

umma

LANGUAGE LEARNING

AT THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN MUSEUM OF ART

INTRODUCTION

Home to a vast collection of over 18,000 objects from across the globe, UMMA offers a unique, on-campus repository of culture. A visit to the art museum can be a platform for cultivating culturally educated citizens and a conduit for applying skills that are being taught in the classroom as part of a new language learning experience.

This pamphlet is intended especially for faculty, lecturers, and graduate student instructors teaching in Romance Languages and Literatures. The modules printed here were designed with your students in mind. Each is based on a student-centered approach to learning that invites students to engage with language through dynamic and experiential learning activities.

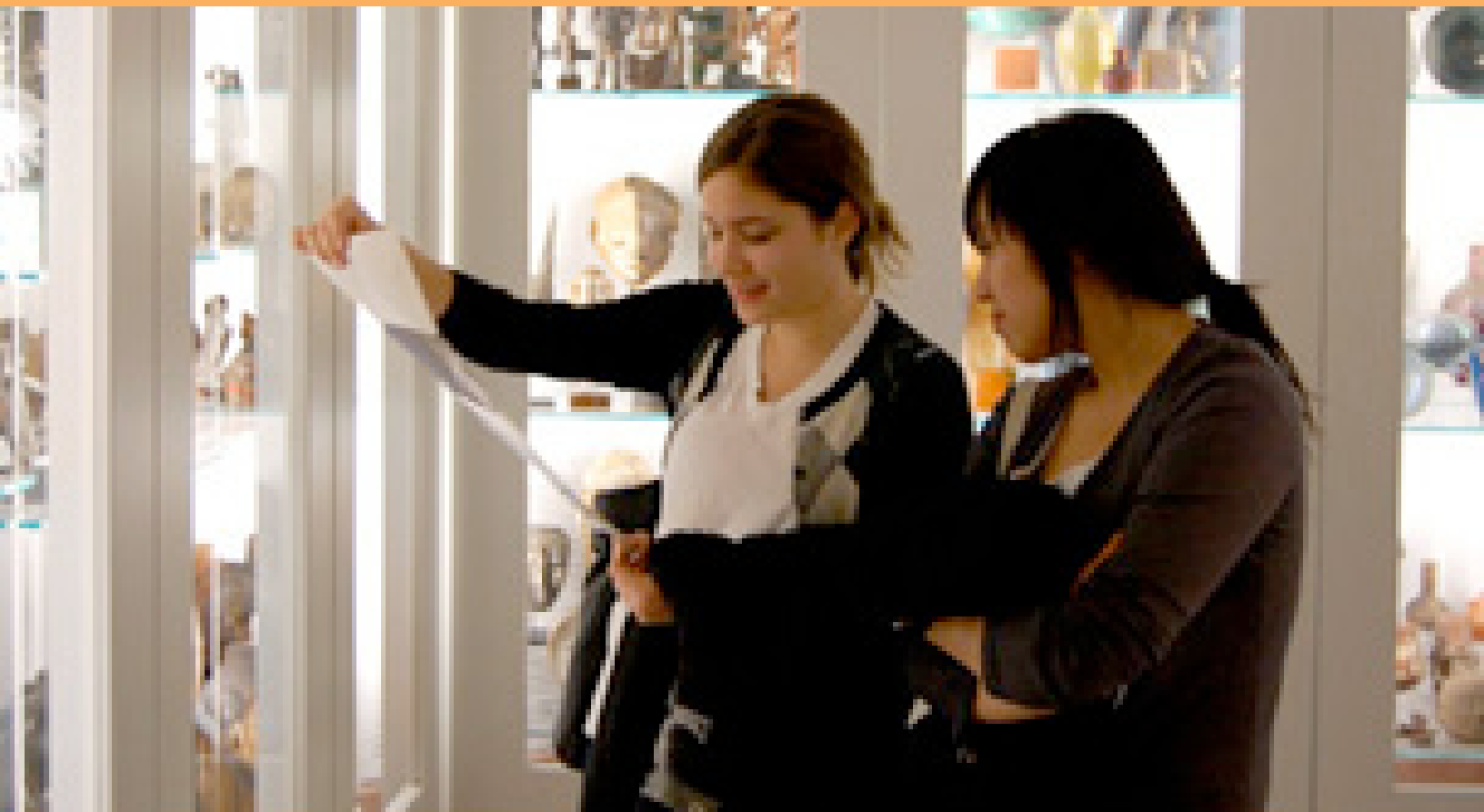
Each module is structured enough to provide a well-rounded approach to using the resources housed at UMMA but also flexible enough to adapt to a wide range of learning objectives and course content. The main function of this pamphlet is to help you to determine specific learning objectives for your visit to the Museum, to guide you through selecting appropriate activities that complement and enhance what you are already doing in the classroom, and to give you the logistical information you will need to schedule your class visit.

PREPARING FOR YOUR VISIT

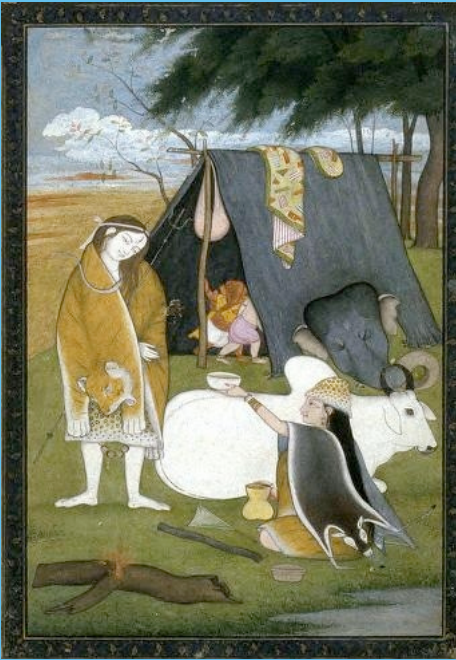
In UMMA's new facilities, faculty may bring students to tour the galleries or to see a specially selected group of objects in an object-study classroom. Survey UMMA's upcoming exhibitions for potential links to your curriculum or teaching plans.

When planning to bring a class for a tour of our special exhibitions, even if you will be a self-guided group, please contact us at umma-tours@umich.edu or 734.647.0522. It may be possible to schedule a tour outside of public hours, however such tours must be scheduled several weeks in advance. Please ask for details.

Two specially outfitted object-study classrooms provide university and post-graduate educators, scholars, and classroom groups of up to 20 people with the opportunity to study at close range original works of art. To reserve a room and for further information, please go to umma.umich.edu/education/index.html.



SPEAKING



Artist unknown, India, Punjab Hills, Kangra School, *Shiva and His Family*, circa 1790–1800, ink, opaque watercolor, and gold on paper, UMMA, Gift of Dr. Walter R. Parker, 1942.4

Characteristics

Level
All

Type of activity
Small groups

Grammar use
Wide range of topics

Galleries
All galleries and temporary exhibitions

Time
50 minutes

Primary Learning Objective

Students will use vocabulary and grammar learned in the classroom to create and perform a 3- to 4-minute theatrical skit based on a work of art from the Museum's collections.

Some useful vocabulary

Painting
Photograph
Gallery
Object
Sculpture

Procedures

Establish a specific location to meet your students.

1. Divide students into groups of 3 or 4.
2. Instruct student groups to explore the galleries for 15 to 20 minutes. During this time, groups should locate a work of art and create a 3- to 4-minute theatrical skit based on the work's content and appearance, or on the students' responses to it. Ask students to write down the title of the work they choose, the artist's name, and the year in which it was made.
3. Depending on the number of groups, set a meeting time in the Commons for skit presentations. Allow 20 to 25 minutes for students to perform their skits.
4. Before each skit, ask students to read out loud the title, artist, and date for their artwork (as a reference for their classmates).
5. Take notes during the skits so that you can point out any specific language corrections or comments. Address your observations at the end of the skit or during the next class.

Content Alteration

- This activity works well to motivate students to practice their verbal skills. You can tailor the activity by having your students integrate specific grammar topics with which they have been working in the classroom.
- You can preselect works of art based on course content.
- Allow or do not allow students to use notes during their skits. You can collect the notes to check for written competence or exclude notes to check for oral competence.

Notes

Make sure to monitor student progress during Step 2. You can limit the activity to just one gallery, which will make it easier to keep track of groups and control skit theme and content.

TALKING ART: WRITING AND SPEAKING ACTIVITY



Artist unknown, African, Lega Peoples
Democratic Republic of the Congo, *Bwami
Society Maskette*, 1900–1975, wood, kaolin,
UMMA, Gift of the Friends of the Museum of
Art in memory of Diana B. Fox, 1985/1.151

Procedures

1. Divide students into pairs.
2. Instruct student pairs to explore the galleries for 5–10 minutes and select two works of art that are located in close proximity to one another.
3. Instruct students to write a dialogue for the next 20 minutes that might hypothetically take place between the two works of art. Indicate to your students a page or time limit for this dialogue and the grammar topic on which you want them to focus.
4. Reconvene the class and divide the pairs into groups of four (two pairs in each group). Instruct the new groups to take turns performing the dialogues they prepared in pairs.
5. Five minutes before the class ends, reconvene the students once again to debrief. Ask volunteers to share their work with the class as a whole.

Characteristics

Level

All

Type of activity

Pairs and small groups

Grammar use

Wide range of topics

Galleries

All galleries and temporary exhibitions

Time

50 minutes

Primary Learning Objective

Students will use vocabulary and grammar learned in the classroom to write and perform a 3–4 minute dialogue between two works of art.

Some useful vocabulary

Painting
Photograph
Gallery
Object
Sculpture

Content Alteration

- Have students integrate specific grammar topics covered in class.
- Preselect objects based on course content to motivate students to focus on specific language issues.
- Collect the dialogues to check for written competence.

Notes

You can limit the activity to just one gallery, which will make it logistically easier to keep track of pairs and groups and allow you to monitor oral competence.

Characteristics

Level

All

Type of activity

Pairs and small groups

Grammar use

Wide range of topics

Galleries

All galleries and temporary exhibitions

Time

50 minutes

Primary Learning Objective

Students will use vocabulary and grammar learned in the classroom to write and perform a 3–4 minute dialogue between two works of art.

Some useful vocabulary

Painting

Photograph

Gallery

Object

Sculpture

ALL ABOUT COMPARISONS: WRITING AND SPEAKING ACTIVITY

Procedures

1. Begin with a large group discussion of two works of art. Ask students to point out similarities and differences between the two objects.
2. Divide students into pairs and instruct them to brainstorm and write out comparisons of two works of art (20 minutes).
3. Reconvene the class and divide the pairs into groups of four (two pairs in each group). Instruct the new groups to take turns reading and reviewing the comparisons they prepared in pairs.
4. Five minutes before the class ends, reconvene the students once again to debrief. Ask volunteers to share their work with the class as a whole.

Content Alteration

- Have students integrate specific grammar topics covered in class.
- Preselect objects based on course content to motivate students to focus on specific language issues.
- Collect the worksheets to check for written competence.

Notes

You can limit the activity to just one gallery, which will make it logistically easier to keep track of pairs and groups and allow you to monitor oral competence.

WRITING



Anonymous, Flemish, *Leaf from a Book of Hours*, circa 1325, ink, tempera, and gold on parchment, UMMA, Gift of the Estate of Helen B. Hall, 1996/2.56

Characteristics

Level

All

Type of activity

Individual and pairs

Grammar use

Past tenses

Galleries

All galleries and temporary exhibitions

Time

50 minutes

Primary Learning Objective

Students will use vocabulary and grammar learned in the classroom to write a personal narrative based on a work of art from the Museum's collections.

Some useful vocabulary

Painting

Photograph

Gallery

Object

Sculpture

Procedures

Establish a specific location to meet your students.

1. Instruct students to explore the museum individually (10 minutes) and select a work of art that is reminiscent of a personal memory.
2. For the next 15–20 minutes, have students write their narratives. (You can set a page or word limit depending on level.) Additionally, ask students to write down the title of the work they choose, the artist's name, and the year in which it was made.
3. Reconvene students and divide them into pairs. Ask each pair to go to the works of art about which they wrote and read their narratives to each other.
4. If time allows, students can do peer editing before turning in their narratives to the instructor for personalized feedback.

Content Alteration

- Have students integrate specific grammar topics or vocabulary covered in class.
- Preselect objects based on course content to motivate students to focus on specific language issues.

Notes

- Make sure to monitor student progress during Step 2. You can limit the activity to just one gallery, which will make it logistically easier to keep track of the students and control content.
- This activity may be used as a pre-writing activity for a journal entry or composition.



Guercino (Giovanni Francesco Barbieri), *Esther before Ahasuerus*, 1639, oil on canvas, UMMA, Museum Purchase, 1963/2.45

AFTER THE SCENE

WRITING ACTIVITY

Procedures

Establish a specific location to meet your students.

1. Select one painting and elicit a description of the scene with the class. You may want to use who, what, where, when, and how questions.
2. Ask students what they think will happen after the scene. Encourage them to be imaginative and creative with their responses.
3. Divide the students into pairs. Instruct them to explore the galleries for 5-10 minutes and select a work of art about which they will write a narrative.
4. For the next 15 minutes, have the students:
 - write a brief description of the scene using the present, present continuous, or the present perfect tenses;
 - write a short story of what they imagine will happen next using the future tense.
5. Reconvene the students and divide them into groups of four. In their new groups have them take turns reading their stories.
6. Five minutes before the class is over, reconvene the class again. The students may volunteer to read some of their stories.
7. Collect the students' work for feedback.

Characteristics

Level
All

Type of activity
Pairs and small groups

Grammar use
Present and future tenses. For more advanced levels, adverbial clauses or more complex grammar might be integrated into the narrative.

Galleries
All galleries and temporary exhibitions

Time
50 minutes

Primary Learning Objective

Students will use vocabulary and grammar learned in the classroom to write a personal narrative based on a work of art from the Museum's collections.

Some useful vocabulary

Painting
Photograph
Gallery
Object
Sculpture

Content Alteration

You can adapt this activity to integrate the past tense. In this case, the students write a short description of what happened before the scene.

Notes

Make sure to monitor student progress during Step 4.

Characteristics

Level

All

Type of activity

Pairs and small groups

Grammar use

Depending on your objectives, the activity can target a series of grammar topics and functions from simple present, comparisons, likes and dislikes, etc., to more advanced grammar such as subjunctive and hypothetical clauses. The target language may include a combination of:

- personality traits, age, occupation, nationality, etc.
- daily activities (including reflexive verbs)
- “to like” and similar verbs
- comparisons
- expressions of obligations, plans and desires
- descriptions of the past or recent past
- expressions of emotions, opinions, etc.
- expressions of hypothetical situations

Galleries

All galleries and temporary exhibitions

Time

50 minutes

Primary Learning Objective

Students will use vocabulary and grammar learned in the classroom to write a story about a character in a work of art.

Some useful vocabulary

Painting

Photograph

Gallery

Object

Sculpture

THE TRUE STORY OF... WRITING ACTIVITY

Procedures

Establish a specific location to meet your students.

1. In pairs, students will have 5–7 minutes to explore the Museum and select a character from a work of art. When introducing the activity, you may want to tell students that they are detectives whose mission it is to “help” the Museum discover the true identities of some of the “characters” in its collection.
2. For the next 15 minutes, instruct students to write a description (the “true story”) of their selected characters using the grammar elements that you have provided. (You may prepare a list of the desired grammar for distribution.)
3. Reconvene the students and divide them into groups of four (two pairs per group). In their new groups have each pair present their stories.
4. 5 minutes before the class is over, reconvene the class once again. You can call for volunteers to read their stories to the class as a whole. Collect the students’ work for feedback.

Content Alteration

- **Past tense.** You can use this activity to practice the past tense. In this case, students write their stories using the preterite or imperfect.
- **Family.** If you prefer, instruct students to look for a family scene in a painting, and to write their stories based on multiple characters instead of just one.

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Édouard Manet, *Exotic Flower; Woman Wearing a Mantilla*, 1868, etching and aquatint, UMMA, Museum Purchase made possible by the Friends of the Museum of Art, 1985/1.166



John Hoppner, *The Digby Children*, circa 1778–1810, oil on canvas, UMMA, Gift of Dr. and Mrs. Ralph Coskey, 1978/2.21



Anonymous, Eskimo, *Man Standing*, n.d., stone, UMMA, Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Eugene B. Power, 1959/2.87



Frederick Sandys, *Portrait of a Lady, probably Anne Simms Reeve (née Browne) of Brancaster Hall, Norfolk*, 1860, oil on panel, UMMA, Museum Purchase made possible by a gift from Helmut Stern, 1987/1.158

THE TRUE STORY OF...

continued

- **Integrating listening skills.** Prior to the activity, select one character in a painting and write out a listening script that integrates the grammar functions that you want your students to practice. Prepare a worksheet with listening comprehension questions based on your script. Have students write their own stories following your guidelines. Reconvene the class 20–25 minutes before the class is over. During this time, carry out the listening portion of the activity, and at the end, have students share similarities between their stories and yours.
- **The original owner of the piece.** This activity can also be carried out using not a character within the work of art, but the piece itself. In this case, the students need to imagine who the very first owner of the object was. The students then should include in their stories a brief description of the object, its information, and its location in the museum.

If you prefer this variation, you may also want to prepare small notecards with basic information about the “real previous owner(s),” if known. At the end of the class, you can give each pair of students one of these cards, which students can compare with the information in their own stories. They then report any similarities or differences between this disclosed information and their stories.

Notes

Make sure to monitor student progress during Step 2. You can limit the activity to just one gallery, which will make it logistically easier to keep track of the students and control content.

HOW DID I GET HERE?

WRITING ACTIVITY

Characteristics

Level

All

Type of activity

Pairs and small groups

Grammar use

Present and future tenses. For more advanced levels, adverbial clauses or more complex grammar might be integrated into the narrative.

Galleries

All galleries and temporary exhibitions. The Albertine Monroe-Brown Study-Storage Gallery is also an excellent gallery in which to carry out this activity.

Time

50 minutes

Primary Learning Objective

Students will use vocabulary and grammar learned in the classroom to write a “personal narrative” of one object’s life journey from the time it was created until it became part of the Museum’s collections.

Some useful vocabulary

Painting

Photograph

Gallery

Object

Sculpture

Procedures

Establish a specific location to meet your students.

1. Divide students into pairs. For 5-7 minutes have the pairs explore the galleries and select an object or artifact about which they would like to write.
2. For the next 15 minutes, instruct the students to:
 - write a brief description of the object using the present, present continuous, or the present perfect;
 - write a short story about the object, from its creation to its current location in the Museum’s collections. Indicate to students a page limit for their stories.
3. Reconvene the class and arrange pairs into groups of four (two pairs per group). In their new groups have students take turns sharing their stories.
4. 5 minutes before the class is over, reconvene the class. Have students volunteer to read or act out their stories.
5. Collect the students’ work for feedback.

Notes

Make sure to monitor student progress during Step 2. You can limit the activity to just one gallery, which will make it logistically easier to keep track of the students and control content.



Artist unknown, Mexican, Monte Alban III (Zapotec), *Seated Figure*, circa 800 A.D., ceramic, UMMA, Museum Purchase made possible by a gift from Helmut Stern, 1983/1.356

VOCABULARY

Characteristics

Level

Basic

Type of activity

Pairs

Grammar use

Basic

Target vocabulary

A wide array of lexic groups such as personal descriptions, countries, nationalities, weather and geography, occupations, parts and objects found in a home, family members, colors, clothes, free-time activities, etc.

Galleries

All galleries and temporary exhibitions

Time

50 minutes

Primary Learning Objective

Students will use vocabulary and functional grammar learned in the classroom to complete charts or sentences previously designed by the instructor. See samples on the next page.

Some useful vocabulary

Painting

Photograph

Gallery

Object

Sculpture

Procedures

1. Start out by studying a painting with the class and brainstorming vocabulary.
2. Instruct students to complete the worksheet that you have provided while working in pairs for the next 20–25 minutes.
3. 20 minutes before class is over, meet with the students again to go over some of their responses.
4. Collect the students' work to check for spelling and accuracy.
5. As a follow-up, students can discuss their favorite work of art from this visit.

Content Alteration

- Have students integrate specific grammar topics or vocabulary covered in class.

Notes

- Make sure to monitor student progress during Step 2.
- You may want to present the activity as a competition to see who can finish the worksheet first.
- This activity is relatively short. A few minutes for free or guided conversation before the start of class can help develop communication skills and expand vocabulary.



Anonymous, Peruvian, Nazca, Vase, circa 300–600 A.D., pottery, UMMA, Gift of Charles and Alice Gibson, 1981/1.311

SAMPLE ACTIVITIES

HOUSE PARTS AND OBJECTS

Fill in the chart with objects in the Museum that we can also find at home. See the example below.

Object	Part(s) of the house	Origin	Gallery in the Museum
1. Punch bowl	Kitchen, dining room	France	European Art (1650–1830)
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			

PEOPLE

Explore the art around the Museum and find a character in the paintings that matches the information below. See the example below.

Someone who	Artwork title	Other information about this person (minimum 2 facts)
1. likes dogs		
2. has white hair		
3. is feeling sad		
4. is wearing a blue dress	<i>Figure of a Girl in Blue</i> (Portrait of Miss Minnie Clark)	Miss Minnie Clark is very thin. She has very dark hair.
5. has three sons		
6. likes to play rugby		
7. is from India		
8. is a General in the military		

RESOURCES

Falk, J. H., Dierking, L. D. (2000). Learning from museums: visitor experiences and the making of meaning. Walnut Creek, CA, AltaMira Press. [Available at UofM]
Answers the broad question: What role can museums serve in a learning community? See especially Chapter 8: The Contextual Model of Learning.

Hooper-Greenhill, E. (2007). Museums and education: purpose, pedagogy, performance. London, Routledge. [Available at UofM]
Focuses on a cultural theory of learning. Based on three national evaluation studies on generic learning outcomes (as defined by the Museums, Libraries, and Archives Council, UK: <http://www.inspiringlearningforall.gov.uk/toolstemplates/genericlearning/>.) See especially Chapter 7: The Value of Museums to Teachers.

_____ (1999). The educational role of the museum. New York, Routledge. [Available at UofM]
A compilation of essays that address the relationship of museums to their audiences with a specific focus on educational groups. See especially Part II: Learning in Museums.

Hein, G. E. (1998). Learning in the museum. London, Routledge.
[Available at UofM]
This book outlines a constructivist approach to teaching in a museum.

Burnham, R., Kai-Kee, E. (2005). The art of teaching in the museum.
Journal of Aesthetic Education 39, no. 1, Spring. DOI: 10.1353/jae.2005.0001.
Article written by a museum educator enumerating different approaches to teaching with works of art.

Web Pages

The Center for Research on Learning and Teaching (UofM). Teaching Strategies: Teaching with Archival, Botanical, and Museum Collections.
<http://www.crlt.umich.edu/tstrategies/tsabmc.php>.
Instructors at UofM share strategies for teaching with on-campus museums, archives, and collections. Includes sample activities and links to additional resources.

Reading & Responding to Exhibitions, Tang Museum, Faculty & Teaching.
<http://tang.skidmore.edu/index.php/pages/view/250/section:193>.
Instructors at Skidmore College report on the ways in which they have used the Tang Teaching Museum and Art Gallery to engage students. Includes a range of disciplines including English, chemistry, and psychology.