



WEEK 1

Discover Your Strengths

What makes you uniquely awesome? How can you use your strengths to support your community?

You-seum

Your Quest:

Curators are people who decide what to display in a museum and tell stories through the collection! In this activity, you'll create a personal You-seum exhibit that tells your story.

By embarking on this quest, you will gain the following skills:

- Storytelling in different ways
- Creating meaning through art
- Self-reflection and self-awareness

Mission Materials:

- Blank paper or note cards.
- Pencil
- Markers, colored pencils, crayons
- Different pictures or objects that represent who you are

Mission Directions:

1. Grab a piece of paper and a pen or pencil and use them to brainstorm.
 - a. What kinds of items would you like to exhibit in your museum?
 - b. How many items would you like to exhibit in your museum?
 - c. Remember, these are just ideas, be free to include things you find along the way!
2. Brainstorm some major milestones in your life and if you have any objects that represent those milestones. Make a note of these as potential items you'll include in your museum exhibit.
3. Take a look around your room. What are the most important objects in this room and how do they tell your story?
 - a. Be sure to think about who gave you the objects, and the circumstances around them giving it to you. For example: did a grandparent give you a stuffed animal when you were younger? That's a part of your story! Use it to tell your museum-goers about your relationship with them!



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4. Ask a parent to help you with this part: Look around other rooms in your home for objects that tell your story. Is there a drawing on the fridge that you did? Maybe there are old photos of you tucked away in a box that you'll need help getting down! Don't be afraid to dig around and look for the artifacts that will best help you to tell your story.
5. Ask a parent to help you with this part: Do you have any family members that don't live with you but that you are close with? Have your parents help you call them up and ask them if they have any memories or ideas for objects that you can include in your you-seum.
 - a. If you don't have access to an object that tells the story maybe you can make something! Draw a picture of you and your family at an event, or create confetti to represent a birthday party you went to for your grandparents! Be as creative as you want to be - this is *your* story after all.
6. Once you have all of your objects set them all out together and grab some more blank paper and a pen or pencil. Now it's time to decide how *you* want to tell your story. Some things to think about are . . .
 - a. Do you want to tell the story in a *linear* way? (That means you tell the story starting at the beginning and going up until now.)
 - b. Do you want to tell your story in a *non-linear* way? (That means you tell your story in any order you want!)
 - c. Is there a *theme* to your exhibit? (For example, do most of your items relate to a hobby you have, a sport you play, a type of art you love, or spending time with your family?) Be sure to take note of that theme on this paper so it can help you tell your story!
7. Once you've decided on all of this it's time to get to work! Set up your museum space and arrange all of your objects carefully so they are visible to your guests but won't fall over!
 - a. Make sure that your objects go in the order of the story you want them to tell! Place the items that tell the beginning of your story closer to the front of the exhibit, and the items that tell the end of your story closer to the back of the exhibit.
8. Use a piece of paper or a notecard to label each item. The label should give as much information as possible! Some things to include are . . .
 - a. What the item is
 - b. Who gave you the item (or, if you're borrowing it, who it belongs to!)
 - c. For things like photos: include the names of the people who are in the picture, and the event it is a picture of.
9. Under your label write out why this object tells part of your story. Be sure to include as much information as you can, so people visiting your museum can learn as much as possible about you and about the story you want to tell.
10. Once all of this is complete you are ready to open your museum to your friends and family!



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Level Up:

- Consider the ways you might *digitize* (*this means make things available on a phone or a computer*) this exhibit and display it in a digital space. Consider asking your family or friends if they have objects that they would like to donate to your museum that will help you add detail to your story. Get your parents' permission and host a tour of your museum for family and friends who are far away. Have a special relationship with your best friend or a certain family member: consider making a whole you-seum exhibit that tells that story!

More to Explore at the Library:

- Read [The Stonewall Riots: Coming Out in the Streets](#) by Gayle Pitman. Pitman takes a unique approach to telling the story of the Stonewall riots by introducing a series of meaningful objects associated with the historical event. Also includes a timeline of events, significant notes on each object, and additional resources.
- Explore [Portraits of Immigrants at Ellis Island](#) by Lewis Hine and made available by NYPL's Digital Collections.

Your Reward:

Make sure to visit NYPL's Online Reading Portal through our partner Beanstack and log your completed activity to receive a special badge! Find our portal at nypl.org/summerreading.

Activity Author: Kevin Kelly, After School Program Coordinator