

The British Museum: have a look inside

Description

- A sequence of 15 slides which introduces students to the British Museum.

Teaching ideas

- The presentation can be used on a whiteboard with the whole class or could be followed by individual students or groups.
- The presentation can be printed out for students to work with individually.
- The presentation can be downloaded and slide vocabulary amended to meet the particular needs of the students.
- Students can be asked to look for the person guiding them through the presentation as each new image appears.
- Students can reflect on how they might feel in different parts of the Museum, taking a cue from the body language of the person guiding the presentation, e.g. feeling squashed when the Museum is busy, feeling puzzled when looking at a mysterious object, feeling relaxed eating lunch, feeling excited going in through the front door.

Notes on the pictures

All slides: all photographs are taken onsite at the British Museum and show public areas which you and the students might use as part of a visit to the Museum.

- **Hello. This is Katharine.**

Introduction to the person who will lead the students through the presentation. She will be wearing the same clothes in each image and students can be asked to see if they can spot her as each new image appears. The information on each slide is written in the third person.

- **Katharine works at the British Museum.**

Katharine works at the British Museum. She teaches some of the school groups who visit the Museum and helps to organise some of the events for families who visit the British Museum. This image shows Katharine standing in the forecourt of the Museum which is the main entrance to the Museum building. If you are arriving by minibus, this is the area where the minibus can park while you are in the museum. Can the students spot Katharine? This image also introduces the idea that there will be lots of other people visiting the Museum at the same time as your group. The Museum is very popular and over 5 million people visit it each year.

- **Come and have a look inside.**

Katharine invites the pupils through the front door of the Museum. This area of the Museum is called the Colonnade and is behind all the tall columns which stand at the top of the main Museum steps. Your group may have come up these steps or you may have used the access lift from the

forecourt level. Everybody comes in through the same glass doors. Can the students spot the face of a lion decorating the outer wooden door which is folded back out of the way?

- **The British Museum is big.**

The British Museum is a big building. This image shows Katharine in the Great Court which is a huge space right in the middle of the Museum. Katharine is standing in front of a big flight of stairs which go up to the Upper floor. The Museum has over 50 public rooms where people can look at some of the objects from the Museum collection. The rest of the objects are locked away in storerooms to keep them safe.

- **The British Museum is busy.**

Lots of people visit the Museum. Some of the galleries can be very crowded with lots of people trying to look at the things. Can the students spot Katharine standing with all the people looking at one of the things in the Museum? At the Museum the students will see women, men and children. People come to visit the Museum from all over the world so the students will hear many different languages being spoken.

- **The British Museum has lots of things.**

The Museum word for 'thing' is 'object' or 'artefact'. You and your group can use whatever word suits you best. The Museum has millions of objects from all over the world. Some of them are very new while others are thousands, or even millions, of years old. The Museum started in AD 1753 and has been collecting and displaying objects for over 250 years.

- **You can look at the things.**

You may like to explain to the students that most of the Museum objects are in glass cases, like this one. The glass case keeps the object safe. Some of the bigger objects are not in glass cases, but the Museum asks the visitors not to touch them – just look. Touching an object can damage the object. Some objects are very fragile and the British Museum has over 5 million visitors which means a lot of hands! Touching an object leaves small traces of dirt, moisture and skin acid on the surface of the object which can cause damage, especially if it builds up over time. You may want to explain to your students about the 'Don't touch' rule which applies in most museums. You could hand round a piece of white paper or fabric and look at the effect of it being passed from hand to hand – crumples, tears, marks etc.

- **Some things are big.**

Relative to themselves, some of the objects are very large and larger than life size. Compare the size of Katharine's face to the size of the statue's face.

- **Some things are small.**

Relative to themselves, some of the objects are very small and smaller than life size. Compare the size of Katharine's face to the size of the faces in the glass case.

- **Some things are familiar.**

The students will see some objects in the Museum which they recognise. In this image Katharine is pointing at her watch while she stands in front of a case of clocks – all objects which help us to tell the time. You will also see familiar objects such as cups, plates and spoons. There are also statues of people and animals.

- **Some things are mysterious.**

Some of the objects on display will be new to the students. Katharine is looking rather puzzled as she stands in front of this object. What is it? Each object will have a label nearby which tells you what the object is, where it comes from and how old it is. The object in this image is on display in the Medieval Europe gallery. It is a shield which would have been carried in parades (it is not strong enough to use in a battle). It comes from Flanders or Burgundy (modern day Belgium and France). It is 500 years old. The shield is decorated with gold and shows a lady in courtly dress with a knight kneeling before her.

- **The British Museum has lifts.**

All public areas of the British Museum are accessible. You and your group may use the access lifts which take you from the forecourt to the front door of the Museum (avoiding the main steps at the front of the Museum) or you may use the big public lifts which take you to each floor in the Museum (Upper floor, Lower floor, Ford Centre for Young Visitors and the Clore Education Centre) or you may use the low access lifts in galleries (a few of which have short flights of 2/3 steps in the room itself).

- **The British Museum has toilets.**

There are toilets in the Ford Centre for Young Visitors and on the Lower Floor of the Museum. This is one of the public access toilets on the Lower Floor with plenty of room to move, a low level hand basin, alarm cord and fold out support frame. These toilets can also be used as a changing area.

- **You can eat and drink at the British Museum.**

If you are visiting the British Museum you will have a lunch slot booked for you in the Ford Centre for Young Visitors (the school lunch room) which also has lockers for storing coats, bags and lunch boxes together with children's and access toilets. There will be other school children eating their lunch at the same time, though you will have your own table. This space may also be used for line feeding. You may like the children to think about what food they will take in their packed lunch to the Museum.

- **Come and have a look. See you soon!**

This image is a repeat of the earlier image showing Katharine standing on the Museum forecourt. This is where your group will end their visit as they leave the Museum through the front gates and go back to school.