

University of Alaska Museum of the North

Directed Discovery Field Trip

Museum Science

K-1st Grade

1 hour

Introduction, Welcome & Rules (10 min)

Gather the class in the Education Center to welcome them to the museum, remove coats, review museum rules, & divide into groups. Introduce yourself and other docents. Tell the class what will happen during the tour.

Ask the students if they collect things. Allow a few of them to answer and tell you what they collect. Ask them how many have been to a library (hopefully they all raise their hands!). What does a library collect? Books! A museum is kind of like a library. We collect things and organize them. But, we don't collect books. Here at this museum we collect rocks, fossils, birds, mammals, fish, insects and more! You can see some of our collection in the galleries. More of it is stored in the basement. Museum collections are used by people all over the world to learn about things. When scientists make and use collections they must know how to sort things. Today we're going to learn about animals and how scientists sort.

I. Collect it! (15 minutes)

This half of the class will complete a scavenger hunt in the Gallery of Alaska. This can be supervised by chaperones or docents. The class will be further divided into 2 small groups (~5-7 students each).

The students will be creating a "collection" of their own. They will search the gallery for animals and collect feathers, fur, etc along the way.

II. Classify it! (15 minutes)

This half of the class will learn about sorting and classification with the docent. They will practice sorting exercises in the Education Center.

Begin by telling students you are going to learn to practice looking for things that are the same and different. This is how scientists do things. Here at the museum, we have collected so many things, it is important to sort them! Pass out piles of the butterfly count & sort pieces. Ask kids to divide them by color. Then ask them if everything in each pile looks alike. No! So, let's sort by the shape (eggs, caterpillars, etc). Discuss how things can be sorted differently and that scientists need to agree on how they are going to do it!

Give each student a picture. Ask them to look at it and decide if it is living or non-living. This is the first category that scientists use. Have all of one group hold up their picture (or move to certain seats, etc). Then, further sort the living things. Ask the students which things are different than the rest. Sort into plants & animals. The students who were in the non-living group will help with the sorting (they become scientists). Finally, sort the animals into birds, fish, mammals and insects. ("Find all the animals with fur. Find all the animals that fly (or with feathers). Find all the fish (scales & fins). Find all the animals with 6 legs!")

Draw an animal (15 minutes)

Tell the students you can sometimes “collect” animals by keeping a checklist of those you see. You could take pictures or draw animals you have seen. Today you can get started by drawing an animal in the gallery.

Pass out writing boards, pencils and blank paper to the class. Allow the students to wander the Gallery of Alaska and draw an animal of their choosing. Collect all the materials from the students and gather them together in the Education Center

Wrap-up (5 minutes)

Review and hand out coats. Encourage kids to continue “collecting” animals when they see them and to think about what group they belong to (birds, fish, insects, mammals).