a steady pace!
- Feeling confident and natural while speaking!
- Memorize your text so you don't read from your paper!

Step 3: Record Your Video

When you're ready, film your review. Keep the video between 1-2 minutes long.

- Tip: You can film by yourself or with a partner. If you are working in pairs, take turns reading parts of the review or presenting together!
- Try to be creative! You can include photos or video clips from the museum if you took any. Make sure to show your enthusiasm and excitement about what you saw!

Step 4: Watch the Reviews in Class

After everyone has recorded their videos, we will watch the reviews as a class.

You can learn from each other's experiences and see what others found interesting in the museum!

This product can well be used for assessment of speaking and writing and learners can be asked to represent what they learned here a few weeks later to see that the language has been uptaken.

Write a summary of the trip

The students write a short essay reflecting on the field trip. They write about how the journey went and how they were guided by the group with the map. They write about what they saw in the museum and what fascinated them. They should also think about what could be improved and how they would have found the field trip more successful. Then they write about what they have learned.

Example (AI):

Today we went to the Zoological Museum at the University of Zurich. It was really exciting! First of all, we saw lots of stuffed animals that I had only seen in books before. I was most impressed by the huge whale hanging from the ceiling. The teacher explained to us that whales are mammals, even though they live in the water. I found that totally amazing because they don't look like other mammals.

Then we learned something about evolution. There was a skeleton of a dinosaur and also an ape. Our guide told us how animals have changed over the course of time so that they can survive better. I learned that humans and apes have common ancestors. I found that a bit funny, but also interesting.

I liked the room with the insects best. There were butterflies in all colors, huge beetles and even a scorpion. Did you know that ants "talk" to each other by leaving scent trails? That's what I learned today!

At the end we were allowed to do a quiz. I found out that the cheetah is the fastest land animal and that sloths can sleep up to 20 hours a day. I really enjoyed the trip because I learned so many new things about animals. I want to go to the museum again soon, maybe with my family.

It was a really exciting day!