

Introduction, Transitions, and Conclusion

An introduction, transitions, content (scaffolded information and inquiry), and a conclusion are the structural elements of all tours. A clear and welcoming introduction, strong transitions, and a thoughtful conclusion make any tour more cohesive and help facilitate learning.

Introduction

An introduction welcomes visitors to the museum and establishes the theme of the tour. It also provides an opportunity to clearly introduce tour expectations.

First impressions count a great deal. Visitors sense if you are friendly and accessible from your words, facial expressions, and body language. The introduction is best received if the group is seated in a quieter area where everyone can see and hear you. Introduce yourself and welcome the group to the museum.

Schools are asked to have nametags for students. If the nametags are legible, address the students by their names. If you are unsure on the pronunciation of a name, ask the student how to pronounce it. Using names at the start of your tour helps you develop rapport with the group and drive more engagement during the tour. Avoid using the terms “boys and girls” in addressing the group. As we become a more gender-fluid culture, we are using more inclusive and non-binary terms, such as “students,” “you all,” or “second-graders.”

Before diving into your first object, review all necessary rules. Inquiry is often a good way to introduce the expectations for the tour; for example, “What do you think are some good rules for visiting the museum?” Framing the rules as “dos” rather than “don’ts” is a positive way to share expectations, such as, “Do walk, do stay with the group, do use indoor voices, and do stay a foot away from the art.” Wrapping up with *why* the rules are important in protecting the art and the people is a great way to stress their importance.

The introduction is also your opportunity to acknowledge and thank the chaperones and briefly explain their role. Ask for help in keeping the group together, walking safely through the galleries and staying a foot away from the art. This is the students’ and chaperones’ time for enjoying the museum, so ask for all to turn off their phones. If chaperones have any questions, refer them to the guidelines on the back of their chaperone tag.

Finally, review the theme as it is the link that connects all the objects on the tour. Asking questions about the theme is a great way to review what the students learned in the classroom and will help you facilitate your discussion based on what they remember.

Transitions

Transitions are 1- to 2- sentence bridges between object stops on your tour. They link objects and ideas and reinforce the theme of the tour. Transitions provide an opportunity to

clarify, emphasize, and/or embellish ideas. Transitions can be presented in the form of a question, activity, or statement in order to move your group towards the next stop on the tour. Transitions are often based on similar or contrasting ideas. Moving from the Tang horse to the Benin leopard in the theme Amazing Animals, you might say, “Together we discovered the many ways in which horses in China are considered amazing, now let’s travel to Africa to see what discoveries we can make about another amazing animal.” Comments from participants can be a great source for transitions if you are open to these opportunities, “You came up with some amazing reasons why horses are important to humans in both work and play. Now let’s go see how another amazing animal plays an important role for a king.”

Conclusion

A tour conclusion briefly sums up the purpose and theme of a tour. “Today we looked at art about animals from all over the world – all of them amazing. We discovered that no matter where you live, animals play an important part in the lives of humans.” A conclusion can serve to review what has been learned through close looking and shared interpretation and encourage participants to return. Students often enjoy reflecting on their favorite objects. Thank the group for visiting Mia and invite them back. Handing out Family Day cards is a great way to do this. It is recommended that you give the cards to the chaperones to distribute at the end of the tour. To encourage feedback on tours, also hand out a K-12 School Tour Feedback form to one of the adults.

Working with the Theme

One of ten Art Adventure tour themes will be indicated on your tour confirmation. Before you begin to organize your tour:

1. Review the general objectives of the theme in the Art Adventure booklet.
2. Take into consideration the grade level of your group and design your tour to meet their interest and needs. An Amazing Animals tour should engage students in searching for a variety of animals and explore what makes those animals amazing. This can be presented on various levels of complexity depending on the age and comprehension of your group.

As you develop your tour, sub-themes may present themselves – animals as pets vs. animals that live in the wild. Including additional objects can enhance the interest of your tour as long as the focus of your Art Adventure theme remains clear.