

Tips for Art Museum Trips

So, you would like to take your students to the art museum... Here are some tips to help you get started:

Before the Tour:

How might your museum visit connect with the topics, skills, and learning goals you are already exploring in the classroom? Make those connections clear to your students. If possible, involve the students in helping to plan the field trip.

- **Check local museum websites for tour offerings.** Is there an option to customize a tour to more closely meet your needs? What are the costs? Are their low- or no-cost options for student groups? Some museums can even help defray transportation costs.
- If you are taking a guided tour, be sure to **communicate your needs and expectations**. If you are planning a self-guided visit, see if the museum offers self-guided resources to create a more meaningful experience. Using a thinking routine, sketching, creative writing, and movement prompts yield richer results, than more superficial treasure hunts. Prepare materials in advance to enhance the visit, such as thinking routine templates, sketchbooks or journals, and pencils.
- **Recruit adult helpers.** Organizing students into smaller groups can help with student engagement and behavior management. If possible, visit the museum beforehand to become more familiar with the space and to troubleshoot any potential logistical problems.
- **Prepare your students.** Check with the museum to see if they offer any pre-tour materials, such as videos, images, or activities to help the student get excited about their visit and to help establish expectations for what they might see and do. For example, project an image of an object from the museum's collection and do a thinking routine together as a class; then plan to see that object during your visit. Also, ask students to explore the museum's website.

On the Day of the Tour:

- Clearly **communicate your expectations** for the visit and the schedule **to your chaperones**.
- If you have requested a scheduled experience and are running late, **contact the museum** to let them know. Adults should model engagement, curiosity, and good museum manners, including limiting your own screen time.
- If self-guided, **use a thinking routine**. Also, include sketching, creative writing, and/or movement prompts to keep learning active.

After the Tour

- How might you extend your museum visit back in the classroom? Some museums offer post-visit activities. **Invite students to reflect on their experience** through conversation, writing, and/or drawing.
- **Share your feedback** with the museum. We will read it!

Pat yourself on the back. *You are a brave and awesome educator!* Museums can bring history and culture to life, and they invite us to observe carefully, think critically, and look at ourselves and the world in new ways.