

Specimen Observation

GUIDE FOR EDUCATORS

This observation activity is designed for use with any specimen on display in the Museum. Completing one worksheet will take 10 to 15 minutes. We recommend using the worksheet in these halls:

[Mignone Halls of Gems and Minerals](#)

[Gottesman Hall of Planet Earth](#)

[Solomon Family Insectarium](#)

[Ross Hall of Meteorites](#)

[Roosevelt Hall of Biodiversity](#)

[Gerstner Collections Core](#)

[Cullman Hall of the Universe](#)

[Spitzer Hall of Human Origins](#)

[Fossil Halls](#)

Materials for Each Student

- One or more printed specimen [worksheet](#)
- Pencil
- (Optional, but recommended) A portable surface to work on, such as:
 - A clipboard or piece of stiff cardboard
 - A science notebook ([version of the worksheet](#) formatted to cut and paste into a composition book)

Instructions for Using Student Worksheets

1. Students choose (or are assigned) a specimen to sketch in the hall.
2. Students take 3 to 4 minutes to silently observe and sketch on their own. If they are not confident about drawing, the teacher reassures them that (1) the goal of sketching is not to create a beautiful picture, but to guide them to observe more closely than they would otherwise, and that (2) they will not be required to show their sketch to anyone if they don't want to. Encourage students to add labels to their sketches, looking in the surrounding panels for more information when available.
3. Students share what they focused on in their pairs or small groups. They are not required to share their sketches, but rather simply talk to their classmates about what they noticed and learned about their specimens. If time allows, students can take turns “presenting” the specimens they chose to each other.

Students may complete this sequence multiple times with different specimens. They should receive a new worksheet for each round.

Recommended Resources

- Video: [Shelf Life 01: 33 Million Things](#)
- Video: [The Value of Scientific Collections with Sir David Attenborough](#)