

# Activity: Create a Museum Exhibit

Objects and specimens help bring history to life, make connections between the past and present, record biological diversity, and provide data for researchers. Museums collect objects, care for them, and use them to help people understand the world around them.

Denali's museum collections include more than 370,000 items from eight disciplines: Archaeology, Ethnology, History, Art, Archives, Geology, Biology, and Paleontology.

## Main Ideas

- 1) Museum collections teach us about our world.
- 2) Exhibit designers and museum curators tell stories by choosing which objects to display and how to present them.

## Learning Objectives

Students will:

- Explain the importance of museum collections and exhibits.
- Practice telling stories by creating museum exhibits.

## Learning Standards

Alaska History Content Standards: C.3. Apply thinking skills, including classifying, interpreting, analyzing, summarizing, synthesizing, and evaluating, to understand the historical record.

## Additional Resources

Denali's Museum Collection: [www.nps.gov/articles/denali-crp-museum-collection.htm](http://www.nps.gov/articles/denali-crp-museum-collection.htm)

University of Alaska Museum of the North: [www.uaf.edu/museum](http://www.uaf.edu/museum)

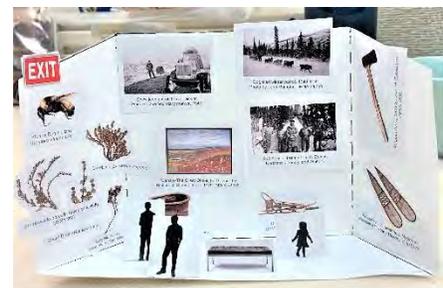
**Time Needed:** 30 minutes

## Materials

- Photos of museum exhibits (photos included or find your own)
- Museum Exhibit Templates, printed on cardstock
- Denali Museum Objects sheets
- Blank paper and pencils
- Scissors
- Glue



Denali museum collections.  
NPS Photo.

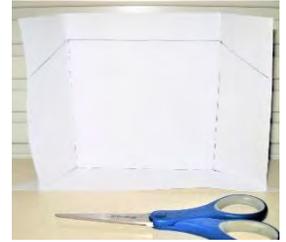


A mini museum exhibit. UAMN photo.

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## Directions

- Ask students if they have ever visited a museum. If so, ask them what they saw and experienced. Brainstorm reasons museums collect and exhibit objects.
  - Show students photos of different museum exhibits. What objects, photographs, videos, labels, or other materials are in each exhibit? What similarities and differences do they see between exhibits? What story is each exhibit telling?
- Lead students in making their own mini museum exhibits.
  - Give each student a Museum Exhibit Template. Have them cut out the triangles on the bottom corners, then fold on the dotted lines to make the display stand up. [For younger students, cut and fold the templates for them in advance.]
  - Pass out Denali Museum Objects sheets. Have students choose which objects to include in their exhibit, and cut them out. Remind them to include the label information.
    - Encourage students to choose a theme for their exhibit (examples: animals of Denali, challenges of mountain climbing, photographs of the park) and select objects that help tell that story.
    - Students may also draw their own objects on blank paper.
  - Arrange pictures on the exhibit template. Once satisfied with the arrangement, glue the pictures down.
  - A museum exhibit needs visitors! Add benches, signs, and visitors to complete the exhibit. [Fold the tabs on the visitor silhouettes to make them stand upright.]
- In pairs, have students discuss their museum exhibits with each other. What kinds of stories did they tell? What objects did they choose to include? What other objects could they add?
  - *Optional:* Have students write a description of their museum exhibit and give it a title.
- *Wrap Up:* Discuss the following questions with students:
  - Why do museums collect and exhibit objects? What different kinds of objects are in museum collections?
  - What was the easiest part of creating your exhibit? What was the hardest part?
  - How do museum exhibits tell stories? What stories do you want to see in museums?



**Extension:** Have students make a mini museum exhibit on a different topic, such as their family, school, or community. This could also be a class project.



UAMN photos.



## Museum Exhibit Examples



Denali Visitor Center. NPS Photo / Kent Miller.



Toklat Tent, Denali National Park. NPS Photo / Charlotte Bodak.

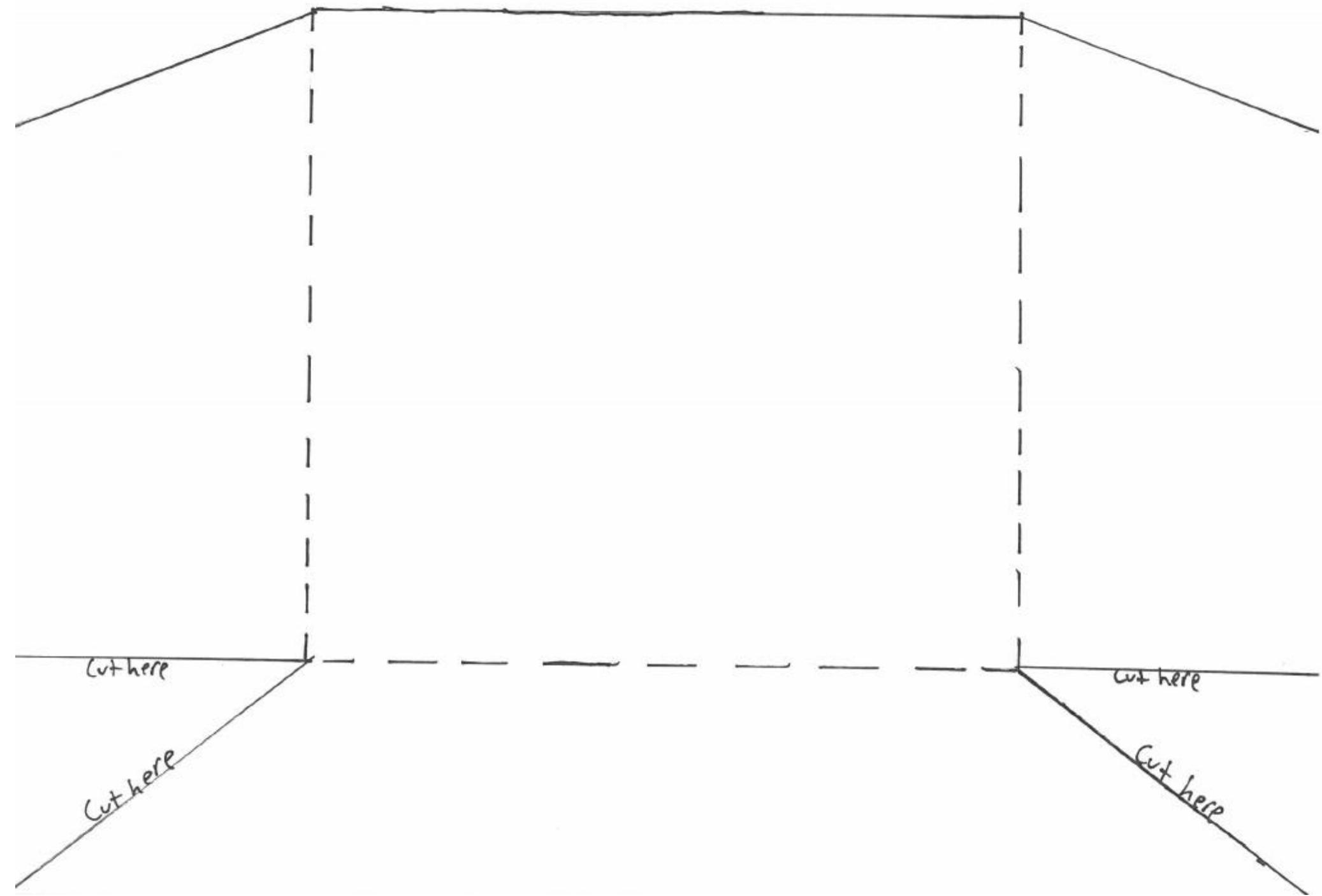


Gallery of Alaska, UA Museum of the North. UAMN photo.



Art of the North Gallery, Anchorage Museum. [www.anchagemuseum.org](http://www.anchagemuseum.org)

# Museum Exhibit Template



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## Denali Museum Objects

These objects are just a few of the 370,000 items in Denali's museum collections.



1913 Ascent Team (Tatum, George, Karstens, Fredson, and Harper). DENA 10728.



Ranger John Rumohr on a dog sled winter patrol, 1940-1941. DENA 21700.



Postcard of McKinley Park Station Train Depot, circa 1990. DENA 23951.



Snow jeep patrol, Oscar Dick at Wonder Lake boundary marker, 1947. DENA 22887.



Stagecoach pulled by four horses, 1926. DENA 4818.



"Denali--The Great One-in Fall Color", by Richard J. Stenmark, ca. 1970. DENA 44000.



Photo of Johnny Fredson, dog team driver for Stuck-Karstens climb, 1913. DENA 22778.



Sheet metal sign recognizing the first airplane to land in Denali (plane flown by Carl Ben Eielson, 1924.) DENA 1692.



Glass thermometer in wooden case. Used by Hudson Stuck during 1913 climb. DENA 388.



"Sourdough" Crampons, 1910. DENA 405AB.



Ax used during 1910 Sourdough Expedition. DENA 1636.



Portable gas stove used by Bradford Washburn, 1947. DENA 4864.



Coffee can used as cooking pot by Bradford Washburn, 1951. DENA 4863.



Folded birch bark basket with willow rim. Maker unknown. DENA 1845.

*Images are not to scale.*

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## Denali Museum Objects



Patch from Mount McKinley Army Recreation Camp, ca. 1944.  
DENA 4851.



Pair of skis. DENA 1698 & 1699.



Handmade snowshoes, 1942.  
Maker: Einar Nilsson.  
DENA 1520 & 1521.



Former Park Superintendent Grant Pearson's journal, 1973.



*Bison antiquus occidentalis* skull, painted with red ochre. DENA 6476.



Dinosaur track. DENA 2271.



Petrified wood fossil.  
DENA 5530.



Mammoth tooth fossil.  
DENA 449.



Fossil impressions of plant leaves. DENA 6022.



Projectile point crafted from antler.  
DENA 4703.



Lanceolate projectile point.  
DENA 2692.



Biface Preform.  
DENA 2692.



Scraper made from black basalt.  
DENA 2985.



*Salix glauca* (grayleaf willow). DENA 14540.



*Betula neoalaskana* (resin birch). DENA 13985.



*Rosa acicularis* (prickly rose), DENA 11126.



*Anemone multiceps* (Porcupine River thimbleweed). DENA 14905.



*Poa paucispicula* (Alaska bluegrass), DENA 11264.



*Bombus kluanensis* (Kluane Bumble Bee).



*Cheilosia yukonensis* (Yukon Blacklet). DENA 40795.

Images are not to scale.

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## Museum Signs, Benches, and Visitors



*Images are not to scale.*