

Make a Museum Label

Labels help museum visitors interpret the objects they see. The information shared on a label is what the museum feels is most valuable and can shape a visitor's understanding of a subject. Create your own labels with objects in your home by sharing the information that is important to you.

WHAT'S IN A LABEL?

Objects have many different stories to tell. The museum label has the power to place an object in context by choosing what story it shares. The label below presents some basic facts but the story offers insight into why that information is important and invites the viewer to look closer.

These plates in Penn Museum's Middle East Galleries are beautiful but may not capture someone's interest on their own. A fun title can grab a viewer's attention and make them want to read about the story the plates tell.



9. IMITATION PORCELAIN

Stonepaste;
Cobalt glaze decoration
Mid-17th century CE
Iran

10. BLUE AND WHITE BOWL

Porcelain;
Cobalt glaze decoration
Late 16th century CE
China

THE BLUE AND WHITE MANIA

Blue and white ceramics were highly prized in the Middle East beginning in the 9th century. A huge collection of Chinese blue and white porcelain was displayed at the Safavid shrine at Ardebil (Iran).

Persian ceramic producers in Iran imitated Chinese styles with stonepaste rather than porcelain from the 16th century onward.

If a label is not directly beside or underneath an object, the number system helps the viewer find the information.

Most museum labels include a descriptive title of an object as well as the materials used to make it, when it was believed to be made, and where it was made and/or found.

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Create your own museum display at home by following these steps!

Materials: Paper or other material to create your label; markers, crayons, or pencils; tape (choose one that will not damage walls)

- 1. Find your artifacts.** The objects in your home have stories to tell. Find an object (or group of objects) that is valuable to you in some way. It can be a work of art, souvenirs from a trip, or a trophy from a sport or activity.
- 2. Imagine your audience.** Who will be reading the labels? Is it your family members or guests in your home? A good museum label makes the information accessible to all readers while offering a new way to look at the object it describes. A fun twist would be to pretend visitors from another planet - how would you choose to describe the object differently?
- 3. Gather the important information.**

<p>Create a descriptive title for the object. Try to make it catch your audience's attention.</p>	<p>List observations you feel are important to share. Could be the color, measurements, year made, etc.</p>	<p>What story do you want to tell? It could be a memory you have involving the object, or the story of how it was made.</p>
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- 4. Design your label.** It is up to you what your labels look like. You can choose to present the information like the Penn Museum or you can present the information in a more creative way! Be sure the labels are accessible to your audience so they will be able to read and understand them.