

Sample Reading Questions

Text: Museums in the Digital Age

In today's fast-moving digital world, museums are being challenged to redefine their purpose. Once seen mainly as places of quiet reflection and historical preservation, they now face growing pressure to stay relevant to new audiences. The COVID-19 pandemic only increased this need. As people turned to screens for entertainment, education and even social connection, cultural institutions had to reconsider how to reach and inspire the public. So, are museums still relevant in the digital age? The answer is yes – but only if they continue to evolve.

Digital technology opens up exciting new possibilities, but it cannot replace the power of real-life experience. Seeing a painting in person, hearing a live musical performance, or walking through a historical space offers something deeper and more emotional than looking at content online. Museums remain special because they provide that sense of presence: being in the same space as a work of art, or an object from another time and place.

However, museums must now do more than simply display items behind glass. They need to actively engage with their audiences and offer experiences that are interactive, inclusive and relevant to people's lives today. One example of this forward-thinking approach is the Musical Instrument Museum (MIM) in Phoenix, Arizona. Rather than simply showcasing instruments, MIM invites visitors to hear them being played, explore their cultural stories, and even try them out for themselves. This hands-on, sensory experience brings music to life in a way that is fun, educational and memorable.

MIM's success comes from its strong focus on the visitor. The museum has created programs for children, adults, families and older people – including those living with memory loss. By offering something for every age group, MIM encourages visitors to return, building long-term relationships with its audience. The team also makes clever use of technology – not just to display information, but to share performances, guide visitors through exhibits, and reach people who may never have visited a museum before.

Social media, virtual tours and online events all play a role in attracting new audiences. But MIM – and many other successful museums – know that digital tools must support, not replace, the in-person experience. They are used to stimulate curiosity, prepare visitors for what to expect, and help people feel connected even before they walk through the door.

Another part of staying relevant is being useful to society. Museums today are embracing themes such as environmental awareness, cultural inclusion and lifetime learning. They are becoming places where people can explore complex topics, gain new perspectives, and connect with others. This makes them more than just cultural storehouses – they are active, living spaces that reflect the world around us.

Source: <https://www.forbes.com/sites/jefffromm/2023/03/23/re-examining-the-role-of-museums-in-the-digital-age-mim-director-weighs-in/>



Questions

1. What kind of places were museums mostly seen as in the past?

- A) busy and crowded places
- B) shops for buying art
- C) places for quiet and learning
- D) places for live shows

2. Why did museums feel greater pressure to adapt after the pandemic?

- A) Many people stopped visiting museums in person.
- B) People changed how they accessed culture.
- C) Museums could not hold international exhibitions.
- D) Museums were unable to respond to online criticism.

3. During the pandemic, what did many people use instead of visiting cultural places?

- A) Printed brochures
- B) local libraries
- C) computer games
- D) online videos

4. What is one way MIM differs from more traditional museums

- A) It lets visitors take part in hands-on activities.
- B) It shows historic items without much explanation.
- C) It uses displays that cannot be touched or heard.
- D) It mostly offers long guided lectures.

5. The word audiences in paragraph 1 is closest in meaning to:

- A) visitors
- B) singers
- C) painters
- D) experts

6. The word stimulate in paragraph 5 is closest in meaning to:

- A) instruct
- B) affect
- C) replace
- D) encourage



7. The word perspectives in paragraph 6 is closest in meaning to

- A) rules
- B) views
- C) facts
- D) stories

8. What can we infer about the role of digital tools in museums?

- A) They allow museums to reach people who might not visit otherwise.
- B) They will soon completely replace real visits.
- C) They work much better with older artwork.
- D) They help prepare visitors for in-person experiences

9. Why might people return to a museum like MIM?

- A) It creates experiences for different age groups.
- B) It plays very interesting music.
- C) It offers lectures in art and history.
- D) It changes exhibits regularly.

10. What is one reason MIM is considered successful?

- A) It specialises in many rare musical instruments.
- B) It appeals to people of all ages and backgrounds.
- C) It still follows a strict and traditional form.
- D) It avoids using today's digital technology.

11. How do museums remain meaningful in modern times?

- A) They focus mainly on rare artefacts.
- B) They depend less on community outreach.
- C) They present the same content to all visitors.
- D) They evolve with their visitors' needs.

12. Vocabulary Complete the sentence with a word from paragraph 3: Visitors at MIM can ____ out instruments from different cultures.

Insert a word above

13. Complete the sentence with a word from paragraph 6 Museums are becoming living _____ where people can learn and talk about new ideas.

Insert a word above



14. TRUE / FALSE / NOT GIVEN MIM encourages people to visit by offering a quiet space for study.

- A) True
- B) False
- C) NOT GIVEN

15. TRUE / FALSE / NOT GIVEN Museums had to find new ways to reach people during the pandemic.

- A) True
- B) False
- C) NOT GIVEN

16. TRUE / FALSE / NOT GIVEN MIM was the first museum to use social media.

- A) True
- B) False
- C) NOT GIVEN

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