



MUSEUM OF YOU!

VMHC EDUCATION

The Museum of You allows visitors to curate their own exhibit about themselves! We've listed some broad types of items that may be found in a museum. Get creative— items can be something that you own, someone's made, or even something your pet thinks is special.

Artifact ideas:

- Artwork
- Clothes
- Music
- Oral history (stories that people tell out loud)
- Plants
- Trophies

Want to turn this idea into a project? We've provided *Museum of You* examples created by staff at the Virginia Museum of History & Culture! Follow along with one of our worksheets for elementary (p. 2 – 3) and secondary students (p. 4 – 5).

You can share your exhibits online by tagging us on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter @VMHCEducation and by using #MuseumofYouVA. To make an exhibit using items from the VMHC, check out [You Be the Curator](#).



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MUSEUM OF YOU: Elementary School

To begin, think about the following questions:

1. What is a museum?
2. What types of museums are there?
3. What types of things do you think a museum has?
4. Look around your home. What types of things can you put in Museum of You?

Let's look at an example of a *Museum of You* created by Anna, a VMHC staff member. Anna took three pictures of things around her home that she wanted in a museum about her. First, name what's in each picture. Then, write a sentence about why you think Anna chose each picture. In a museum, we call these sentences "captions." They tell visitors why the museum thinks an object is important. Don't read the next section until you've completed those questions.



We're now ready to read Anna's captions for each picture:

1. We love Spring the most in our yard. We have rolling blooms throughout the season including these beauties! The bees like them too.
2. Swift Creek is right around the corner – we start and end most of our days here.
3. Behold Granger! A retired racer, who placed and won several races in his long 2 year career, travelling throughout Florida, Georgia and the Carolinas – now enjoys sleeping in very weird positions, VERY slow walks, and pretending he is sleeping to avoid being asked to go on walks.

Did your captions match Anna's? Sometimes a visitor can think about an object one way, but the museum thinks of it differently— and that's okay! That's what makes museums exciting.

Keep reading for how to make your exhibit



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MUSEUM OF YOU: Elementary School

Now you're ready to make a museum of your own. Pick five objects in or around your house to put in your museum. These can be things you can hold, like a toy or a photograph, or they can be things like memories. If you want memories or stories in your museum, write two or three sentences describing them. After, write a sentence about each object. If you're feeling creative, make an actual exhibit!

Organize your objects around a room and get ready for your exhibit opening. Some people like to dress up for these events, so don't be afraid to look fancy. Invite your family to tour your exhibit. For family or friends who don't live in your house, go digital! Take people on a virtual tour of your exhibit with apps like Facetime or Skype. Congratulations on opening your first *Museum of You!*



MUSEUM OF YOU!

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MUSEUM OF YOU: Secondary School

A *Museum of You* highlights objects or moments that you think are pivotal to understanding who you are as a person. Today you'll analyze how museums write captions, and even how they build their collections. Along the way, you'll choose an object for your *Museum of You* and get a chance to write a caption of your own.

COLLECTING

The *Museum of You* might tell a story from a specific time in your life, or it could be an overview of your whole life. Pick an object that you'll use for this exercise. It can be something physical, like a photograph, or it can be intangible, like an oral history. After you've chosen your object think about where it came from. Where did you get this object? Can you remember buying or making it, or when you got it as a gift?

Museums can add to their collections in a variety of ways. Firstly, they can purchase items that tell stories relevant to their museum. People can also donate things to museums. At the Virginia Museum of History & Culture, we have large collections of personal papers that families have donated to our library over time. The VMHC has over 9 million artifacts in our collection! Lastly, museums can hold donation drives to encourage the public to donate specific items, like those related to female political activism.

INTERPRETING

Now that you know how museums get their "stuff," let's understand how they write captions. These are sentences that can go beyond physical descriptions and add historical context to specific items. Let's look at an example from Adam, a VMHC staff member, on the next page. Read about Adam's object, then complete the following activity.



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MUSEUM OF YOU: Secondary School



Batman mug, 1966

As a child growing up in the 1960s, I was an avid consumer of pop culture, which both entertained and fueled my imagination. I was six years old when the Batman television series starring Adam West and Burt Ward debuted in 1966. I was immediately captivated by the dynamic duo for their valor, ingenuity, and the seemingly endless plethora of Bat-gizmos used to fight crime (who didn't want a spin in the Batmobile?). Of course, I had to demonstrate my loyalty by purchasing all things Caped Crusader – Halloween costume, lunchbox, action figures...and this mug. The other vestiges of my Batmania chapter have long since disappeared, but the mug remains – like Charles Foster Kane's sled "Rosebud" - a fond reminder of the good, gone days of my youth.

DIRECTIONS

1. Circle all the verbs, underline all the adjectives, and make a box around the nouns. If you're completing this on your computer, create three columns and separate the words into categories.
2. Choose one adjective. How does it demonstrate his feelings toward his mug, or towards pop culture in the 1960s?
3. Choose one verb. What action or movement does it show?
4. Choose one noun. How does it fit with the caption's tone?

It's time to write your caption. Keep in mind the importance of word choice— each word must help the visitor understand why your object deserves a spot in the museum! Captions can vary in length. Try to make yours around five to six sentences. After you're done, display the caption and object around your house. *Voila!* You've curated your first object in the *Museum of You*.