

PREPOSITIONS OF LOCATION:
THE SMITHSONIAN MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY

In, at, on, between, over, under, next to...Prepositions can be challenging to teach because of their need for context. We use prepositions of location to directly refer to the world around us:

Please give me the pencil next to the book.

The book is on the table to the right of the lamp.

In the classroom, teachers often use examples like those above, using classroom objects to teach prepositions of location. However, using computer-based tools, we can give students a richer, more engaging context to learn prepositions of location.

In this week's Teacher's Corner we'll practice prepositions through a virtual visit to the U.S. National Museum of Natural History. Millions of visitors every year visit the National Museum of Natural History to learn more about geology, human history, and the environment. Perhaps one of the most popular exhibits is the museum's collection of dinosaur skeletons and fossils.

The museum has created a virtual tour of its exhibits, and now visitors around the world can tour the museum from home or from the classroom. This week, we'll use this virtual tour to engage students while they practice prepositions of location.

LEVEL

Intermediate and above

LANGUAGE FOCUS

- Speaking, listening (primary focus)
- Writing (secondary focus)

GOAL

Students will use prepositions of location to create a scavenger hunt at the National Museum of Natural History.

MATERIALS

- Teacher: whiteboard, or chalkboard; markers or chalk, tape
- One classroom computer, Internet connection, and projector
 - If possible one computer per 2-3 students
 - If no computer is available an .mp3 player will be needed to play audio
- Students: pencils or pens, writing paper

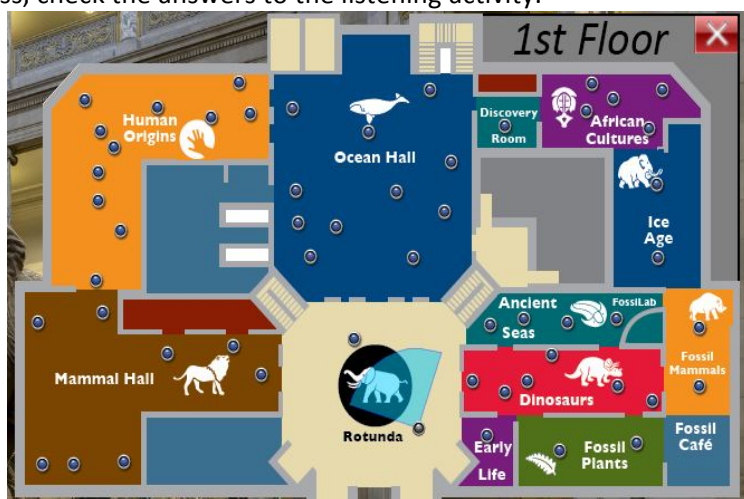
PREPARATION

- If a computer is available, load the [National Museum of Natural History Virtual Tour](#) before class.
 - Be sure to try the Virtual Tour before using it in class to better understand how it works.
 - At the top right corner of the screen are the buttons: ground, first, and second. Click the button labeled: first.
 - This class activity will only use the first floor of the museum.
- If a computer is not available, print out the photos in Appendix B.
 - This activity will use the web-based virtual tour; however the tour can be substituted with the images provided.

PROCEDURES

Part 1: Listening Activity

1. Begin the activity by asking students if they like to go to museums.
 - a. Elicit museum vocabulary from the students by asking: What can you see at a museum?
 - i. Some ideas might include: paintings, art,
2. Tell the students that today they will visit a museum in Washington, D.C.
3. Next, give each student a copy of the National Museum of Natural History: Fill in the Blank worksheet (Appendix A).
4. Tell the students that this is the National Museum of Natural History in Washington, D.C. and today they will listen to a description of the museum. They must listen and label the rooms correctly.
5. Read the directions on the worksheet as a class. When students are ready, play the audio.
 - a. If no computer or .mp3 player is available, the audio transcript in Appendix B can be read aloud.
6. Next, check comprehension by asking the students:
 - a. Does the museum have dinosaurs? – (Yes)
 - b. What do visitors see when they first enter the museum? – (An elephant)
7. As a class, check the answers to the listening activity.



8. Finally, tell the students that the class should not just listen about the museum but take a tour!

Part 2: National Museum of Natural History: Virtual Tour

1. On the computer screen show the students the [National Museum of Natural History: Virtual Tour](#).

2. Take a few moments to explore the museum as a class.
 - a. Note: each of the blue dots on the museum's floor plan is a spot where you can look around the museum.
3. Play the audio one more time. After each area of the museum is discussed, pause the audio and visit the room. In each room, ask the students to find the items discussed in the audio:
 - a. The Hall of Mammals – A Giraffe (between zebras and a hippopotamus)
 - b. Dinosaurs – A Tyrannosaurus Rex (across from the triceratops)
 - c. Ocean Hall – A Whale (hanging from the ceiling)
 - d. Discovery Hall – An Alligator (on the table) and a Raccoon (on the wall to the right)
4. Once students have found all the items in the audio, return to the Hall of Mammals in the Virtual Tour.
 - a. Note: Many of the items in the museum may be new vocabulary for the students. However, the Hall of Mammals has many well know animals so is the best choice for this activity.
5. Have a student pick an item in the Hall of Mammals but keep it secret.
6. Have this student give clues using prepositions of location. The other students must guess the correct item. The student who guesses first chooses the next item for others to guess.

If students would like to learn more about the items at the National Museum of Natural History encourage them to visit:<http://www.mnh.si.edu/explore.html>

NATIONAL MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY: FILL IN THE BLANK

Below is a map of the National Museum of Natural History in Washington, D.C. Listen to the recording and label the maps with the names of the rooms.

Mammal Hall

Ocean Hall

Dinosaurs

Discovery Hall



APPENDIX A: AUDIO TRANSCRIPT

The National Museum of Natural History

"I'll meet you next to the elephant." That comment is heard a lot in Washington, D.C. The elephant is in an unusual place. It is in the center of a large building on the grassy Mall area of the capital city. It is the first thing visitors see when they enter the National Museum of Natural History. This African elephant was 50 years old when it died in 1955. It weighed 7200 kilograms! Let's explore the exhibits of this unique museum.

The newest exhibit is about the history of mammals in the world. It is on the first floor of the museum. The purpose of the new Hall of Mammals is to show how all mammals, including humans, are related. The Hall of Mammals is to the left of the large elephant. Here you can find a giraffe between zebras and a hippopotamus.

Another exciting exhibit is the dinosaur exhibit. In this exhibit visitors can learn about these giant animals that lived millions of years ago. You can find them to the right of the elephant between the Ancient Seas and Fossil Plant exhibits. On the left is the triceratops which has three horns on its head. Across from the triceratops is a Tyrannosaurus Rex. It stands on two legs and has long, sharp teeth. Don't get eaten!

Behind the elephant is the Ocean Hall. Here visitors can learn about the wide variety of animals that call the ocean home. This exhibit contains a giant whale. Can you find it? Be sure to look above you!

Finally, every visitor should stop at the Discovery Room. This room is to the left of the African Cultures exhibit. In the Discovery Room, visitors can examine fossils, use a microscope, and learn about the natural world. Be sure to see the alligator on the table. Can you find the raccoon? A raccoon is a small, furry animal with a white tail with black stripes. The raccoon is on the wall behind a tree. See if you can find him!

*Adapted from Voice of America's [National Museum of Natural History](#)

APPENDIX B:

