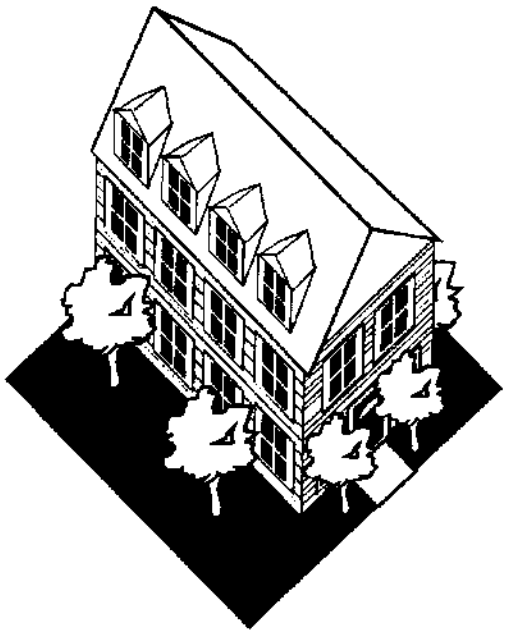
BEHIND THE SCENES TOUR OF A MUSEUM



CFE 3217V

OPEN-CAPTIONED
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Grade Levels: 6-10
17 minutes

DESCRIPTION

What are museums? What are some kinds of museums? What do they do? There are art, history, and science and industry museums made of collections of things that link us to the past and offer a glance into the future. Discusses acquisition, care and restoration, exhibits, and the importance of museums both in history and in lifelong education.

INSTRUCTIONAL GOALS

- To describe the three main categories of museums.
- To describe the role museums have in society.
- To identify some of the key personnel at museums.
- To depict how exhibits and displays are conceived and constructed.

BEFORE SHOWING

1. Preview the video to determine unfamiliar vocabulary and language concepts.
2. List a variety of museums in each viewer's city. Identify type and function of each museum.
3. Describe a favorite museum.
    a. Identify what makes the museum special.
    b. Create a list of improvements that could be made in that museum.

DURING SHOWING

1. View the video more than once, with one showing uninterrupted.
2. Pause after the section on history museums.
    a. Compare the living-history type of displays with those housed behind glass.
    b. Discuss which type of display is more interesting.
3. Pause after the science and technology segment.

a. Describe why companies or corporations play such a large role in science museums.
b. Describe how hands-on experiences in these museums help visitors learn new information.

4. Pause after the segment on museum loans. Ask for examples of famous collections loaned as traveling museums.

AFTER SHOWING

Discussion Items and Questions

1. Review the fact that museums are collections of things.
   a. Using one poster board for each, list the area museums and identify the type and function of each museum.
   b. Draw and display a variety of objects that might be found in each museum.
2. Generate a list of other objects which might be displayed in a science and technology museum. List corporate sponsors who might fund the displays.
3. Describe what museum workers do with all the items or objects which the visitors do not see.
   a. Identify how these objects are collected.
   b. Review how these objects are stored.
4. Describe the two methods used in the video to show how birds can be cleaned in a museum.
5. Identify the factors important to environmental control which will affect museum objects. Explain how these factors affects each.
6. Discuss the role behind-the-scenes restoration plays in museums. Give examples of artifacts which might need restoration.
7. Explain why large exhibits must be planned years in advance. Include ideas related to design, cost, materials, and labor.
8. List advantages and disadvantages of establishing hands-on displays in museums.

Applications and Activities

1. Using the Internet, review museum sites which use dioramas for display. Identify an area of interest and then create a diorama to depict this.
2. Create masks of recently studied characters in literature.
    a. Make face casts to be painted and displayed in a classroom museum.
    b. Write a biographical sketch to be displayed with each mask.
3. Research museums in an encyclopedia. Using encyclopedias and information from the video:
    a. Draw a time line depicting the history of museums around the world. Add labels and short descriptors to the time line.
    b. Describe the variety of careers associated with a museum. Identify the duties and responsibilities for each job.
4. Create a classroom museum using interesting objects found in and around the school. Train classroom docents.
5. Research taxidermy and describe how animals are preserved for display.
    a. Invite a taxidermist to the class to discuss the process of taxidermy.
    b. Through discussions with the taxidermist, identify other organizations which might need these services.
6. Write to the Smithsonian Institution requesting brochures describing their various museums.
7. Visit a local museum featuring living-history displays.
8. Construct shadow box displays depicting a diorama of a realistic life situation.
9. Visit the school's museum, if one exists. Interview the curator or person responsible for managing the museum. Share the information in a class newsletter.

10. Research information in the public library or on the Internet on the King Tutankhamen traveling museum collection.

COMMUNICATION SKILLS

1. Practice new vocabulary using all appropriate modes of communication.
2. Identify possible museum careers for a person who is deaf or hard of hearing. Describe modifications, if any, which would need to be made.
3. Interview the curator of a museum.
    a. Determine required training for the variety of museum careers.
    b. Research where that training might be obtained.

WEBSITES

Explore the Internet to discover sites related to this topic. Check the CFV website for related information (http://www.cfv.org).

CAPTION SCRIPT

Following are the captions as they appear on the video. Teachers are encouraged to read the script prior to viewing the video for pertinent vocabulary, to discover language patterns within the captions, or to determine content for introduction or review. Enlarged copies may be given to students as a language exercise.

(male narrator)
Wouldn't it be great to be able
to travel through time?

To unlock the mysteries
of the past,

or to explore the possibilities
of the future?

To see how things were
and how they may be?

To see how the earth
has changed

over its four-billion-year
existence;

to see the plants and animals
that have come and gone;

to see how this planet and
its inhabitants have evolved?

Hello. My name is
Rolf Johnson.

I'm the director
of the Science Media Center

at the Milwaukee
Public Museum.

I'm here to tell you
that it is possible

to travel through time.

Thousands of people
a day do that

in places like this--
in museums.

(Johnson)
Museums are collections--

things to help us understand
the past and the future--

collections that are valuable

because of how
they can open our eyes

to what has come before
and what may lie ahead.

Museums are organized to protect
and showcase artifacts.

Art museums or institutes
contain paintings, sculptures,

and other kinds of artwork.

The artwork is protected
and preserved

so the collection can be enjoyed
by generations to come.

History museums show
what the past was like.

They may include famous
documents, furniture,

tools, and other materials
from the past.

Many communities have
historical societies

that operate a museum
that shows the area's history.

Historic houses and villages
re-create

how life was for people

during a certain period
of time.

Buildings may be restored
or reconstructed

to display
how the community looked.

People may dress up in costumes

and act as if they were living
during a certain time.

This can be a portrayal
of how life may have been,

as daily activities
are illustrated.

People demonstrate
everything from woodworking

to cooking.

Many historic villages
have talented individuals

who learn specific skills that
they demonstrate to the public.

Science and technology museums

include displays
on science and technology.

Some exhibits in such museums
are sponsored by corporations

to explain how equipment
or a certain technology works.

Actual working versions
of equipment may be on display.

Here is a display
of how robotics can be used

to build a customized
circuit board.

It is at the Motorola Museum
of Electronics,

one of the finest
corporate museums in the world.

It traces the history
of an important company,

and because that company closely
follows advances in electronics,

it's a wonderful place to learn
about that technology.

At this museum,

hands-on experiences are part
of every visit.

Computer interactive stations
respond to the touch

instead of a keyboard.

Volunteers conduct
demonstrations to small groups

to help the public understand

how electronics have changed
over the years.

Here is the Sonoran Desert
Museum of Arizona.

It showcases the plants
and the animals of the desert.

Cactus, prairie dogs,

snakes, and lizards
are all part of this museum.

The curators take care
of the plants and animals

to ensure their survival.

Are zoos museums?

Well, a museum is a collection
of objects and artifacts.

Because a zoo is
a collection of animals,

it could be considered
a museum of living things.

Veterinarians and zoologists
care for the animals.

Proper diets and room for each
species is part of their work.

Something as simple
as a bath for the elephants

is a necessary responsibility to
ensure the animals' good health.

Most zoos strive to duplicate
natural habitat surroundings

so that the animals
feel comfortable.

A museum of natural
and human history,

such as
the Milwaukee Public Museum,

houses a wide variety
of collections and specimens.

Subjects range
from the geology of the earth

millions of years ago

to the rain forests found
around the earth today.

However, museums are not
just exhibit halls

or places to view displays.

It is true that this plays
a major role in a museum,

but there is more
to what museums do.

Museums are responsible
for acquiring new materials

and preserving those materials

so that they can be studied
by generations to come.

New objects to a museum's
collection might be donated

by people who collect
such things.

Other times the museum will buy
something needed for an exhibit.

Many museums
sponsor expeditions

to unusual places
around the world

in search of new materials,

specimens,
and scientific information.

An important role museums play
is research and study.

Museums loan specimens

to researchers and scientists
throughout the world.

They provide researchers
with materials

from their collections.

Also, laboratories and libraries
are housed in the museum,

and they're made available
to the researchers.

Museum collections
at large facilities,

such as
the Milwaukee Public Museum,

can be enormous.

When you visit,

you are viewing only a fraction
of the collection.

The curators decide which pieces
will be displayed and how.

The rest of the collection
is cataloged

and kept in protective storage.

When specimens are received,
they are given a catalog number

and then cleaned and preserved.

This might mean
putting a specimen

in the dermestid beetle aquarium

so that the beetles
can feed on a specimen

and remove everything
so just the skeleton remains.

The beetles do a better job
cleaning the skeletons

than humans could do.

Other specimens,
like birds and mammal skins,

are treated
with arsenic or borax

to keep destructive insects
away.

Specimens are kept in cabinets
that are often sealed

against outside influences
like light or humidity.

Though visitors see thousands
of specimens on exhibit

on the main floors
of the museum,

the complete collection
is stored behind the scenes

in areas that are off-limits
to the public.

It is back here where displays
are planned, designed,

constructed, and assembled.

It is back here where most
of the work takes place.

Specimens and artifacts
are received,

cataloged,

examined, and evaluated.

Decisions are made
about repairing and cleaning.

Then consideration is given

to how the object
is to be stored or exhibited.

The environment for storage
or exhibition must be considered

to ensure that the object
is protected and preserved.

Temperature and humidity

are also important
to maintaining an object.

The storage areas
and the exhibit floors

are usually
environmentally controlled.

Light can also damage
artifacts,

so galleries
are often dimly lit.

Sometimes artifacts
may be severely damaged,

and they have to be restored.

Conservators are talented
and skilled scientists

who carefully return an item

to nearly its original
condition.

This may require repairing
cracks, dents,

scrapes, and missing parts.

Curators and conservators work
to clean and preserve specimens

and to provide a protected
environment for their storage.

Museum laboratories,
studios, and workrooms

are often abuzz with activity

as displays are constructed
from the ground up.

Large exhibits must be planned
years in advance

because of the amount of work
required to get ready.

Many displays are kept
inside a case of wood and glass.

These cases provide protection
from theft

and keep the contents
free of dirt and dust.

One very important
responsibility of museums is

to keep specimens
in the best possible condition.

Exhibits have changed
over the years.

At first, specimens were
displayed inside closed cabinets

arranged along long halls
called galleries.

Exhibits are often organized
to tell a story.

These displays are called
"dioramas."

Dioramas are exhibits depicting
humans or animals

in a realistic life situation.

The first habitat diorama
was constructed at the Public
Museum in Milwaukee in 1890.

Instead of just displaying
a muskrat sitting on a log,

a realistic scene was designed

to simulate the actual habitat
of the animal.

This display included grasses
and a muskrat hut.

Then the surrounding walls
of the display were painted

to create the illusion that
this was an actual outdoor scene

frozen in time.

The Milwaukee Public Museum
has continued this tradition

of outstanding exhibits
right into the present.

This museum has received
worldwide recognition

for creative
and revolutionary exhibits.

Many of the displays offer
video components

with two or three different
short presentations

to describe things
in greater detail

or to show how specimens
were collected

or how the display
was constructed.

This exhibit of a Tyrannosaurus
rex *feeding upon a* Triceratops

includes special lighting,
sound effects,

and a very realistic
environment.

Visitors can move
to different places

to see the scene
from different perspectives.

One view is even from above.

These Indian mannequins
are so realistic

because they were made
from casts of real people.

Everything is life-size
in these exhibits.

There are other exhibits
that are miniatures

and show a story or give
an overview of a large area.

Exhibits require the work
of many people.

Researchers find out about the
subject matter of the exhibit.

Specimens are selected.

Sketches and designs are
created to plan the exhibit.

Artists paint backgrounds,

reconstruct objects,

build display cases,

and decide on the lighting and
special effects for the exhibit.

Specimens in an exhibit
are labeled,

and often an explanation of
the entire display is provided.

An effort has been made
at many museums

to involve the visitors
as much as possible.

Here is the Curiosity Zone
of the Milwaukee Public Museum,

where children can explore
a variety of things

through touch
as well as sight.

Everyone is encouraged
to examine the objects up close

and to actually touch the items
that at one time

may have been locked
behind glass display cases.

What an exciting opportunity
when a future paleontologist

holds a real dinosaur skull
for the first time!

Museums are full of excitement
and offer chances

to broaden a person's interest
and understanding

of the world around them.

The word "museum" comes
from the Greek language.

The word "mouseion" was given
to the temple of the Muses,

the Greek goddesses
of art and science.

The first museum was located
in Alexandria, Egypt,

in 200 B.C.

It was a place for research

and contained a fine library.

In the 1400s and 1500s,

Europeans kept objects brought

from North and South America

and from the Far East.

In the late 1800s
and early 1900s,

more museums were established
than ever before.

There has been an increase
in educational programs

and hands-on learning
opportunities.

The tie between schools
and museums is strong,

as most museums offer
instruction and tours.

Museums believe
in lifelong learning.

They offer tours,
workshops,

and courses
for people of all ages,

from preschool
to senior citizens.

The museum of today is

a vital educational
center for communities.

The museums of the world
are our link to the past

as well as a showcase
to the future.

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