



National Museum of Natural History Washington, D.C.

Introduction and Instructions

Opened in 1910, this museum traces its origins back even further, to the founding of the Smithsonian Institution itself. Originally housed in the Smithsonian Castle – which is located directly across the Mall – it was once known simply as the National Museum. Today, the museum is the most visited natural history museum in the world. In addition to any prior knowledge you may have, use your research skills and the resources provided here to answer the questions below.



Let's learn more about the history of this museum.

EXPLORE: <https://naturalhistory.si.edu/about/brief-history-nmnh>

1. In addition to its natural history collections, what else was housed in the museum when it first opened?

Answer: It housed art, culture, and history collections.



Get a sneak peak of the museum from a student's perspective.

WATCH: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CxO2GW4QT_M

Check out the current exhibits at the museum here.

EXPLORE: <https://naturalhistory.si.edu/exhibits>



See the museum from a first-person perspective!

EXPLORE: <https://naturalhistory.si.edu/about/virtual-tour>

2. It wasn't until 1957 when it was determined that the museum needed to be split into two separate museums: the Museum of Natural History and the Museum of History and Technology. The art and portrait collections were moved to the new American Art and Portrait Galleries that opened in 1968. The National Museum of Natural History was to focus on the anthropology and natural history collection. Choose three exhibits that you would like to see on your tour. Describe what they are and your reasons for wanting to see them.

Answers will vary.



Go inside the collections with some of the curators and researchers who work at the museum.

WATCH: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CCxbHd0N1ns>

3. Explain why the museum is considered a scientific institution.

Answers will vary, but students may write about how there are many more collections that are not on display. Also, there is scientific research going on all the time to help us learn more about our world.



Read more about the research and collections that are going on behind the scenes at the National Museum of Natural History.

READ: <https://naturalhistory.si.edu/research>

4. Explore one of the seven science topics. Summarize what you learn.

Answers will vary.

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WHAT DO YOU THINK? *This is your chance to share your opinions, make connections, and apply what you've learned!*



Did you know that you can be a Citizen Scientist and help the National Museum of Natural History? Look over the eight opportunities featured on this page.
READ: <https://www.si.edu/Volunteer/CitizenScience>

1. Select one of the Citizen Scientist opportunities to learn more about. Summarize the program you chose, and give two specific reasons why it interests you.

Answers will vary.

2. How might the museum use this technology even more in the future?

Answers will vary.

3. Imagine what exhibits will be in the National Museum of Natural History in the future. Propose two future exhibits that might be included.

Answers will vary.