

THE  
**LEARNING FOR CHANGE**  
FRAMEWORK



# WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO “LEARN FOR CHANGE?”

It means that the world is changing fast....  
and *museums can help people change with it.*

Museums are lifelong learning institutions,  
offering plenty of opportunities for visitors to  
learn more about their world and themselves.

But museums can't do it alone! As museum  
workers, you have role to play in this process.

# LEARNING FOR CHANGE FRAMEWORK

The **Learning for Change Framework** focuses on the specific skills museums can intentionally support in order to help its visitors manage these times of accelerated cultural change.

It consists of nine skills, and nine supports museums can offer to help visitors develop these outcomes.



**Click on the diagram or the buttons below to learn more.**

# SKILLS: WHAT I CAN DO?

Museum visitors can learn, or already possess, certain **skills**. These are developed through training and practice. Some skills are more easily measured than others.



Click on each skill below to learn more. ▼





## INTRINSIC MOTIVATION

Intrinsic motivation drives people to do things for the fun of it, or because they believe it is a good or right thing to do. Museums support intrinsic motivation because there is a freedom to learn at one's leisure.

To promote intrinsic motivation, museum content must be relevant. The more people understand why something is important and why it should matter to them, the more interested they will be.

**Now that we know the skill, let's do more!**

## NOTICE IT

While at work, walk around and decide if your institution (museum, gallery, etc) is using strategies to support intrinsic motivation.

Answer the following questions:

1. Does the institution have clear guidelines and instructions?
2. Is the institution presenting content that feels personal and important?
3. Does the institution provide opportunities for visitors to share their feelings/experiences?



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## EMPATHY & CONTEXTUAL INTELLIGENCE

Empathy is the ability to sense other people's emotions and imagine what they might be thinking or feeling. Contextual Intelligence is the ability to understand the limits of our knowledge and adapt it to different environments.

Museums encourage empathy by introducing diverse perspectives. Reflection activities can further challenge visitors to apply their knowledge outside of the exhibit.

**Now that we know the skill, let's do more!**

## THINK ABOUT IT

*“No one cares how much you know, until they know how much you care.”*

- Theodore Roosevelt

Based on this statement, answer the following questions:

- Should museums show that “they care” about the information shown in their exhibits? How can they? Does this make the visitor experience better?
- Name 2 specific ways museums can encourage visitors to engage in self-reflection.



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## RESILIENCE

Resilience is the capacity to recover quickly from difficulties. Museums are important sources of resilience for people because they build confidence, support the acquisition and practice of communication and problem-solving skills, build strong relationships and social networks, and support civic participation.

Museums need to ensure that they reflect the widest possible range of people; gathering viewpoints, oral histories, and other contributions.

**Now that we know the skill, let's do more!**

## TALK ABOUT IT

Find a co-worker (*be resilient!*) and with them, discuss any exhibitions you both attended this year.

Based on your discussion, answer the following questions:

1. What did these exhibitions teach you about being resilient in your own life? Were there obvious/subtle connections?
3. What could be a great exhibit idea for your institution that demonstrates the importance of resilience?



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## SOCIAL & CULTURAL CAPITAL

Social capital are relationship networks which contain high levels of trust and collective action. Social capital is most often created among individuals with similar cultural capital - a collection of personal attributes such as knowledge, education level, skills and tastes.

Museums are a source of both types of capital by providing “bridging and bonding” opportunities for visitors. Connecting people of different generations, genders, and cultures over exhibitions creates opportunities for social and cultural capital to develop.

**Now that we know the skill, let's do more!**

## THINK ABOUT IT

*“Museums can be the most effective in addressing inequality.”*

(Manual of Museum Learning, pg. 42)

Based on this statement, answer the following questions:

- Why would addressing inequality help strengthen social and cultural capital amongst museum visitors?
- For museums that cannot directly speak to social topics, such as science-focused museums, how can these institutions help its visitors “bridge and bond” with each other?



**WRITE IT DOWN!**

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## SELF-DIRECTED LEARNING

Mastering Self-Directed Learning is not just a skill for museums; it ultimately enables people to learn from what exists around them; whether it is the internet, nature, or the city itself.

Museums help support Self-Directed Learning by being: a useful resource (supplying adequate seating, WiFi, areas to sit and work) and revealing the process of knowledge creation behind museum exhibits.

**Now that we know the skill, let's do more!**

## TALK ABOUT IT

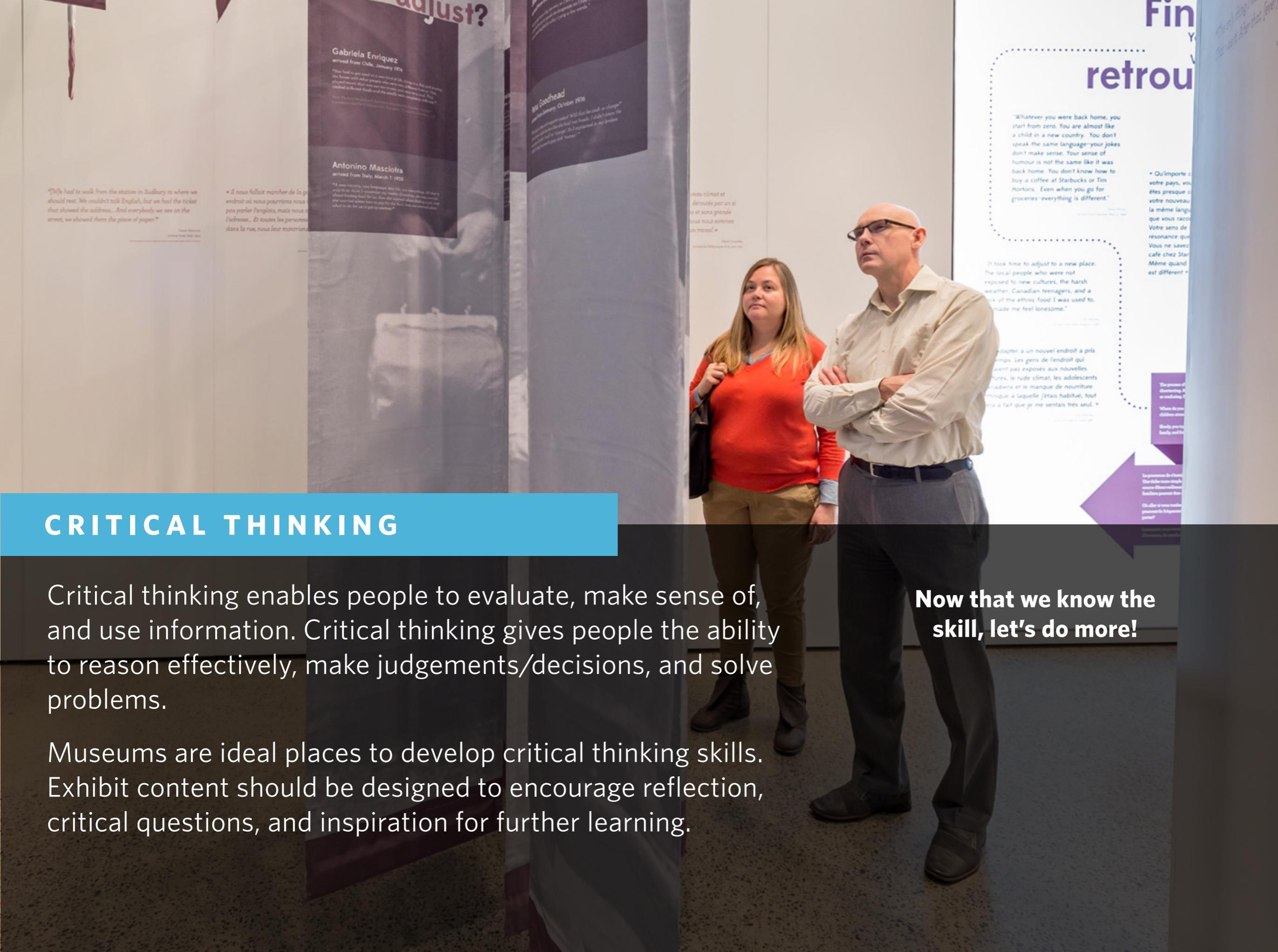
Get in to a group of 2-4 people. In your group come up with an exhibit topic. Once you have your topic, complete the following:

1. Come up with a “study plan” for gathering the knowledge required to develop exhibition content. What will you need to read/see/do to prepare?
2. From your plan, create a list of resources you would recommend to museum visitors to encourage further learning after their visit. Brainstorm ideas for delivery format (ie. a brochure, prompts within exhibit content, etc).



**WRITE IT DOWN!**

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## CRITICAL THINKING

Critical thinking enables people to evaluate, make sense of, and use information. Critical thinking gives people the ability to reason effectively, make judgements/decisions, and solve problems.

Museums are ideal places to develop critical thinking skills. Exhibit content should be designed to encourage reflection, critical questions, and inspiration for further learning.

**Now that we know the skill, let's do more!**

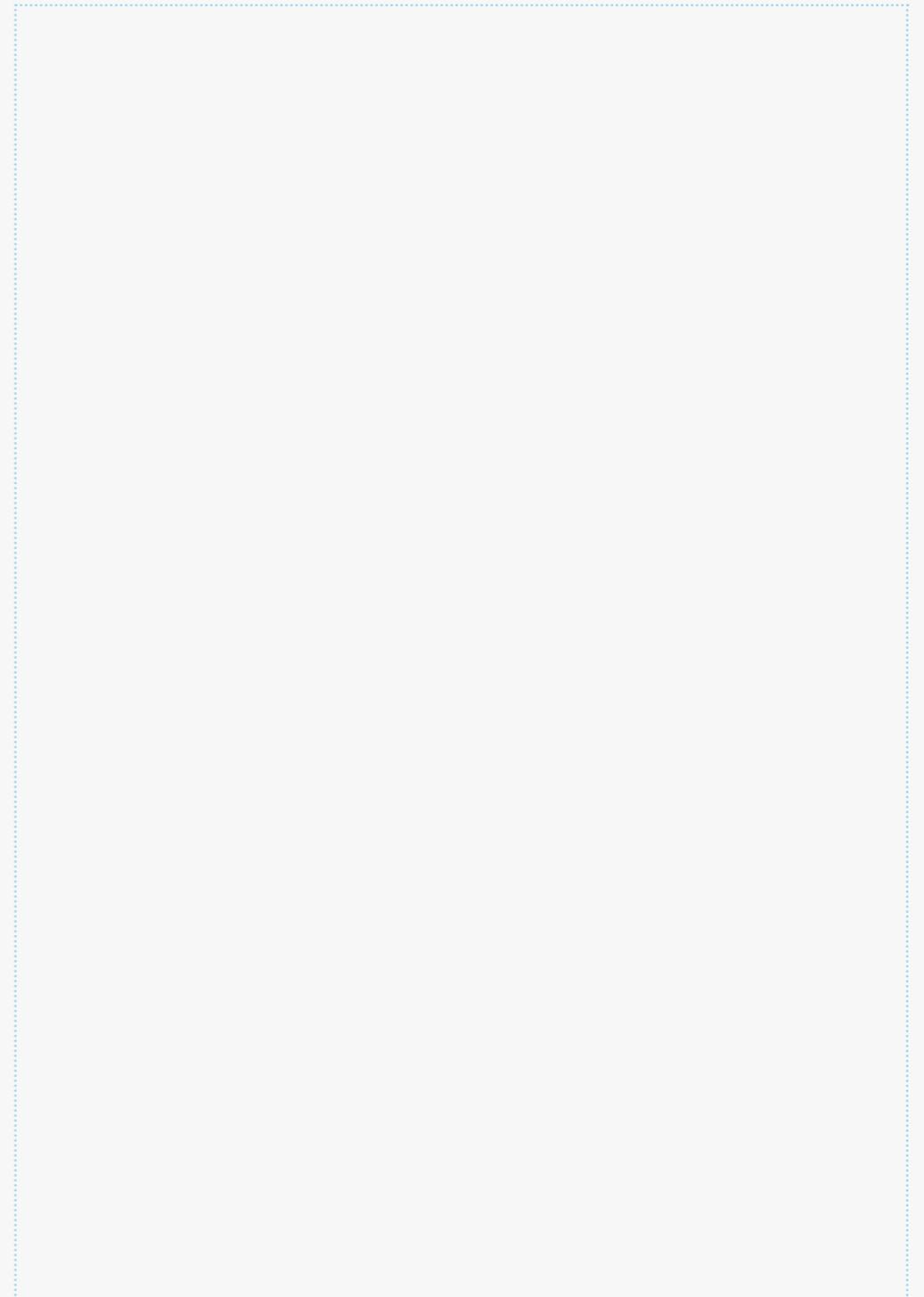
## NOTICE IT

While at work, walk around and track how often you see the following:

- Content that lists its sources and evidence.
- Content that include facts, as well as asks questions.
- Areas encouraging people to create and experiment.



**WRITE IT DOWN!**

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## CREATIVITY & TAKING INITIATIVE

Solutions involve creativity, confidence, and initiative. Creativity requires an understanding of decision-making structures and confidence helps propel initiative.

Museums support these skills by affirming the importance of risk and failure. Having exhibits which highlight instances where people took risks, failed, and eventually succeeded, help to inspire new ways of thinking. Showing these decision-making processes helps participants understand the creativity and evolution of ideas.

**Now that we know the skill, let's do more!**

## TALK ABOUT IT

Get in to a group of 2-4 and choose one of the following: a famous artist, scientist, or historical figure. Once your group has made a decision, answer the following questions:

1. What is this person famous for? How did this person bring about change?
3. Did this person ever fail in their process? If so, explain how.
4. Why would your person be a great museum exhibit to showcase the importance of creativity and taking initiative?



**WRITE IT DOWN!**

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## INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION

In the globalized world, it is important to find ways to operate among people who may not have the same background, languages, or values as us. True intercultural communication often requires individuals to question what they feel is "right" and see things from a different point of view.

Museums can design programs and projects that bring together people from different cultural backgrounds and encourage intercultural communication.

**Now that we know the skill, let's do more!**

## THINK ABOUT IT

*“Information is giving out;  
communication is getting through.”*

- Sydney Harris

Based on this statement, answer the following questions:

- Museums “give out” information. Do you think they communicate in a way that “gets through” to people, especially people of different backgrounds and perspectives?
- Does your museum communicate in a way that bring in different perspectives, experiences, and knowledge bases? If yes, how? If no, how could you change this?



**WRITE IT DOWN!**

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## CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

Civic engagement is a skill that involves converting one's individual interests and attributes into the ability to mobilize others and make changes. Museums are civic, voluntary institutions that people can engage with.

Museum funders are increasingly requiring a strengthening between the institutions and the people of their communities.

**Now that we know the skill, let's do more!**

## NOTICE IT

Go to the website of your museum. Once there, look for the following information:

- Does the museum support community organizations? If so, how many and what types of organizations do they support?
- Does the museum offer special programs/events for the community?
- Does the museum have a way that visitors/staff/volunteers can connect outside of the museum?  
(i.e. Facebook Page)



**WRITE IT DOWN!**

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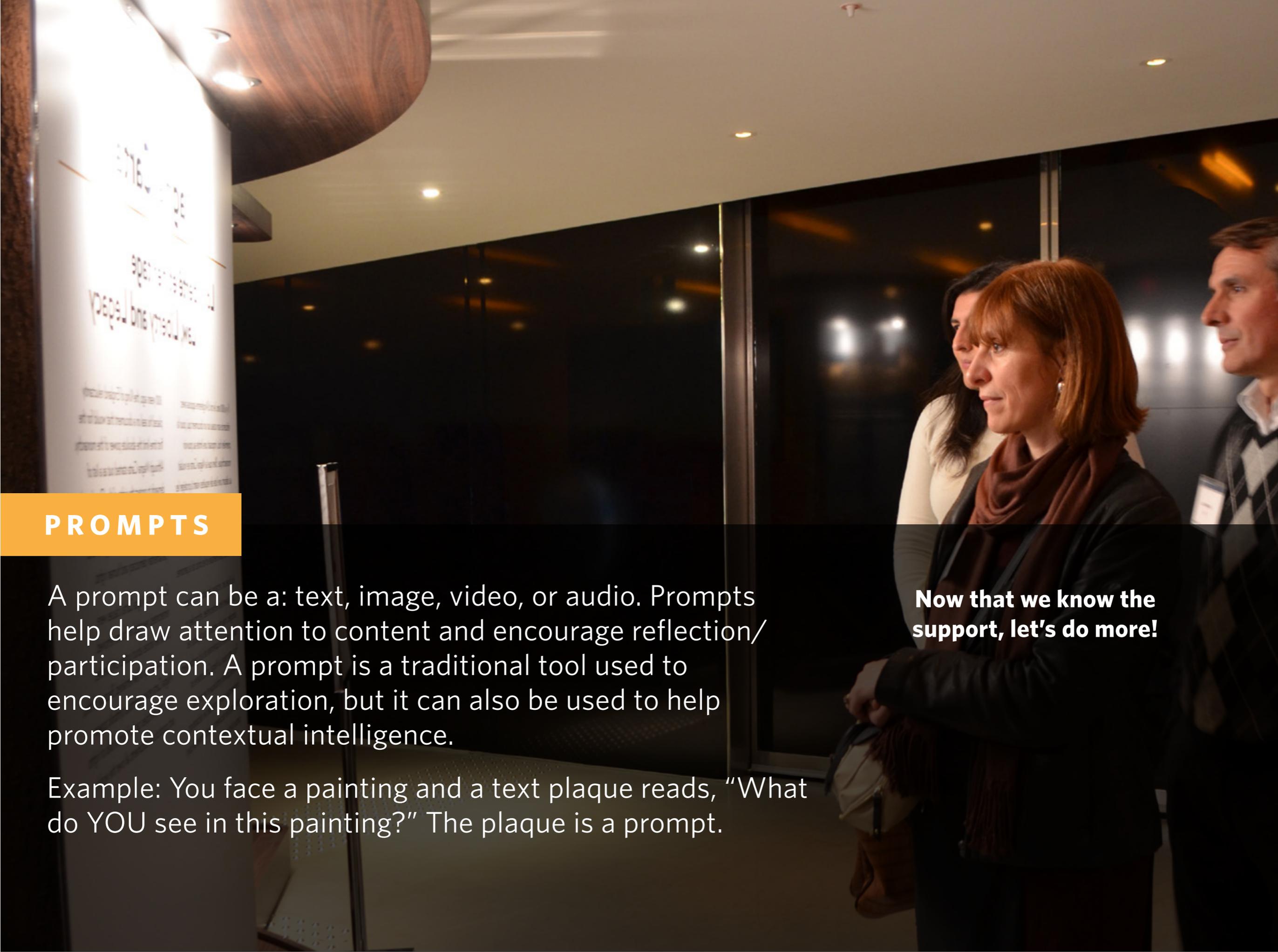
# SUPPORTS: WHAT CAN YOU DO?

**Supports** are features museums can offer to support learning for change. When visitors engage with these features, they develop transformative skills!



Click on each support below to learn more. ▼





## PROMPTS

A prompt can be a: text, image, video, or audio. Prompts help draw attention to content and encourage reflection/participation. A prompt is a traditional tool used to encourage exploration, but it can also be used to help promote contextual intelligence.

Example: You face a painting and a text plaque reads, "What do YOU see in this painting?" The plaque is a prompt.

**Now that we know the support, let's do more!**

## TALK ABOUT IT

Find a co-worker and together pick a feature exhibition at your museum.

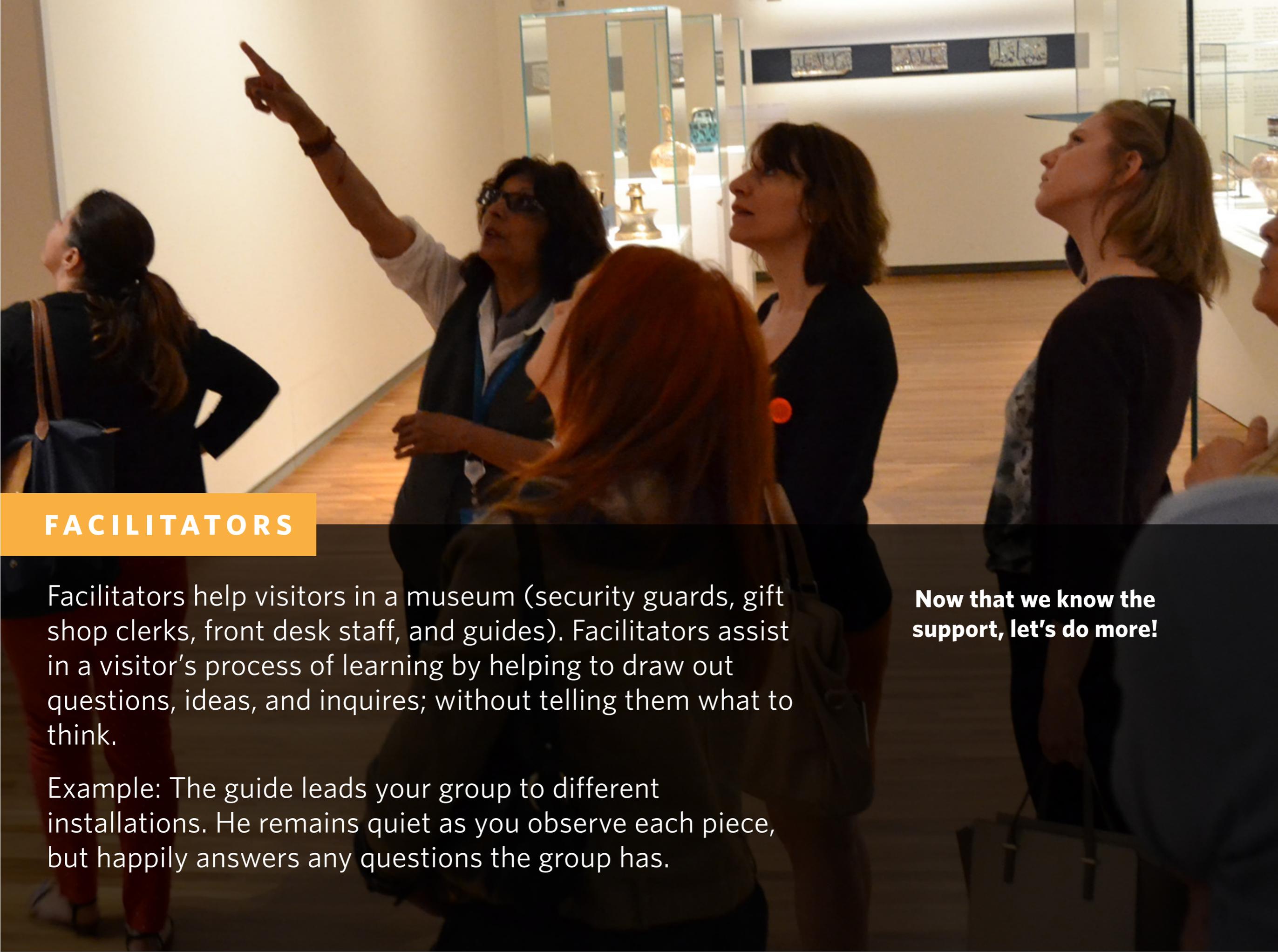
Once you've decided on the exhibition write out your ideas for creating the following prompts (use the exhibit to create relevant content for each prompt):

1. A text plaque
2. An image
3. A video
4. An audio recording



**WRITE IT DOWN!**

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## FACILITATORS

Facilitators help visitors in a museum (security guards, gift shop clerks, front desk staff, and guides). Facilitators assist in a visitor's process of learning by helping to draw out questions, ideas, and inquires; without telling them what to think.

Example: The guide leads your group to different installations. He remains quiet as you observe each piece, but happily answers any questions the group has.

**Now that we know the support, let's do more!**

## NOTICE IT

While at work, seek out a tour guide and ask them a question about a nearby exhibit. Now complete the following:

- Observe them - Do they speak in a way that is passionate, and helps to draw out more questions? Or, do they speak in a disheartened manner and tell people what to think about the exhibit?
- For the next 30 minutes, observe how many visitors interact with the museum facilitators. Do visitors appear engaged with their tour guides?



**WRITE IT DOWN!**

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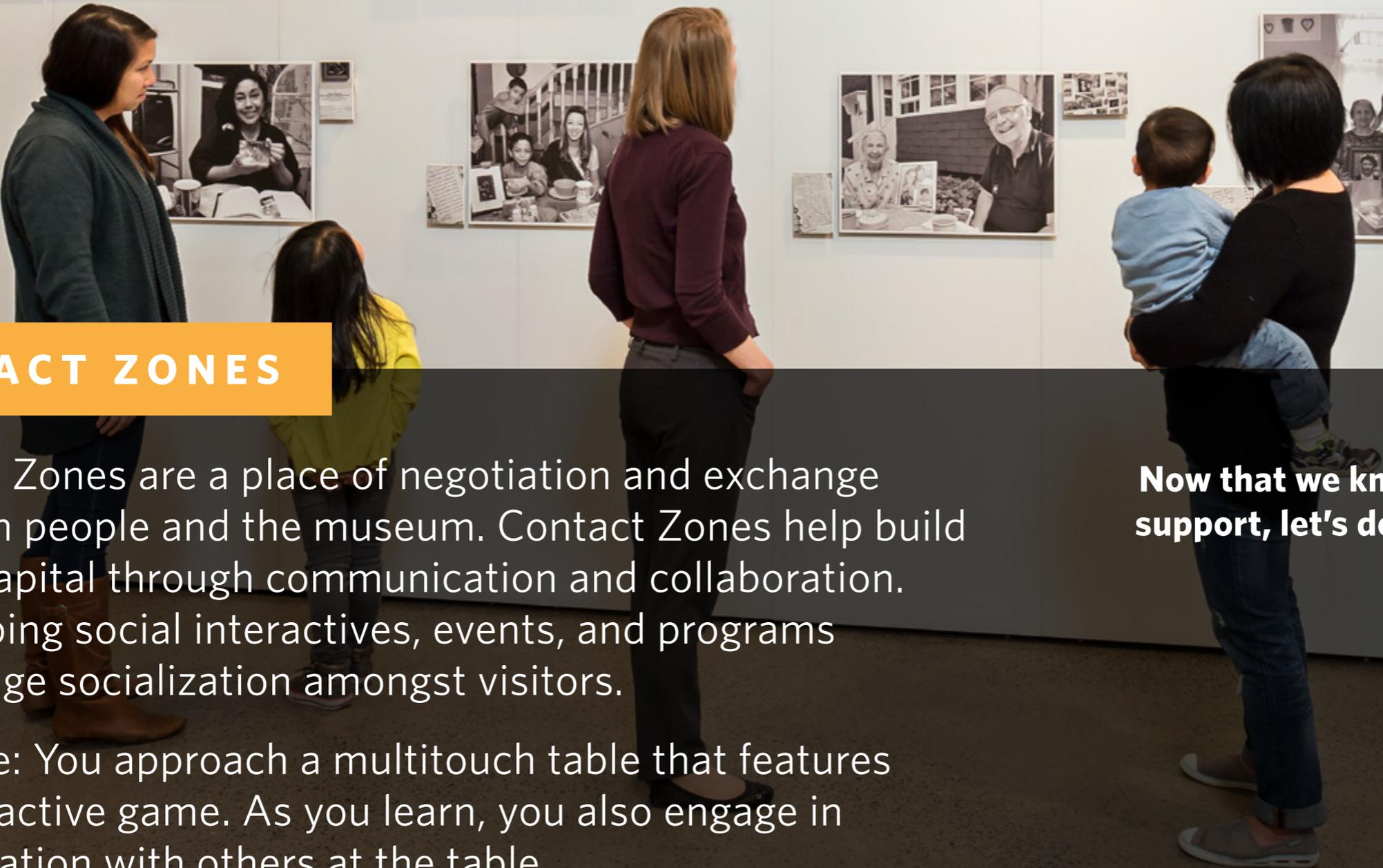


## CONTACT ZONES

Contact Zones are a place of negotiation and exchange between people and the museum. Contact Zones help build social capital through communication and collaboration. Developing social interactives, events, and programs encourage socialization amongst visitors.

Example: You approach a multitouch table that features an interactive game. As you learn, you also engage in conversation with others at the table.

**Now that we know the support, let's do more!**



## NOTICE IT

*“The meeting of two personalities is like the contact of two chemical substances: if there is any reaction, both are transformed.”*

- Carl Jung

Based on this statement, answer the following questions:

- What types of contact zones encourage collaboration? (*List one you've experienced, or an idea you have for a contact zone*)
- Do you think social media platforms, like your museum's Facebook page or Twitter account, can be considered a contact zone?



WRITE IT DOWN!

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## PLATFORMS FOR PRACTICE

Museums teach but it is also important to find opportunities for visitors to practice what they are learning. Capitalizing on learning moments implicit in the museum experience can be reached through developing platforms for practice.

Example: Leaving the Egyptian hieroglyphics exhibit, you stop at a table and attempt the task "can you translate each symbol?"

**Now that we know the support, let's do more!**

## NOTICE IT

While at work, track how often you see the following:

- An area designated as an interaction/ activity space
- People using these participative spaces:
  - o If it is a large number, why do you think that particular platform for practice is effective?
  - o If it is a low number, how do you think the platform could be improved to encourage visitors to use it?



**WRITE IT DOWN!**



## FEEDBACK

Feedback is an important part of learning. Museums can provide feedback by asking for input and contextualizing with the input of others, or giving opportunities for professional evaluation of their own projects.

Example: The curator of a museum exhibit asks you, an arts magazine writer, to view the exhibit before the opening. The curator wants your opinion and feedback on the presentation.

**Now that we know the support, let's do more!**

## THINK ABOUT IT

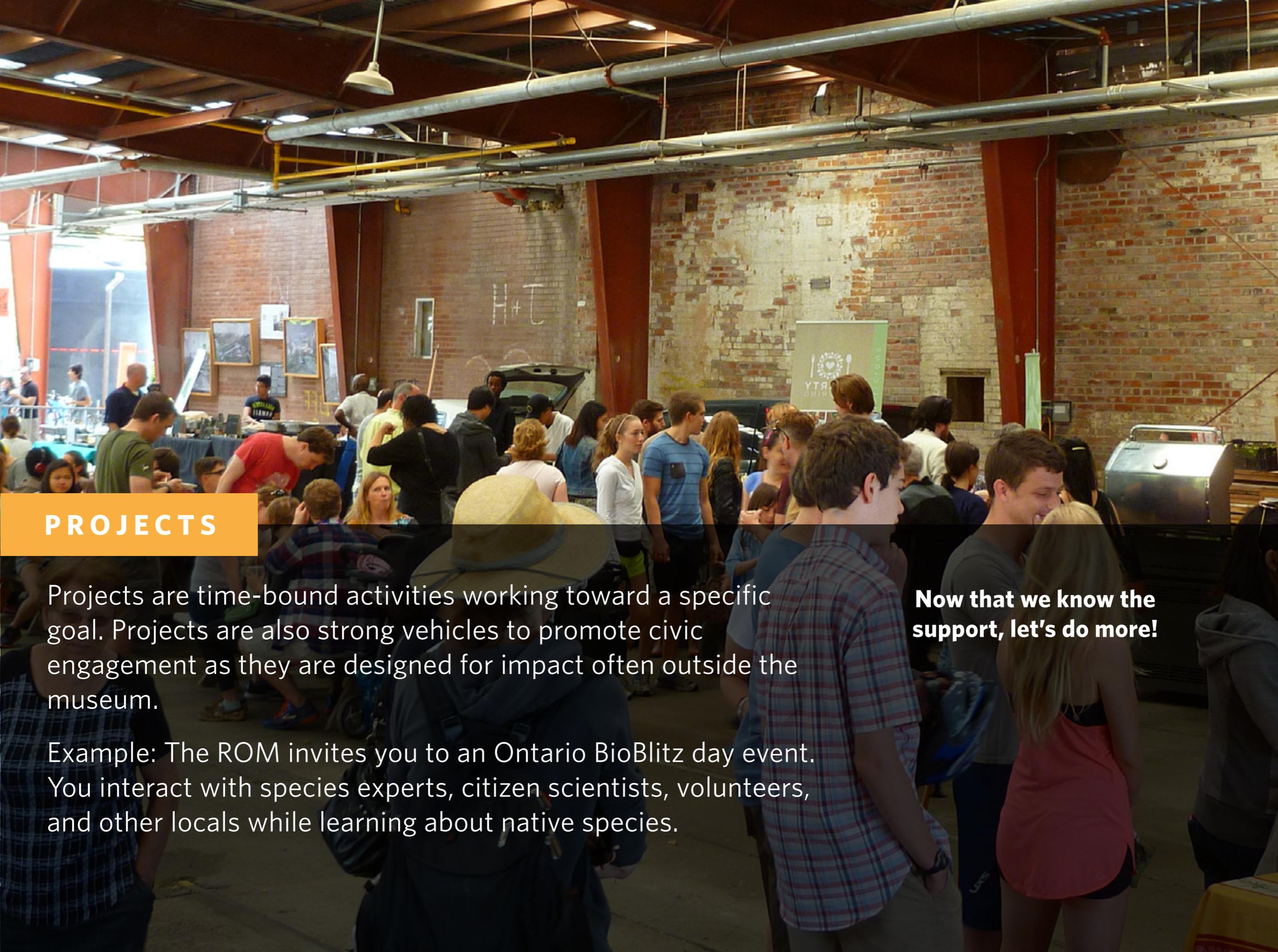
Answer the following questions:

- What methods can museums use to collect and encourage feedback from their visitors?
- Do you think feedback is an integral part of what makes a museum successful?
- Should museums always cater to visitor feedback? What could be an instance where public feedback could do more harm than good for a museum and its programs?



WRITE IT DOWN!

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A large crowd of people is gathered in a brick industrial space, possibly a museum or community center. The room has high ceilings with exposed pipes and ductwork. In the background, there are tables with displays, a car with its trunk open, and a sign that says "YTRA". The atmosphere appears to be a public event or workshop.

## PROJECTS

Projects are time-bound activities working toward a specific goal. Projects are also strong vehicles to promote civic engagement as they are designed for impact often outside the museum.

Example: The ROM invites you to an Ontario BioBlitz day event. You interact with species experts, citizen scientists, volunteers, and other locals while learning about native species.

**Now that we know the support, let's do more!**

## TALK ABOUT IT

Get together with a group of 2-4 and create a project for your museum. You must:

1. Come up with a project - what would it look like and what is the benefit for both the museum and the local community?
2. Outline the rationale and specific goals of the project.
2. Create a workplan and roles for the project. What is the staffing required? How long will it take to accomplish? Are there opportunities for museum staff and visitors to work together?



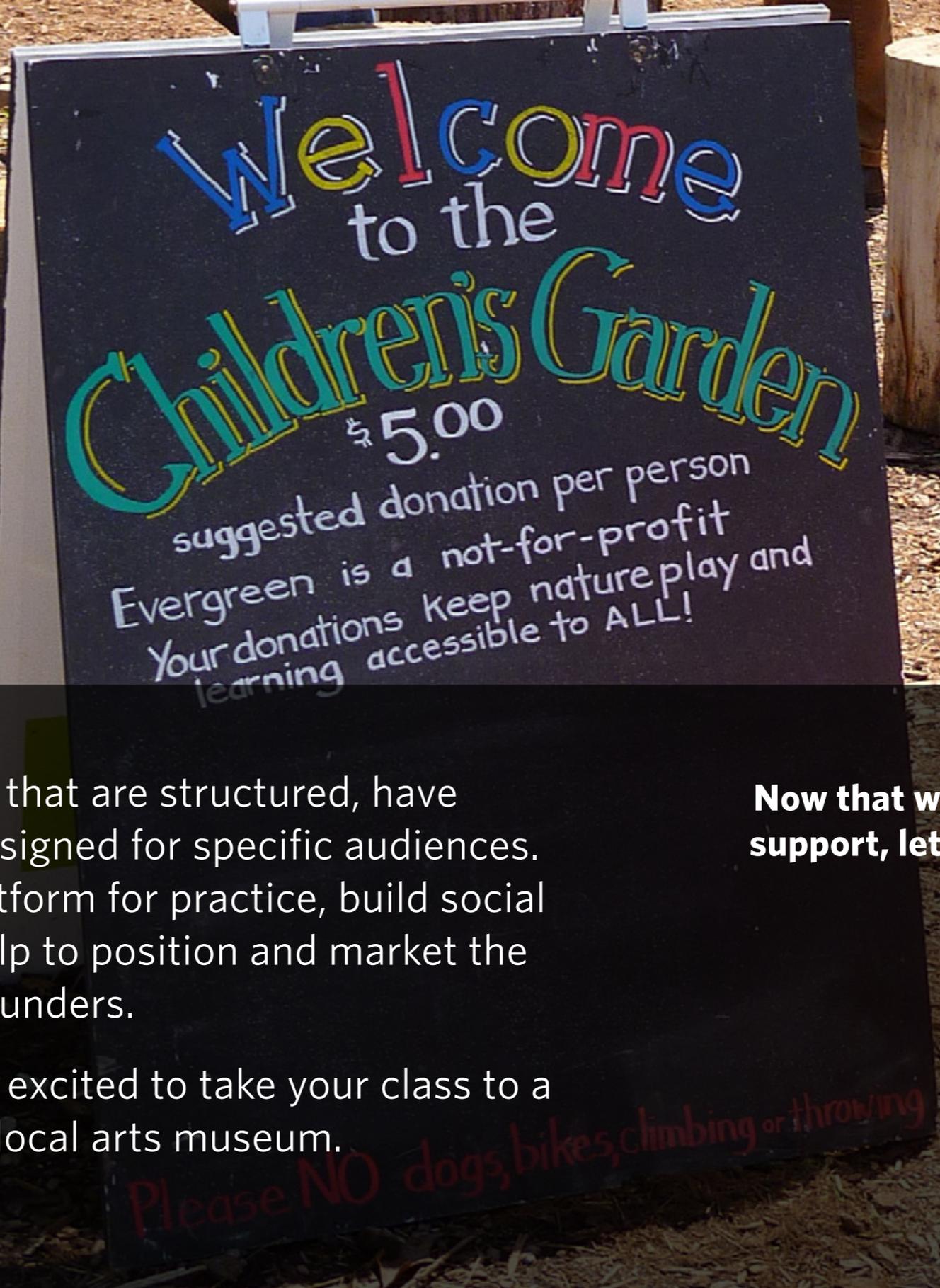
**WRITE IT DOWN!**

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## PROGRAMS

Programs are regular activities that are structured, have assigned resources, and are designed for specific audiences. Programs are an important platform for practice, build social and cultural capital and can help to position and market the museum to other visitors and funders.

Example: As a teacher, you are excited to take your class to a school program arranged by a local arts museum.



**Now that we know the support, let's do more!**



## NOTICE IT

While at work, head to the information desk. Once there, ask the staff member questions such as:

- Does the museum offer a variety of programs? If so, who are the programs for?
- What kinds of activities are included in the programs? What resources are required to run them?

If you work at the information desk, see if you can answer the questions yourself without having to refer to any reference materials! Are you familiar with the programs your museum offers?



**WRITE IT DOWN!**

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## NETWORKS

Museums are nodes within a network of other learning and civil society institutions. Connecting visitors, staff, and outside organizations with similar interests is a key way for museums to support an integrated form of learning that extends beyond its physical site.

Example: After viewing an incredible fossil collection, the museum guide connects you to a local membership group specializing in fossils.

**Now that we know the support, let's do more!**

## THINK ABOUT IT

*“Giving connects two people, the giver and the receiver, and this connection gives birth to a new sense of belonging.”*

- Deepak Chopra

Based on this statement, answer the following questions:

- Does your museum have a network of connections? Is this network accessible to you and your visitors?
- How could you use networks to support visitor learning after their museum visit?



WRITE IT DOWN!

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## VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers are ambassadors for the museum not only among visitors but also in their communities. Volunteers fill a variety of positions and use a combination of their own experiences and the resources of the museum (collections, knowledge, and expertise) to assist and encourage visitor's learning.

Example: As a volunteer, you use your knowledge of early Canadian history to help the museum with research.

**Now that we know the support, let's do more!**

## TALK ABOUT IT

Part 1: Find a co-worker and discuss the following:

- What motivates people to volunteer at a museum?

Part 2: While at work, seek out a volunteer:

- If they have time, talk to them and get to know their thoughts on volunteering. Do they think they play an important role in the visitor experience?
- Do they feel like an integral part of the museum? Are they supported and appreciated? Will they continue volunteering for the museum?



WRITE IT DOWN!

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# THANK YOU!

**We hope you enjoyed this document!**

If you'd like to learn more about this framework, alongside other valuable museum learning concepts, we encourage you to click on the links below:

» **Manual of Museum Learning by Barry Lord and Brad King**

» **Brad King's essay, "Childhood Learning in Museums"**

Questions? Feedback? Email us at [lordacademy@lord.ca](mailto:lordacademy@lord.ca) or click on any of the icons below to connect with us: