

MOWT Highlight Tour Simple Outline V2019.4.19

Dear Staff Member, Volunteer or Intern (or self-guiding teacher!)

Thank you for studying the highlights of our exhibit content. This outline is meant to help you familiarize yourself with basic information about some of our most popular artifacts and exhibits. After mastering this outline, you will be equipped to give at least a basic promo tour.

Remember: this is *your* tour. While you're using the same exhibits and artifacts as everyone else, you set the energy, the passion, and the fun. You choose to emphasize what you enjoy. To your listeners, *you are the authority*. The more you own your tour, the more enjoyable it will be to you and your audience.

Ideas for preparing *your* highlight tour

1. Spend time in the exhibits.

It is *so* easy to skip this step when you've got other job duties as a staff member or volunteer. Ask your supervisor to allow you time each day to familiarize yourself with the exhibits. Use your breaks to visit and exhibit and read a few signs. Consider coming in on a day off and pretending you're a visitor.

2. Shadow a tour

Staff and volunteers frequently give tours to school groups, adult groups and prospective clients and partners. Have a conversation with your supervisor about following a tour. Ask a Programs staff member when upcoming tours are scheduled.

3. Quality is more important than quantity for information shared

You don't have to share everything that you see in other tours. You don't have to say everything in the outline. In fact, you *shouldn't* try to say everything you know. More info doesn't make for a better tour. Too much info can ruin your tour. Pick what is relevant to the visitor, pick what feels comfortable to the situation, and trust your gut.

4. Find examples of great educational content and take notes

Sometimes it's hard to know how to approach giving a tour. Should I be funny? How fast should I talk? Should I ask questions? Take a tour or attend a program at another museum. Listen to a TED talk. Watch "Crash Course History" on YouTube. Learn their tricks and decide how you will be the authority when giving a tour.

5. Chat with Programs Department staff

Programs Department staff work day in and day out delivering, evaluating, and reworking MOWT's educational content for maximum impact. If you have a question or concern, it's likely they've run into the problem before and found a good solution. Bonus: They love to talk. They especially love talking about what they do.

6. Give the tour to a friend, a staff member or (wait for it) yourself.

The prospect of giving a tour you've only ever studied to a stranger or a group is terrifying. Will my joke fall flat? Will they understand this complicated explanation? Even just walking around the exhibits on your own and explaining things to yourself as you go can help you know what to say.

7. Ditch the outline. Write it out from memory.

Most new tour guides express anxiety about remembering the order of what they will say or about what words they'll use to convey an idea. Writing your tour from memory forces you to address the order of your tour and the way you'll say it.

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- I. **Welcome**- In your intro, the goal is to make your guest feel comfortable and welcome.
 - a. Before doing anything, make sure your guest(s) are checked in. If they are part of a paid group, make sure the group is paid for. If you are giving a promo tour, have the front desk check them in as promo tour.
 - b. My name is _____. My position is _____.
 - c. We have three floors and our tour will take about _____ min/hours.
 - d. Feel free to take pictures without flash. Stop me at any time with questions or if you need a break.
- II. **Intro to MOWT** (mostly just for adult tours)
 - a. MOWT was founded in 2001 by a local doctor and his wife, Dr. Jon and Lorna Kardatzke.
 - b. While much of the artifacts belong to them, we have about 140 different collectors. We have about 10,000 artifacts, 25% of which are on display and 75% of which are owned by MOWT.
 - c. We're a 501c3 with a Board of Directors. We see it as our job to hold these artifacts in trust for the community.
- III. **Fossil Gallery** (no specific order necessary in this element)
 - a. Found in South Dakota in 2005 in the field of a man named Ivan McGee (the namesake).
 - b. Installed in MOWT in 2007.

- c. Roughly 50% complete, most complete parts are tail and left leg.
- d. Don't know if it's a boy or girl. We think it was a young adult.
- e. T. rex was a carnivore, lived 65 million years ago in the cretaceous period.
- f. [You can pass around the fossils or casts found behind the sign].
- g. Other specimens: daspletosaurus, relative to T. rex, edmontosaurus was herbivore and could walk on two or four feet, pteranodon is similar to a pterydactyl but is larger, has no teeth, and has a longer crest on head. Pteranodon is entirely cast.
- h. Fun fact to VIP your guest: The head is nearly entirely cast (⊗) and, according to our most recent research, is too small for this skeleton. The real skull would have been closer in size to Stan's out front.

IV. Sea Creatures

- a. Tylosaurus is a mososaur. Mososaurs are NOT dinosaurs.
 - i. Can compare tylosaur to the mososaur seen in Jurassic World to create a visual image.
 - ii. Logan is named for county in Kansas where he was found.
 - iii. Logan is 75% complete and nearly 30 ft. long.
 - iv. Fun features: jaw with extra joint and teeth on roof of mouth

b. Xiphactinus

- i. Xiphactinus was found in Hays, KS. Is the same type of fish as the "Fish Within A Fish" at the Sternberg Museum at Fort Hays.
- ii. Xiphactinus would (mostly) eat its prey whole.
- iii. This xiphactinus was dug up with shark teeth alongside it. We believe it was either attacked or scavenged by the shark.

V. Optional Stops: Mesopotamia, Rome, and Greece

- a. We normally won't talk about these on a brief highlight tour. However, it will be helpful to know at least some basics in case asked.
- b. Mesopotamia/Ancient Near East- Best artifacts to highlight are the cylinder seals (they're like rolling stamps, were rolled onto clay as a signature) and the cuneiform cones. The cones have a

message written on them and would be inserted into the wall of a building, similar to a building dedication plaque today.

- c. Rome exhibit- There are many things you can choose to highlight here. A great option is the rings, makeup and perfume bottles, and the mirror. Roman women wore fitted jewelry, put on (often poisonous lead) makeup, were able to curl their hair between hollow metal cylinders over a candle, and wore perfume.
- d. Greek exhibit- The Apulian vessels are great pieces to highlight. Pick a few of those you really like, read the signs and memorize some fun facts. Highlight the purpose, design, and symbolism of the paintings.

VI. Ancient Egypt

- a. Often times the best approach is to provide a few pieces of information, allow the guests to see, and then wait to answer the inevitable questions. It will save you time and allow your guests to interact.

b. Mummies

- i. Both female and are about 3,000 years old.
- ii. They are both full grown women. Poor nutrition led to short people. Baka (on the left) is about 4'6". Braided Hair Lady (on the right) is about 4'9".
- iii. BHL's mouth is probably open because of a mummification ceremony called the Opening of the Mouth, which allowed the person to eat and drink in the afterlife.
- iv. The mummies were not royal and their mummification quality is only average. We do think, however, that they were wealthy in life. They have nice teeth, well cared for hair, and manicured nails.
- v. They've been in America over 100 years and have been passed between different owners and museums. They were both unwrapped before they arrived here.
- vi. We don't have the coffins for these mummies.
- vii. Fun fact to VIP your guest: We once took the mummies to a doctor's office (they were diagnosed with a case of being dead, haha) and put them through CT scans. A dime sized hole was discovered in Baka's head.

- c. Other interesting artifacts in the Egyptian exhibit- animal mummies, canopic jar, coffins

VII. Shrunken head and trophy head

- a. The shrunken head is from the Jalisco tribe of South America. To shrink a head, the skin is slit to remove the skull and innards of the head. All orifices are sewn shut and the skin is then dunked in boiling water and filled with hot rocks to turn the skin into leather. Heads were shrunken to allow the owner to retain the strength and spirit of the person.
- b. The trophy head is from the Nazca valley in South America. The tribe in this area often kept heads, at times out of respect and at times as a trophy. The rope through the head indicates this is probably a trophy.

VIII. Buddhas

- a. One of the most interesting things to point out about the Buddhas is that they were originally painted. You can point out bits of the original paint.
- b. Each Buddha has different symbolism. For example, Mi Lo (the laughing Buddha) is clutching beads which represent wealth and a bag representing prosperity.
- c. Fun fact to VIP your guests: Museum legend tells that once, when Mi Lo was moved from one exhibit to another, he cracked the floor beneath him.

IX. 2nd Floor- 15th Century Bible

- a. This artifact is located inside the Creating the Crown exhibit (middle of the 2nd floor, gray walls).
- b. It was printed within 50 years of the printing press. This is very important for two reasons:
 - i. The printing press changed the way knowledge was spread. This is a good example of what something printed by the press would look like.
 - ii. Prior to the printing press, very few Bibles were available as they were only handwritten by monks. The printing press made Bibles more available to more people, which is thought to have led to the Protestant Reformation.
- c. The Bible is opened to the book of Sapientia, which is Latin for the Book of Wisdom. It is interesting to note that this is a book that is not present in all Bibles. This was printed prior to the Protestant Reformation and before the apocrypha (books

believed by Martin Luther to be of dubious origin) were removed.

- d. The colored letters were handwritten in. This process is called illumination.
- e. Other notes on this exhibit: All documents except for those in the Bible's case and the one to its left are facsimiles, or copies of things in the museums collection.
- f. Fun fact to VIP guests: The real documents case, to the left of the Bible's case, rotates every three months. This is your chance to see very old documents with your own eyes.

X. Founding of America

- a. You have many options to highlight in the Founding of America exhibit.
- b. 1843 copy of the Declaration of Independence was made with a huge stamp as (obviously) photocopies were not available at the time. It is important because the original Declaration is very faded and this shows us more detail.
- c. The two uniforms to the side of the Declaration were used in the movie *The Patriot*. While they are not actually *from* the Revolution, they were made with great attention to historical accuracy.

XI. Civil War

- a. Again, there are many things you can address in the Civil War area. Pick one or two.
- b. Instruments
 - i. These would have been used by military musicians during the Civil War
 - ii. Musicians played songs to signal actions to the troops. They'd play cadences for marching.
 - iii. Evidence indicates that children as young as 9 years old joined the army during the Civil War as musicians. This certainly was not the norm, but it did happen.
- c. Reproduction of a Civil War Era mourning dress
 - i. A woman who lost a family member during the Victorian Era would have to go into mourning. A widow would have to go into mourning for 2 and a half years. Mourning periods for other family members were shorter. In general, men mourned for shorter times than women.

- ii. Fun fact to VIP your guests: As mourning clothes would often be needed at a moment's notice, they became the first off-the-rack clothing items (clothing was custom made back then). Those who could not afford new clothes would dye all of their old clothes black.
- d. Henry Repeating Rifle
 - i. [Need more info]

XII. World War I

- a. The big focus of this exhibit is the trench replica. In this exhibit, we like to highlight the experience of a WWII soldier in the trenches.
- b. Start by asking the guest what they think the trench was used for and have a conversation about the pros and cons of trench warfare.
- c. Pros-
 - i. Protection from enemy gunfire and artillery
 - ii. Easier to hold onto land when you are literally inside of it
 - iii. Safe (if inefficient) transportation
 - iv. Harder for enemy to know where to aim projectiles
- d. Cons-
 - i. Disease spread easily due to lack of sanitation
 - ii. Trench foot and jungle rot from mud and moisture
 - iii. Labor intensive to build, hard to maintain
 - iv. Dragged out warfare for a long time because it was hard to gain any ground
 - v. If cornered or if grenade or gas thrown in, there was nowhere to go
- e. Fun fact to VIP guests: The wood planks are called "duckboards." Their main purpose was to protect soldier's feet from the mud, although they may also have served as a primitive alarm system against intruders. It would be impossible for someone to sneak up on you with this kind of squeaking!

XIII. World War II

- a. Again, there are many things you can talk about with World War II.
- b. World War II Uniforms of note
 - i. Soviet woman uniform

1. This one is located in the corner of the two cases and is a rather unremarkable in design.
 2. It belonged to a woman named Kseneya Ivanovna Davidenko, a railroad signaler. The mess tin by her feet was stolen from a German and used to heat up meals.
 3. Fun fact to VIP guests: For now, this is the only women's uniform in our collection.
- ii. US Navy Pilot uniform (Brown leather, brown fur collar)
1. During WWII, pilots did not have heat inside cockpits. As things get cold at high altitudes, they needed uniforms to provide warmth.
 2. This uniform and Japanese one on the case on the other side have wires running through them that provide heat, like a electric blanket.
 3. Fun fact to VIP guests: This worked great until one of the wires got a short and the suit caught fire. These suits were replaced by wool and cotton then nylon alternatives during the Korean War.
- c. Hat and scarf belonging to Don Jackson
- i. Don Jackson is a Kansas native and was trained as a Tuskegee airman during World War II.
 - ii. After WWII, he returned to Wichita and became a veterinarian. He is still alive today and is active in the veterans community.
 - iii. Tuskegee Airmen were the first group of African American military pilots. They all trained at Tuskegee university (hence their unofficial moniker) and some saw action during World War II.
- d. Nazi flag
- i. This middle medallion of the flag was donated to MOWT in 2007 by someone who found it at a garage sale. A MOWT staff member took the time to try and find some of the signees.
 - ii. One of the signees, S/Sgt. Cyril Leuelling, was reached and revealed himself as the man who had the flag mailed to America as a war trophy. It turned out that he and his fellow soldiers had signed it in France just 2 months after landing in Normandy on D-Day. The flag never made it

home to Cyril and this was the first he'd seen it since he mailed it.

- iii. Cyril called in and spoke over the phone once for an exhibit opening and, in his *nineties*, travelled all the way from Illinois to speak in person on Veteran's Day 2013.
- iv. We are especially proud of this piece because it exhibits the power of a community (the MOWT and Wichita community, in this case) to save important stories, like Cyril's.
- v. Please be aware: On rare occasions, people may be offended that you are highlighting a Nazi flag. In these cases, please be sensitive and inform them we highlight it to give honor to the American soldiers who signed.

XIV. Third Floor

- a. We usually do not spend much time highlighting the exhibits of the third floor.
- b. Banquet space- *Epecially if* you are giving a promo tour to someone who may be interested in renting the space, be sure and stop here to mention our facilities.
- c. Rotating Gallery-This will rotate from year to year so the content will change. The important thing here is to highlight that *students* get to come in and curate this exhibit. This is exciting because it allows us to help them learn and it gives us a change to showcase artifacts that otherwise may not be seen and tell new stories about artifacts already on display.
- d. Authors section: Again, we frequently do not highlight this area. If you'd like to stop here, pick an artifact or two and study up on it. You can highlight this for your guests.
- e. Romancing the West- Showing off the Gatling Gun is a fun way to end your promo tour. If you'd like to integrate this into your tour, please talk to a Programs staff member and have them show you how to demonstrate the Gatling Gun.

XV. End of tour

- a. Helping guests assign value- Ask your guests what their favorite piece was and why. This helps solidify their favorite part in their mind.
- b. If you are finishing a group tour, you'll likely want to allow them to look around. Before you let them go, thank them and let

them know where you'll be available to answer follow up questions.

- c. If you're giving a promo tour, you'll probably want to return them to the front desk. Give them your business card or the business card of the relevant staff member so they can follow up. If they want to chat, be sure not to cut them off too soon. Allow them to express their reaction to the tour.

You're finished!