

FOR TEACHERS: PRE-VISIT ACTIVITIES grades K-4

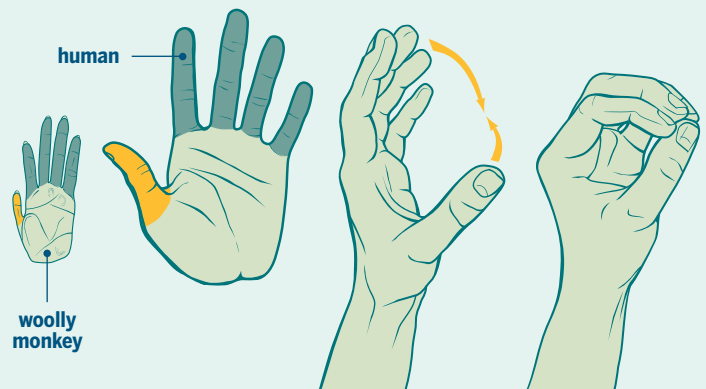
How to Use: Try any or all of the activities below in advance of your visit to the Spitzer Hall of Human Origins. You can also photocopy the worksheet on the opposite side of this page and distribute it to students to use as they walk through the exhibition. They'll need a pen or pencil and a hard surface to write on.

Diary of a Discovery:

To excite students about the famous fossils they'll see represented in the Spitzer Hall of Human Origins, visit amnh.org/education/humanorigins. You'll find firsthand accounts about the moment of discovery of Lucy, the Laetoli footprints, and Turkana Boy. Follow-up questions are suggested.

Explore the Human Hand:

Humans have a unique precision grip made possible by our opposable thumb—which can touch all four fingers. Wrap masking tape around each student's writing hand to hold their thumbs in line with their fingers. Have them test their abilities to pick up, manipulate, and put down objects with and without their thumbs. Ask: How are human hands adapted for grasping objects? What does the grasping hand enable us to do?



Compare Primates:

Show students a photograph of a human and two other primates. (You can download and print photos from amnh.org/education/humanorigins.) Tell students that humans belong to a group of animals called primates. Ask: In what ways do these primates look alike? In what ways are they different? Referring to the pictures, have students select a particular body part from two primates and draw them for comparison. Then have them label the differences and similarities of the body part.

You can correlate your visit to the Spitzer Hall of Human Origins to the NEW YORK CITY SCOPE AND SEQUENCE for grades 1-4.

Grade 1

Unit 3 Animal Diversity

Compare and contrast the physical characteristics in animals.

Describe how physical traits help a species survive.

Grade 3

Unit 4 Plant and Animal Adaptations

Recognize that traits of living things are both:

- Inherited (eye color).
- Learned/acquired (riding a bicycle, having scars).

Grade 4

Unit 1 Animals and Plants in Their Environments

Recognize that individual variations within a species may cause certain individuals to have an advantage in surviving and reproducing.

Describe the way that humans:

- Depend on their natural and constructed environment.

FOR STUDENTS: DURING YOUR VISIT

Examining the Evidence:

Find the round Hands-on Fossils table called “Examining the Evidence” in the first section of the hall. Observe and touch the three feet. How are they alike? How are they different? Write your answers below. Do the same with the two jaws.

Feet: Alike: _____

Different: _____

Jaws: Alike: _____

Different: _____

Diorama Scenes:

Choose your favorite diorama scene. Observe what the figures are doing and where they live. Answer as many questions as you can about this scene:

NAME OF DIORAMA SCENE: _____

How do they get their food? _____

What is their shelter? _____

Are they wearing clothes? What does this tell you about the place they live? _____

What do they use tools for? _____

What dangers do they face? _____

Draw Cave Art:

Observe the ancient cave wall above the back entrance. Sketch the art on the back of this paper. What does this art tell you about the people who created it?
