

Wessex Museums Interpretation Plan template

For each exhibition, a detailed Interpretation Plan should be compiled to describe each component of the display and associated programming in terms of:

- Exhibition description
- Themes and key messages
- Target audiences
- Interpretation tools
- Learning outcomes
- Special requirements and opportunities

The Interpretation Plan acts as a control document to inform research and identify ways to work across various museum disciplines such as learning, marketing and digital media. It should also act as a control document during the exhibition planning phase, and as a benchmarking document during post-project evaluation. Review Interpretation Plans regularly to find out what approaches work best for your audiences. Below is sample that could be used as a template for future projects.

Sample Interpretation Plan (overleaf)

Title of the exhibition: e.g. Stories from Stonehenge				
Overarching theme:				
<i>One sentence to sum up the exhibition as a whole</i>				
Key messages:				
<i>4 or 5 key messages taken from your exhibition proposal and developed with the project team. Refer back to WMP key messages and guiding principles to ensure the exhibition messages link in with the WMP key messages.</i>				
Target audiences:				
<i>Existing:</i>		<i>New:</i>		
Learning outcomes				
<i>Intellectual outcomes:</i>		<i>Emotional outcomes:</i>		<i>Behavioural outcomes:</i>
Section 1 (Area of the Exhibition: e.g. Introductory gallery)				
Key messages:		Functions of this area		
<i>2 or 3 key messages taken for this section of the exhibition</i>		<i>e.g. Scene setting, an area for visitors to gather themselves and get their bearings, exhibition guide pick-up point etc</i>		
		Estimated dwell well time: e.g. 5 mins		
Look and feel of this area				
<i>e.g. Well-lit gallery space Feels like the start of a journey of discovery Minimal but well-chosen objects and interpretation Free-flow – people can visit the items in the room in any order and are free to pick and choose what they want to find out about and leave when they wish</i>				
Content/ story	Interpretation tools	Materials/ resources	Contextual material	Target audience
Introduction to the exhibition	e.g. Text panel (150 words) near entrance to the exhibition		e.g. Historic image of Stonehenge	e.g. All
Map of Wessex locating Stonehenge and other important sites	Large-scale wall graphic	Wall vinyl		All
Introduction to the key functions of Stonehenge, which were...	Case of 'gateway' objects	Conditioned showcase, object labels	Reconstruction drawings to give context to the objects	All
Interview with an archaeologist at Stonehenge	Multimedia guide commentary (2 mins max)	See multimedia guide proposal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Headshot of the interviewee Footage of Stonehenge today 	Specialist interest learners
Perspectives of Stonehenge from different eras	Historic quotations at high level (20–30 words each)	Wall vinyls		Independent adults
Timeline of key events	Image-rich animated digital media presentation	Large front projection onto gallery wall	Historic images – one per event on the timeline	All
The people of Stonehenge (from the distant past to today)	Handling object desk facilitated by a volunteer. (flint axe, vessels, modern druid divination stick etc)	6 x accessioned museum objects and replicas Volunteer training	Suite of hardcopy images for use by the volunteer to help illustrate a point	Families and young people