

# ROBERSON MUSEUM AND SCIENCE CENTER

## Post-Visit Meet the Museum: Turning your Classroom Collection into an Exhibition

**Grade Level:** Pre K - Adult

**New York State Standards:** ELA 1, Arts 1-4

**Pennsylvania State Standards:** A & H 9.2, 9.3; H 8.3, 8.4

**Objective:** Students will learn how to research and sort specimens that they have found during a scavenger hunt, or that you have provided. Next, students create their own museum.

### Materials:

- Books about nature or field guides
- Books related to other relevant topics
- Paper
- Pencil
- Labels
- Buckets
- Zip lock bags
- Index cards

### Procedure:

#### Day 1

1. Begin your class by telling your students that we are going to “turn our classroom into a museum” in the next couple of days. Explain to the students that this is just a simulation, meaning that it is not exactly what a museum does, but similar in some ways. Students will be collecting things, finding out information about the things they have collected, and then exhibiting the items. This is not exactly what a museum does. Most collections found in museums are “gifted” or “willed” to the museum. Museums don’t go out collecting things. However, they do research their collections and display them in an exhibition.

2. Tell your student that they are going to turn the classroom into a natural history museum and go “collecting” for specimens. This part (the collecting or pillaging) is unlike a museum. Modern museums do not take items from their communities. They accept gifts from donors or purchase items for their collections.

3. Explain that tomorrow the class is going outside to collect things from nature. Teachers, please note that depending on where you live (city or country side) what you collect is going to be different. Be prepared with the appropriate field guides. Make sure that the children dress accordingly, depending on where you are going to take them and the time of year. If they are going to a city park in the winter, or by a stream, they may get wet and dirty. In this instance, they would want to dress warmly and in older clothing. Perhaps they might want to bring a change of clothes. Remember they will be collecting from the natural environment, use common sense.

## Day 2

On the following day, provide each student, or pair of students, with a bucket and/or a zip lock bag. Tell the students where they are going and that their task is to take a little bit of everything they can find from the natural world. You may want to assign students to specific areas when you get to your destination so that you don't end up with several of the same object. Remind your students to be respectful of nature. Collecting rocks, leaves, plants and animals in water is fine. However, they should not take anything out of its environment that would harm it. All living specimens must be returned. All water dwelling animals must be collected in buckets with water in them.

When you get back to the classroom all specimens must be cared for if they are living. All non-living specimens can simply be put away until the next day.

## Day 3

1. On the next day, the students should begin to sort what they have collected. They should decide what categories they belong in (for example: plant, animal, etc) and identify them in their field guides. For example, a plant could be classified as a white pine. They should write down this information, and as much information as they can about each specimen they found on an index card. (For example: White Pines are found mostly in the North Eastern portion of the United States. Their needles are 4 to 5 inches long and come in bundles of three.) Have students continue to find and document information.

2. Finally, all information from their index cards should be printed neatly or typed, if computers are available, on a single large sheet of paper. This will resemble the wall text one sees in museums.

3. When everything is complete, all items need to be displayed around the room. Be creative in your thinking. If you have old boxes, you can put a sheet over them. These can serve as a pedestal for a specimen. If your school has other items you may temporarily use them for the exhibition. Don't forget to mount your wall text near each specimen.

4. Have your classmates walk around and look at all the displays. Or, better yet, tell the entire school about it!

5. Extension: If you should decide on another type of project, instead of a natural history study, you may set up your own set of directions. Have students bring in a collection of odd antiques for example. Next, have the students figure out what time period they belong to and what they were used for. Alternatively, you may use reproductions of different styles of paintings so that students have to determine the artist, the time period, the style, etc.

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