

## What we've learned about developing workshops

*Practical tips if you're writing and running new workshops in your museum*

### When you're planning a new workshop...

Define who the **audience** will be for your workshop, and **why** you want to produce a workshop: to make the most of your collection; to complement a particular exhibition, to reach a new audience etc.

### When you're developing content for the workshop...

Start with your topic and carry out **research**, identifying three main learning objectives that are suitable for the target audience.

Your workshop needs a **bang at the beginning and a good ending**. Choose activities that you can't do in the classroom or at the kitchen table, and which can be done by small groups of visitors. Look for surprising hands-on activities or intriguing things to make-and-take.

### When writing the workshop...

From your research, develop a storyline for a workshop **20 minutes long** and write a script. Train presenters in the ideas and activities the show should contain, but do encourage them to present the workshop **in their own way**. Make sure the tone of the presenter and the workshop match, and suit the audience.

Make the best of the equipment and space you have. It could be useful to have a projector, screen, stage and sound system, but a workshop can be done simply on tables.

### When scheduling and promoting the workshop...

Plan the workshop for when the **target audience is likely to be available**. One presenter can run three or maximum four workshops in a day, and will need at least one other member of staff present to be actively involved in helping things run smoothly. Schools usually have to book workshops, but family

visitors usually simply drop in on the day. Consider whether you can make the workshop free, or if you need to charge in order to allow for more expensive components.

To **promote** the workshop, use the web, email lists, school newsletters and anything else you can think of. On the day, have signage and make announcements.

## **When presenting the workshop...**

**Organise** all materials well in advance of the workshop. Give a brief health and safety announcement if necessary. **Enjoy** the workshop, maintaining eye contact with the audience. Make sure your voice can be heard, and vary it during the show. Keep the pace brisk, moving around the room. **Include adults** and don't let them drift off at the back. Select a variety of volunteers from around the audience. Don't dismiss 'wrong' answers; use them to lead to the correct one.

**Encourage** visitors with ideas of what else to do in the museum after the workshop.

## **If you are evaluating the workshop...**

Compare what people say the workshop was about with the learning objectives you identified, to see if they match.

## **Further resources:**

Come and see the workshops we're currently running, by visiting [www.sciencemuseum.org.uk](http://www.sciencemuseum.org.uk) and navigating to events.

Find out about developing science shows by reading a further *What we've learned* sheet:

- What we've learned about writing and performing science shows

Get some ideas about how to evaluate an event by visiting: [www.danacentre.org.uk/aboutus/eventdiy/](http://www.danacentre.org.uk/aboutus/eventdiy/)

See how children can learn to do their own demonstrations by watching a Teachers TV programme: <http://www.teachers.tv/video/27087>