



Revolutionary Spaces presents:

Museum@Home

Three+ fun activities for kids to
create their very own museum at home.

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About Revolutionary Spaces & Our Museum@Home Activities

In celebration of Museum Week 2020, **Revolutionary Spaces** invites kids to learn about the collections, exhibits, and gallery talks at our two historic sites and to create their very own museum at home. These three activities can be completed one at a time or all at once. They are designed for kids ages eight and up to complete on their own but also make a great rainy day project for families.

Revolutionary Spaces is an organization that cares for and shares the stories of two historic sites: the [Old South Meeting House](#) and the [Old State House](#). Both buildings were built in the 1700s in Boston, Massachusetts and are part of the Freedom Trail.



Thousands of people visit these two museums every year to explore the history of the founding of America. They are places where people can gather together to share ideas, learn about how our democracy has changed over time, and explore ways to make our communities happier, healthier places through civic action.

We hope you will come visit us here in Boston sometime soon. In the meantime, you can complete these three activities to create your own museum at home to share with your family and friends.

❖ Gather your collection ❖

Time needed: 10-30 minutes

Materials needed: Your own collection, people to share it with



LEARN: What is a museum collection?

Most museums have a collection of some kind. A museum collection is a group of unique objects that are related to the kind of museum that cares for them and shares them with visitors. For example, an art museum might have a collection of paintings, a history museum might have a collection of antiques, and a natural history museum might have a collection of fossils.

Most museums have a staff member who is responsible for taking care of their collection. At Revolutionary Spaces our collection manager is Jill Conley; she takes care of all of our objects. We asked Jill to share a little bit about her work with the collections at Revolutionary Spaces:



What does a collections manager do?

A collections manager ensures the proper care and safety of a museum collection in many ways. We keep the objects clean and stored properly, protect them from pests, and move and pack them if necessary. I also act as the museum registrar. A registrar gathers and organizes detailed information about each object in the collection including its history, condition, and location in storage. In a small museum, the registrar and collections manager usually are the same person.

Why did you want to be a collection manager?

Ever since I was a kid, I've always loved collecting and organizing things. I didn't realize that was what a collections manager did until I went to graduate school and found the perfect job for me!

How many objects do you take care of? Do you have a favorite?

We have about 7,000 objects in the collections at Revolutionary Spaces. One of my favorites is a boot jack made from whale bone and decorated with scrimshaw. I think it's cool that an everyday tool used to help you get your boots on and off would be made out of such fancy materials.



YOUR TURN: What do you collect?

Collections aren't just for museums. People like to collect things too.

In homes around the world you will find button collections, squishy collections, comic book

collections, beyblade collections—the list goes on and on. Deirdre Kutt, one of our Revolutionary Spaces education associates, started collecting socks back in 2007. She now owns more than 65 pairs of fun print socks and wears a different pair every day.



Now it's your turn.

- Do you have a collection? If not, you can find some ideas for starting a collection on page 8.
- What do other members of your family collect?

Having a collection means you need to keep your objects organized and safe—just like a museum collections manager.

- Where do you keep your collection?
- Do you organize your collection in a particular way—by size, color, age, etc.?
- Do you use or play with the objects in your collection? Or are they just for looking at?

Share and talk about your collection with your family.

- Why do you collect the things you do?
- What did the grown ups collect when they were kids?
- Do you see any differences between what grown ups collect and what kids collect?

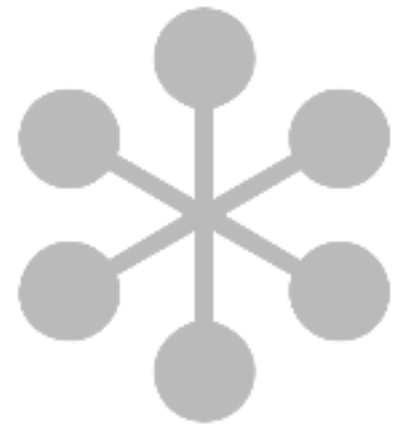
Did you learn anything new or surprising about your family members after seeing or talking about the things they collect now or when they were younger?

Up next: how can you share and tell stories with your collection?

❁ Organize your exhibit ❁

Time needed: 20-45 minutes

Materials needed: Objects to display, something to write with, paper or post-it notes



LEARN: What is a museum exhibit?

In the first activity, you and your family shared your own collections with one another. How do museums share their collections with their visitors?



Lots of museums like to display their collection in public spaces to tell stories and share information. These displays are called exhibitions or exhibits. Exhibits feature objects, paintings, pictures, or other parts of a museum collection along with labels telling the viewer about what they are looking at and how it connects to the other objects in the exhibit. The label usually has the name of the object, when it was made (if this is known), and a brief description. These are pictures of a display

case of objects used and made by sailors in the 1800s and the label describing each one. The display is part of a larger exhibit on view at the Old State House.



Sometimes there is a person in charge of designing the exhibits for a museum. At Revolutionary Spaces our exhibits are designed by a whole team of people working together. Our newest exhibit, *Reflecting Attacks*, took over 15 people working together to complete. Some people wrote the exhibit text, some people organized the objects and images that are on display, and other people designed and made all the labels and signs describing the exhibit materials.

The [exhibits at the Old State House and the Old South Meeting House](#) share stories about the history of Boston and America and help visitors connect those stories to their own lives.

YOUR TURN: Organize an exhibit using your collection.

Can you create a museum exhibit at home using your collection or objects you find in your house? See page 8 for ideas on where to find objects if you don't already have a collection. *Here are the steps:*



Step 1: Decide what you want people to learn from your exhibit

- The best exhibits use objects to tell a story or share information.

Step 2: Pick out your objects

- It's a good idea to keep your exhibit small; choose 5-10 objects that best tell your story.

Step 3: Arrange your objects

- Spread them out on a nice flat surface where they can be easily viewed.
- Be thoughtful about how you arrange the objects in order to help the viewer follow the story of your exhibit.

Step 4: Write your labels

- You will want one label that introduces the story of your exhibit and labels that share information about the individual objects on display.
- You can type these on a computer and print them out, or hand write them. Post-it notes make great at home museum exhibit labels because they're already sticky!
- Arrange your labels next to your objects, or put a number near the object and have all of the information on one sheet of paper.

Step 5: Name your exhibit

- Choose a name that gets the viewer excited about what they're going to see and learn.

Up next: *how can you talk with people about the story your exhibit tells ?*

☆ Share your exhibit ☆



Time needed: 20-45 minutes

Materials needed: Your exhibit, people to share it with

LEARN: What is a museum gallery talk?

In the second activity, you created an exhibit using your collection or objects in your house to tell a story or share information. How do museums use their exhibits to help visitors connect these stories to their own lives?



At Revolutionary Spaces we have a team of staff members who engage with visitors to the Old State House and Old South Meeting House. Some museums call these people tour guides or docents. We call them education associates. Their job is to teach people in the museum by providing them with opportunities to talk and ask questions about our exhibits.

Education associates give gallery talks, interact with visitors in the galleries, and help the museum education manager teach programs for school groups on field trips.



Here are some pictures of Nicole Mello, one of our education associates, leading a gallery talk at the Old State House. We asked her to share a little bit about her work at Revolutionary Spaces:

What's the best part about your job?

The best part about my job is when a visitor gets so excited to hear what I'm saying, they just have to react. When a guest gasps, laughs, or cries, I know I'm sharing these histories in a meaningful way.

What do you do when someone asks you a question you don't know the answer to?

When someone asks a question I don't know the answer to, I find a way for us to answer it together as a group. We'll ask other education associates, our friends around the museum, and, if all else fails, we turn to primary sources—historical documents from the 1700s.

YOUR TURN: Create a gallery talk for your exhibit.



Can you use your museum at home exhibit to create a short gallery talk for your family that gives them a chance to ask questions and learn more about the objects and stories in your exhibit? *Here are the steps:*

Step 1: Decide what information or stories you would like to focus on in your gallery talk

- Instead of talking about your whole exhibit you may want to talk about one or two objects or one part of the bigger story.

Step 2: Write an outline of what you are going to say

- You can write down a list of things you want to say or write out a whole script.
- When our education associates are learning how to give a gallery talk they write down notes about what they would like to say on cards so they can check them as they practice.

Step 3: Gather your audience

- Invite everyone in your house to gather together for your gallery talk.
- Think about how you can get them excited about what they will learn and talk about.

Step 4: Give your gallery talk

- When giving your gallery talk it is important to speak slowly and clearly.
- Be sure to allow time for your audience to ask questions and share their own experiences.
- Always thank your audience for listening and sharing when you are done.

Step 5: Share your collection, exhibit, and/or gallery talk with Revolutionary Spaces

- *If you have permission from an adult* you can share photos of your work with Revolutionary Spaces on our social media accounts: @RevSpaces on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.
- Use these #hashtags to tag your work: #RSMuseumatHome, #RSHomeMuseum, #MuseumWeek, #RevSpaces.

**** BE SAFE! ****

You should *always* ask a trusted adult before sharing any information online. *Do not* give out personal information such as your address or telephone number. *Do not* share pictures or videos of yourself or others if you do not have permission or do not feel safe to do so.

+ Start a collection +



No collection? Here are some ideas for starting one!

If you have a **yard** or a **park** near where you live you can look for things to collect there. Or, take a **walk** around your neighborhood to find interesting things for a collection.

- Rocks — look for different shapes, sizes, and colors
- Flowers and leaves — you can dry and/or press them in a heavy book
- Bottle caps — see how many different kinds you can find
- Photos of wildlife — bugs and birds are pretty easy to “capture” on film

If you live near the **beach** there are lots of treasures that you can collect:

- Shells — try to find different sizes of the same shell
- Sea glass — be careful to only take pieces with smooth edges
- Driftwood — imagine where the wood came from, perhaps a shipwreck
- Sand — you can collect sand in small jars from different beaches
- Rocks — when rocks are wet their colors are more vibrant

Here are some other things that people collect that you might find **in your home**:

- Coins — ask the grown ups in your house if they have any interesting ones
- Stamps — check the mail every day to see what new stamps arrive on letters you receive
- Coffee mugs — you’d be surprised at how many you find in your cabinets
- Books or comics — people collect book series or books on a specific topic

Some people like to collect things from **events** they attend or **places** they visit:

- Postcards — it’s fun to see pictures of faraway places you or your family have visited
- Pins or magnets — maybe they are all together on a piece of clothing or the fridge
- Money — money from around the world comes in many shapes, sizes, and colors
- Ticket stubs — for airplane flights, music concerts, museum visits, movies, etc.
- T-shirts or hats — from places you visited, camps you attended, or activities you do

You don’t need much to start a collection—just a few objects and some imagination!