

Guiding principles around creating a Museum Exhibit and writing labels:

CHOOSING THE ELEMENTS OF YOUR MUSEUM DISPLAY:

The elements students choose to include should *build the narrative* around their *thesis*. As such, the annotations of these elements should link together the topic, theme and the choice of elements to effectively communicate the student's thesis. The visual presentation/construction should bring together all these ideas.

LABELS:

HOW TO

Every label should address the following criteria:

- An assessment of the source in itself, what it says about the theme
- Link the source back to the theme
- Explain how it acts as important proof to the narrative
- Labels should be concise, bold and to the point
- Careful language choice is essential for communicating a specific message
- Student should also consider composition and structure of the label itself, and how this may be manipulated to

"Excellence in Exhibition Label Writing Competition" examples - <http://aam-us.org/about-us/grants-awards-and-competitions/excellence-in-label-writing>

SUGGESTED STRUCTURE

Below is a suggested formula for writing an exhibition label:

1. **Introduction statement:** the first line of every label should be hard hitting and directly address the topic of the element and link to the theme/thesis
2. **Build the narrative:** student should then draw on how this element builds on the narrative of the history presented, giving further historical detail. Essentially this is the 'story telling' part
3. **Effect:** higher level entries will provide proof of the *impact* their topic has made as a turning point in history
4. **Impact statement:** a strong, conclusive statement that delivers the ultimate message and significance of this element in demonstrating the theme

WHAT IS AN "ELEMENT" OF A MUSEUM DISPLAY:

An element refers to the different components of the museum display used to represent and communicate the historical detail of the chosen topic. All elements should be captioned, but not every element requires a label. Elements can take many shapes and forms. Below are some examples:

- Sources:
 - Image/photograph
 - Cartoon
 - Diary/journal
 - Artefact
 - Artwork
 - Speeches and Quotes
- Timeline on the model
- Physical Representation: i.e. many students may physical construct buildings or replica models as part of the display
- Maps
- *Etc.*

ANNOTATED EXEMPLARS:

EXEMPLAR ONE: HISTORICAL SOURCE

Topic: The Universal Declaration of Human Rights

Theme: Turning Points



In the context of changing relations, rising international tension and the recent loss of close to 80 million lives during World War II, The Universal Declaration of Human Rights set the tone for an entirely new world order; one in which we internationally agreed to the value of the lives of every human being. The declaration is considered the first global expression of human rights and, seen here, within 30 articles aims for the achievement of international co-operation in solving international problems of an economic, social, cultural or humanitarian character, including respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms without distinction as to race, sex, language or religion. After almost 300 years of intergovernmental relations being characterised by *Realpolitik* the world now looked to their fellow global citizens as comrades towards a common cause, on a quest of global peace and protection, rather than enemy statesmen. On the 10th of December 1948 when the vote of 48 in favour and none opposed was taken in the UN General assembly, one of the drafting subcommittee recalled “I perceived clearly that I was participating in a truly significant historic event ... there was an atmosphere of genuine solidarity and brotherhood among men and women from all latitudes, the likes of which I have not seen again in any international setting”. Only almost 4 years before then in the midst of World War II, on the 17th December 1944 Allied prisoners of war are executed in cold blood by elements of the 6th SS Panzer Army. Some 87 prisoners are killed where they stand on direct orders from German Colonel Joachim Peiper. Today, more than 7, 500 people around the world bring human rights complaints to the attention of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. Whilst the milestone document was not legally binding and not yet one always adhered to, it has since forced the world to reconsider our humanity and set a precedent of mortality for humankind

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights: proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly in Paris on 10 December 1948 (General Assembly resolution 217 A) as a common standard of achievements for all peoples and all nations. It sets out, for the first time, fundamental human rights to be universally protected and it has been translated into over 500 languages.

never seen before.



Source caption including relevant publishing details

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