



The Sedgwick Museum
of Earth Sciences

Lots more things to do...

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Some simple, quick (or not-so-quick if you prefer) gallery activities for groups. I mainly use these with KS1 & 2, but they are also great to adapt for adult groups and secondary pupils. You can adapt these for all sorts of settings, though they are obviously best done at the Sedgwick Museum... None of these ideas require any specialist knowledge about the Museum, rocks, minerals or fossils, the emphasis is on looking, discovering and learning.

Round the Museum Challenges:

Can you find...

- ...the oldest fossils in the museum?
- ...the youngest fossils in the museum?
- ...and what clues did you use to work this out?

You can prime them to look at the gallery plan or the banners in the windows all of which have dates on in millions of years before now. The gallery plan is available as a download from the museum website. Please note (Aug 2009) that this plan is slightly out of date due to the new Darwin the Geologist exhibition in Bays 1 and 2, a new one is in production)

- ...an enormous spider?
- ...a fossil in the Whewell (mineral) Gallery?
- ...the biggest tooth?

You can use this as the start of a discussion – what does biggest mean? Use this as a maths words activity; you could refine this question with longest, widest etc, estimate dimensions.

Contenders for biggest are usually mammoth tooth, sabre-tooth cat tooth, mammoth tusk (all together in Ice Age temporary display), T. rex tooth (case top near shop) or Pliosaur tooth (in Jurassic Sea display). Belemnites (Jurassic Sea diorama and elsewhere) are not teeth although they look like long pointed dinosaur teeth! They are the remains of squid-like creatures which may have looked a bit like cuttlefish. This can be another interesting thing to talk about or post-visit research, how can we tell the difference?

Shape counting

Challenge them to look for and count different shapes using the museum building and fittings (maths); the mineral gallery is good for this to keep it contained.

How many triangles can you count? (The fireplace is good for this)

How many rectangles are there (eg case fronts and sides)

Can use 3D shapes too- cylinders, cubes, cuboid etc.

Shape search

Provide a list of shape words eg pointed, spiky, round, spiral, lumpy etc etc.

Ask the children to find and draw examples of each word. This allows them time to make their own appraisals of the words, and is good for linking personal interpretations to literacy. Make this a quick time-limited activity so they can't get

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bored and have to make quick drawings, otherwise you can end up with one gorgeous drawing and lose the energy and emphasis of the activity.

Alphabet Challenge

Find something beginning with each letter of the alphabet in the Museum! This can be either another timed drawing activity, or writing a list as they look around. Encourage them to think creatively, and to look at the whole building as well as the rocks and fossils. If you look really carefully there is a coral called Zaphrentis or a mineral group called Zeolites for Z! (Carboniferous bay/ mineral gallery.)

Here's a list a volunteer came up with as an example:

Ammonite
Burgess shale
Ceiling
Deinotherium
Elephant tooth
Fern leaves
Gold
Handles
Insects in amber
Jurassic
Kites
Lava
Mammoth tooth
Nereites trace fossil
Opal
Plaster of Paris
Quartz
Ruby
Shop
Trilobite
Upstairs
Veins of calcite
Window
Xanthopsis crab (also e**X**cellent!)
Young Charles Darwin
Zaphrentis corals

There are lots more simple learning games that you can use during a self-led visit, some of which utilise handling objects that are freely accessible in the gallery. Please contact me for other ideas and information.
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