

What is the Story Cube?

The Story Cube is a museum educational tool designed for tutors to help volunteers develop narratives about objects to create engaging and unique visits.

There are two cubes: a **Senses Cube**, designed to focus on the object using one's senses, and a **Mind Cube**, to encourage reflection and critical thinking.

The cubes help ask questions about the object to see it in a new way and encourage cooperative learning and dialogue. The technique can be used with beginners as well as advanced storytellers. The cubes are a universal tool that can be used for adult education and non-formal learning.

The Story Cube is a product of the "Museum of Communities" project co-funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union.

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How to use the cubes

Remember

- Before using the cubes, explain the concept of the Story Cubes and provide volunteers with basic information about the chosen object.
- Make sure the object is visible to everyone.
- Create and maintain a safe and respectful environment so everyone can share their thoughts and feelings.
- Please name the project in which the Story Cubes were created and state that it was co-funded by the EU Erasmus+ Programme.

Instructions

1. Let the volunteer roll the cube in front of the object.
We recommend starting with the Senses Cube. You will see a question or a symbol.
2. Let the volunteer answer the question or refer to the symbol. You can ask additional questions connected to the topic to guide the volunteer (see sample questions below).
3. Try to combine original, even unconventional ideas with what you know about the object.
4. When using the Senses Cube, it is important not to correct the volunteer – there are no right or wrong answers. It is important to encourage volunteers to come up with their own ideas. The role of the tutor is to draw the attention of volunteers to fact-based information.
5. Continue rolling until you feel the story of the object is complete.

Sample questions

The Senses Cube



Sight

- Look at the object – what do you see?
- Look at its colour/size/material/shape/details/condition (Is it broken? Is it torn? Maybe it looks brand new?)
- Do you see something unusual about the object?
- What is most striking/eye-catching about it?

Note: Encourage the volunteer to look from as many perspectives as possible (close/far/high/low/right/left/behind etc.)



Hearing

- What sound does the object make? What sound could it make? (If you touch it, if it falls on the floor, etc.)
- Can you imagine any sound connected to this object? (e.g. a person portrayed in the painting screaming or a statue saying something, a teapot when it's boiling, sounds surrounding the object – e.g. people talking while drinking from a porcelain cup)
- What did it sound like when the object was being made?



Smell

- Does the object smell? How?
- Can you imagine how it could smell – in the past?
- What smells (used to) surround the object? (e.g. perfumes in the palace or the bad smell of the dirty streets?)
- Can you imagine any smell connected to this object? (How would animals, flowers, food, and other things in the painting/statue smell?)



Touch

- Can you touch it?
- Imagine you are touching the object – how does it feel? Describe the texture. What sensation does it give to your skin? (Is the object hard, fluffy, warm, cold, sharp, etc.?)



Taste

- Imagine how the object might taste. (Is it warm/cold?)
- Is it connected with some kind of taste? (e.g. a cup can hold chocolate/coffee/tea)



6th sense – object in space

- What is the connection between the object and the space around it?
- Where is the object now? Does it fit its surroundings?
- Do the objects around, or the room where the object is placed, give us some information about it?
- How does the presence of the object make you feel? (e.g. is it too big/small for the room?)
- Does the object affect your mood or behaviour?

The Mind Cube

Where?

- Where was the object made?
- Where did it come from?
- Where was it located?
- Where was it/is supposed to be? Think about the place of the object now – should it be in this museum? Does it belong somewhere else?

When?

- When was the object made?
- Was it damaged/restored? When?
- When did it arrive at the museum?
- Can you think of a turning point in the history of this object? When did its story/purpose change?

Why?

- Why was it made?
- Why is it placed here?
- Why was this object chosen for the exhibition? Why was it important?
- Why were these elements chosen by the artist?
- Why did it survive until today?
- Why is it important nowadays?

Who?

- Who made the object?
- Who owned/commissioned the object?
- Who used the object?
- Who could see/use/experience this object?
- Who is represented in the object?
- Who brought it to the museum?

How?

- How was the object made?
- How was the object used?
- How did it arrive at the museum?
- How is it presented?

The bridge



- Create a connection between the object and yourself (i.e. your memories, experiences, what the object reminds you of, etc.)
- Create a connection between the object and the people who created the object/people of today.

Note:

Making the bridge may lead to a broader discussion. The volunteer can use this opportunity to reflect or discuss a topic connecting the past and the present (e.g. What was the situation back then/how is it now? What is/was the condition of the society? How has the perception of certain issues changed?)

Notes

There are multiple ways of using the Story Cube. Feel free to experiment and use the cubes in a different order or both at the same time. For example, if you use both the Senses Cube and the Mind Cube and see *how* and the symbol of *hearing* at the same time, you can combine the two concepts. In this way, you can discover more aspects of an object and also make new hypotheses about the context of an object.

You do not have to answer questions from all sides of the dice. Some questions may seem inadequate for the chosen object. Some may have answered. You can also interpret each question in your own way.

We hope the Story Cubes will help your volunteers create engaging stories and give them the confidence to discuss objects even without expert knowledge. We wish you much joy in the process of discovering the possibilities of the cubes!

The cubes are really easy to make. You can make them by printing the attachments below (we recommend using thicker paper in order to make it more durable). Cut out the templates along the drawn lines, then glue them in the marked places. Recommended paper thickness 150-200 grams.

Credits

The Story Cube is a product of the “Museum of Communities” project co-funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union. The Story Cube was created by the experts associated with the Museum of King Jan III’s Palace at Wilanów, Stazione Utopia, and Gödöllői Királyi Kastély: Marta Baglivo, Chiara Damiani, Erzsébet Demeter-Guba, Ildikó Faludi, Aleksandra Głowacz, Joanna Kacperczyk, Jagoda Kruszewska, Orsolya Lovas, Zita Marescalchi, Magda Piaskowska, Olivia Rabatin, Ágnes Torma, Magdalena Žontar.

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