

Explore: West Michigan Habitats (Grade K-12)

Program Description:

Explore is one of the Museum’s core educational programs, and it will help learners understand how to use the exhibit *West Michigan Habitats* as a tool for exploration, investigation, and discovery. Students will practice two thinking moves which will allow them to get the most out of experiencing exhibits. First, they will make observations of displayed objects and images and explicitly record the emotions, memories, and questions that these objects bring up. Next, they will dig deep into an exhibit section to ask themselves, “What is the Big Idea of this exhibit?” and “What story is this exhibit telling me?” Learners will leave Explore programs with the tools and experience to enjoy learning throughout the GRPM and beyond.

What content standards align with this program?

ELA Common Core Standards for Reading

Michigan Social Studies Strands: H1 The World in Temporal Terms: Historical Habits of Mind, P1 Reading and Communication, P2 Inquiry Research and Analysis

NGSS Science and Engineering Practices: Asking questions, Analyzing and Interpreting data, Constructing Explanations, Obtaining, Evaluating, and Communicating information.

Museum Program Strand(s):

- Empower individuals to use observations and inquiry to understand arguments and design creative solutions.
- Help learners tell, interpret, create, and share compelling stories so no history is ignored or untold.

This program is aligned with the following Museum Learner Outcomes:

Holders of Foundational Knowledge	Masters of Fundamental Literacies	Creative Thinkers and Doers	Generous Collaborators for Tough Problems	Learners For Life	
X	X			X	

What will students know and be able to do after completing this program?

- Students will reflect on what a museum does and why museums are important spaces.
- Students will recognize and record various features of the exhibit *West Michigan Habitats* that evoke emotions, connections, and questions.
- Students will make detailed observations of *West Michigan Habitats* and be able to verbalize their understanding of the exhibit’s core message, or big idea.

What questions will students answer?

- What does a Museum do, and why might Museums be important for communities?
- What sensory observations can I make in this exhibit? Are there opportunities to engage in experiencing the exhibit with my sense of sight? Touch? Hearing? Smell?
- What subjective responses (emotions, connections, questions) does this exhibit evoke in me? How does explicitly listing these responses help me learn from exhibits? How do my classmates respond?

- What things might you be able to learn in this exhibit?
- What is the Big Idea this exhibit is trying to communicate to Museum visitors? What parts of the exhibit made you think this way?

Key Vocabulary

Artifact
 Specimen
 Exhibit
 Observations
 Subjective vs. Objective (6-12 grade)
 Big Idea/Take-home message

Materials List and Setup:

Dry Erase board
 Dry erase marker and eraser
 Student Worksheet

Program Activities: 60 minutes

1. Introduction and Expectations
2. Assessing our prior knowledge of Museums; introduce key vocabulary
3. Activity #1: First tool to become a museum professional: Recording sensory observations and reflecting on your subjective responses (i.e. what memories does this elicit? what questions do you have? What emotions does this elicit?)
 - a. Instructions/modeling
 - b. Students explore exhibit and complete observations
 - c. Discussion of findings
4. Activity #2: Second tool to become a museum professional: Museums are meant to tell visitors stories and teach them lessons about the world. We will work to figure out what the exhibit has to teach us!
 - a. Instructions/modeling
 - b. Students divided into groups and work to write/sketch what they think the big idea of the exhibit is.
 - c. Regroup as a whole and share out findings.
5. Wrap Up:
 - a. Revisit the brainstorming list about museums....is there anything to add at this point?
 - b. Congratulate the students--tell them they are officially museum professionals...they've learned important tools that help them learn from museums
 - c. Encourage them to be curious and use these tools through the rest of their lives and through any museum visit that they take.