

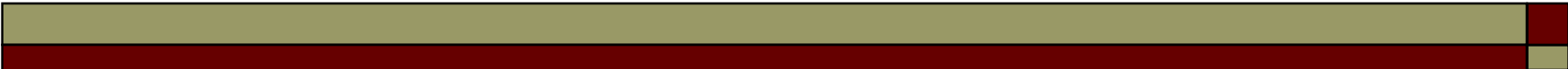
Session 2

Exploring Collections

HPHE7009 Skills in the Museum

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and Heritage



Preserving The Past

- ❑ Humans
- ❑ have a long history of preserving artefacts of the past.
- ❑ **Collecting** things is a basic need!

LET'S EXPLORE COLLECTING

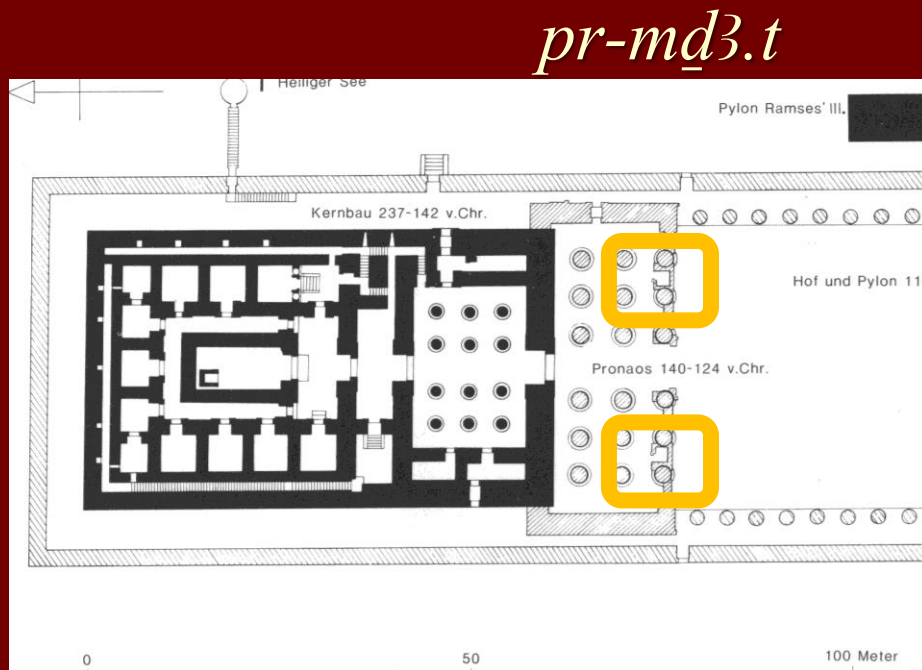
Book Label of Amenhotep III



- Egypt, Thebes, 14th cent. BC
- Glazed composition book-label of Amenhotep III and Queen Tiye
- "Beloved of Ptah, the king of the Two Lands, the good god Amenhotep III, may he be given life; the wife of the king, Tiye, may she live"; "the book of the moringa tree."
- **Dimensions**
Length: 6.3 centimetres
Width: 3.8 centimetres

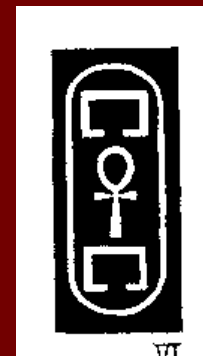
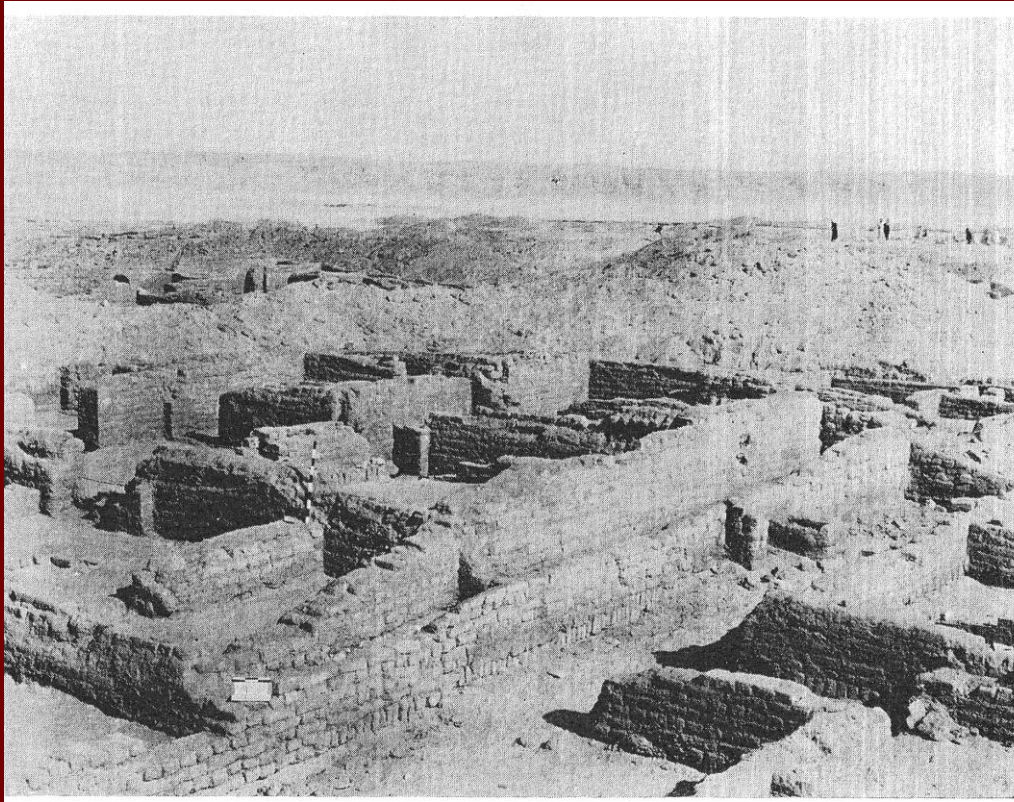


Edfu: Library (*pr-md3.t*)

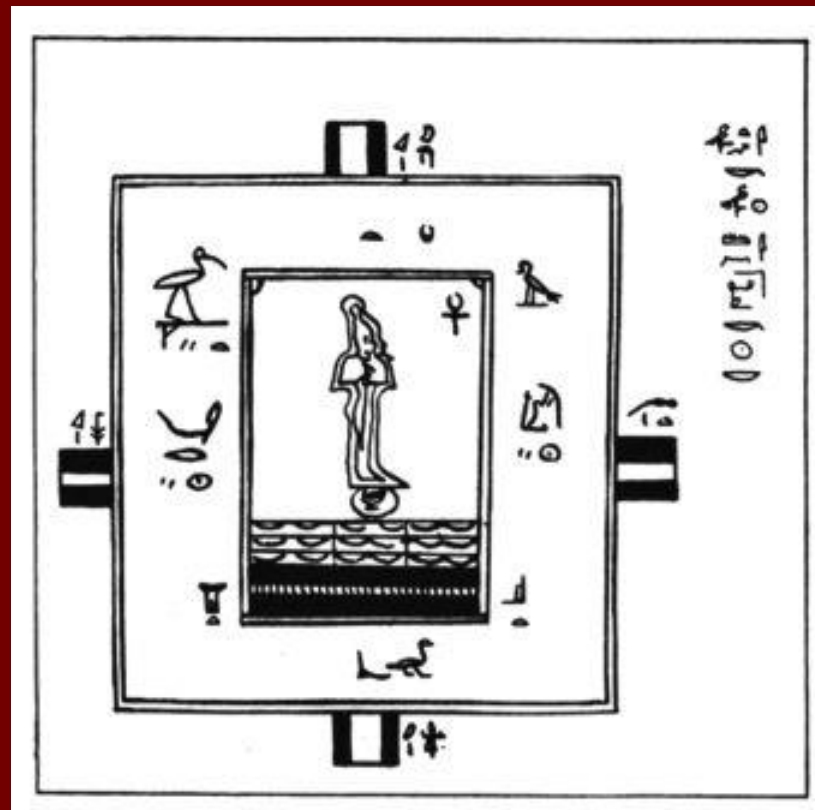


pr-dw3.t

Amarna: House of Life (*pr-^hnh*)



The house of life in Pap. Salt 825

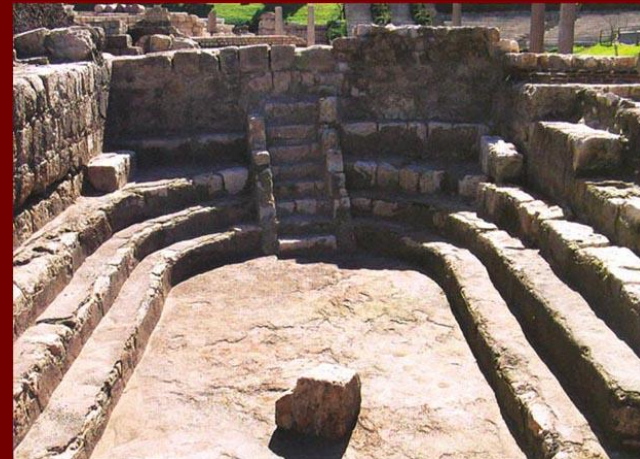


Preserving The Past

- ❑ The ancient Greeks coined the term *mouseion* when they first built a temple to "the Muses," spritely goddesses who kept watch over the arts and sciences.
- ❑ The Greeks filled their temples with both sculpture and scholars. The tradition was copied in the kingly treasure houses that followed — spoils of war were displayed in the halls of royal palaces and the cages of royal zoos.

Museion in Alexandria

- Museion as place for the muses → becomes a place of memory and education
- 2007: lecture theatres discovered → thought to have belonged to Museion



Museion in Alexandria

- ❑ founded at Alexandria by Ptolemy I (305-285 BC)
- ❑ Mouseion at Alexandria, Musaeum or Μουσεῖον τῆς Ἀλεξανδρείας
- ❑ not a museum as in modern terms but a learning institution (brought together some of the most brilliant scholars of the Hellenistic world): study of anatomy and mathematics (Euclid's geometry), astronomical observation and studies in engineering
- ❑ Location of the Library of Alexandria: Hellenistic scholars edited major works of Greek literary canon

Medieval Treasure Chambers



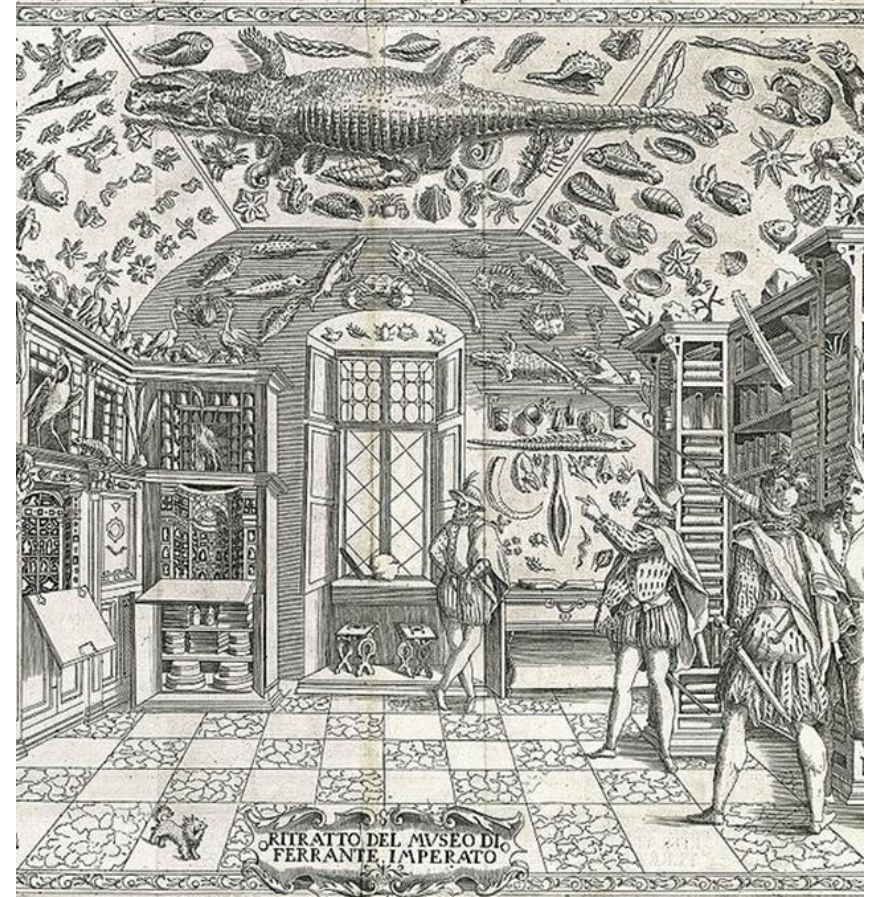
Medieval Treasure Chambers

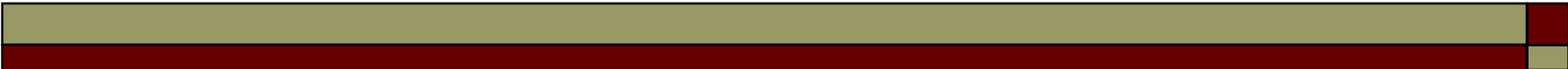


- ❑ Medieval collections of antiquities
- ❑ Belonging to secular rulers and ecclesiastical orders
 - Relic collections → relics gained in addition to religious and ritualistic purpose a collective quality
- ❑ Treasures to legitimise rule and demonstrate wealth, not museums in the modern sense
- ❑ Sense for aesthetic

Cabinet of curiosities

- ❑ Encyclopaedic collections in Renaissance (mainly 16th / 17th cent.) Europe of all types of objects
- ❑ Called **Cabinet of Wonder**, and in German **Kunstkammer** ("art-room") or **Wunderkammer** ("wonder-room")
- ❑ Combined objects of natural history, geology, ethnography, archaeology, religious or historical relics, works of art (including cabinet paintings), antiquities and fakes of all kind





Cabinet of curiosities (Kunstkammer)

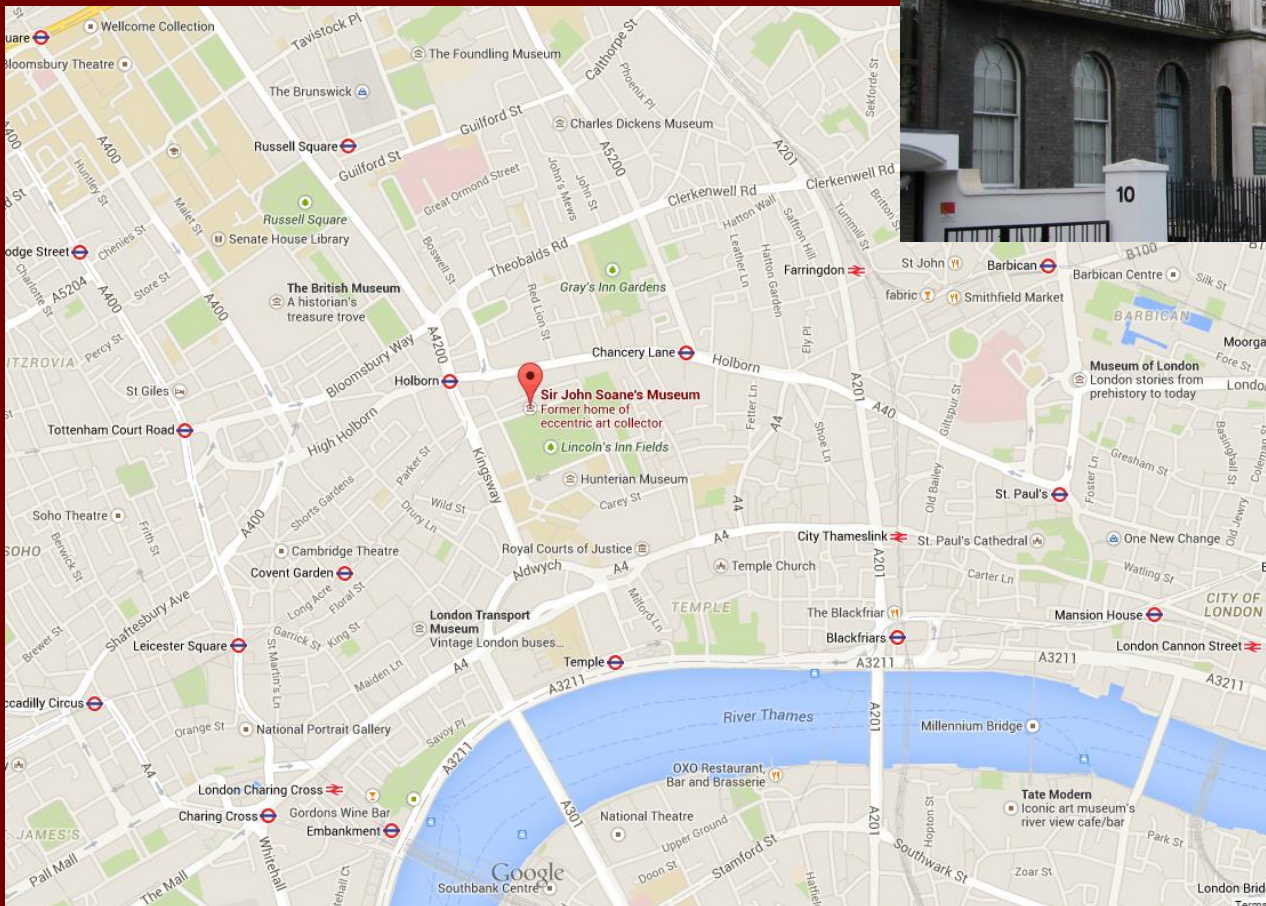
- ❑ Kunstkammer = regarded as microcosm / theatre of the world → memory theatre, were precursors to museums
- ❑ conveyed symbolically patron's control of world through indoor, microscopic reproduction
- ❑ Charles I of England used his *Kunstkabinett* as a form of propaganda
- ❑ most famous and best documented cabinets = of European rulers and aristocrats
- ❑ But also important: Kunstkammer of members of the merchant class and practitioners of science also formed collections

Kunstkammer of Ole Worm (1588-1654) – professor of medicine

- Believed, that learning comes about through the observation of nature - "through empiricism and experiment" - and not just through the study of texts.



Sir John Soane's Museum



Sir John Soane's Museum



- Born in 1753, died in 1837
- son of a bricklayer
- English architect, specialised in Neo-Classical style
- professor of architecture at Royal Academy, official architect to the Office of Works
- received a knighthood in 1831
- designed 13 Lincoln's Inn Fields as his home + setting for his antiquities and works of art
- established the house as a museum by Act of Parliament (1833) requiring that his romantic and poetic interiors be kept as they were at the time of his death



SIR JOHN SOANE'S MUSEUM

HOME | YOUR VISIT | THE MUSEUM | EDUCATION | COLLECTIONS



The house and Museum of the architect Sir John Soane, R.A.

Born in 1753, the son of a bricklayer, Soane died in 1837 after a long and distinguished career. He designed 13 Lincoln's Inn Fields as his home and as a setting for his antiquities and works of art. After his wife's death he lived here alone, constantly adding to and rearranging his collections. He established the house as a museum by Act of Parliament (1833) requiring that his romantic and poetic interiors be kept as they were at the time of his death.

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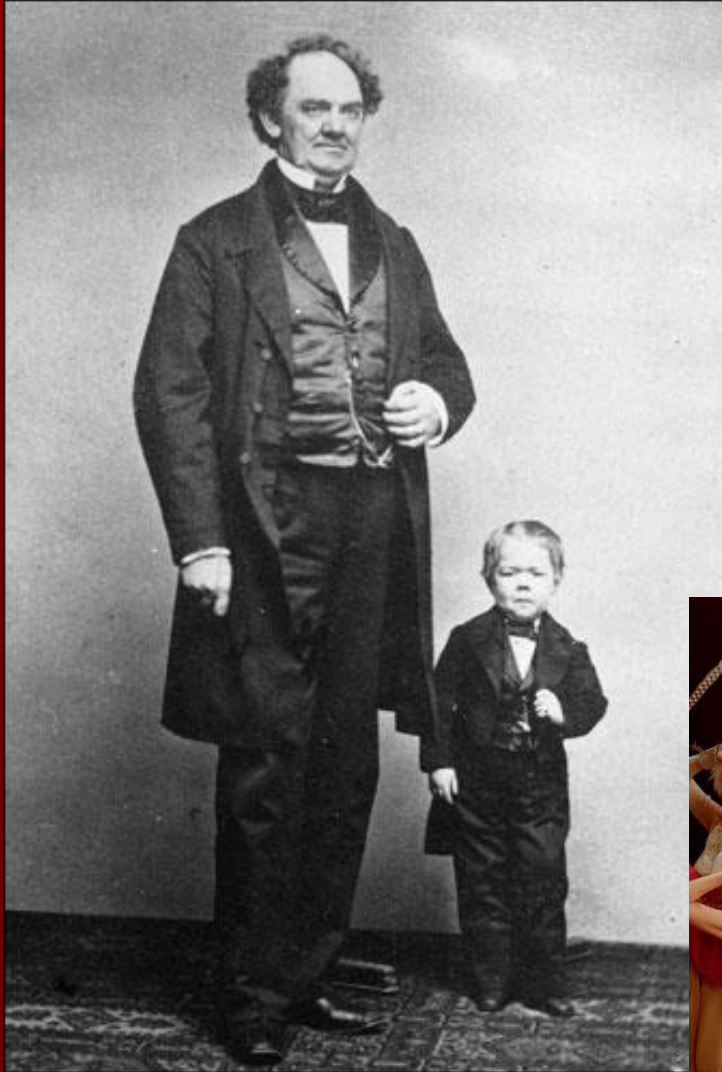
showing 1-3 of 21 items

GUIDED TOURS

OUTS

SOANE SHOP

Wondrous curiosities



- American showman P.T. Barnum (left) and Commodore Nutt, pictured circa 1862. Nutt was "exhibited" at Barnum's American Museum in New York, which Barnum claimed attracted 15,000 visitors per day.



Ancient Egypt at the British Museum

Ancient Egypt at the British Museum

WONDROUS CURIOSITIES

STEPHANIE MOSER

What are collections?

- By definition –
“Collections – a group of objects that have been collected by one person or in one place”



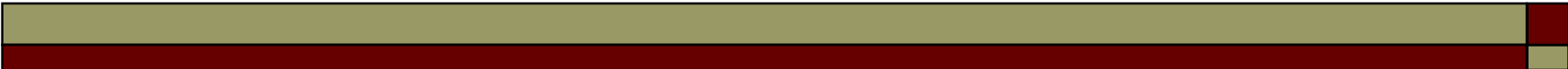
Variation

- Dependent upon the collecting body
- Purpose
- Theme



“...principal function as repositories of objects” and that they exist to “conserve and display objects” (Vergo 1989:41).





Discuss: What is the difference between museums and collections?

Museum

Collection

Discuss: What is the difference between museums and collections?

Museum

- **institution** that collects, safeguards, and makes accessible artifacts and specimens for the public's enjoyment, learning, and inspiration

Collection

- **Assemblage(s)** of objects
- Can be deposited in institutions (museums, archives, ...) and make them unique + form the basis of its activities

Museums and Collections

Museums can influence and dictate the collections that are accepted and retained

Politics



Organisational Collections

National Museums
Regional Museums
Local Museums
University Museums
Specialist Museums



Managing Collections

- Whose role is this?
- Expectations of Knowledge
- Collaboration
- Future



Further important questions to ask

What collections are you already aware of?

How are they used?

What other collections exist?



Approaches to Collections

Keene describes that there are
FOUR broad perspectives:

Fine Art

Functional Objects

Research Archives

Place-and people-related collections



Collections Use

It is important to note that not all collections can be used in the same way!

So how are they used and how can they be used?



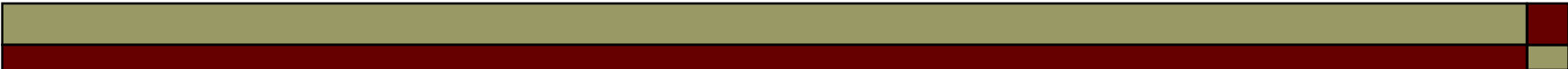
- Reserve Collections
- Study Collections
- Research Collections
- Stored Collections
- Learning and Handling Collections



The Future of Collections - Discussion

- Engagement
- Democratisation
- Accessibility





How does this knowledge relates to skills in the museum

- ❑ Attention to detail: researching and cataloging objects
- ❑ Communication skills: working with staff, answering visitors, giving talks
- ❑ Organizational skills: planning and managing exhibitions
- ❑ Research and analytical skills: curation, exhibition design, audience insights
- ❑ Creativity
- ❑ Problem-solving skills
- ❑ Ability to work well with others
- ❑ Ability to work independently
- ❑ Computer skills