

## From Joyce's death mask to Bono's sunglasses: a look around the Little Museum of Dublin's grand curiosities

### Level 2: Intermediate

#### 1 Warmer

a. Discuss the following questions in pairs.

- How often do you visit museums?
- Which is your favourite museum and what do you like about it?

#### 2 Key words

a. Find the words from the wordpool in the article. Then write the words next to the correct definition.

hit	championing	exhibited	passion	neglect
antiseptic cream	artefacts	inspire	funding	house
decade	donations	accessed	mementoes	persuaded

1. a strong feeling of love for something \_\_\_\_\_
2. caused someone to agree to do something by giving reasons \_\_\_\_\_
3. money that is given to help a person, group or organisation \_\_\_\_\_
4. items from the past that are important or interesting, especially those in museums  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. put something in a public place for people to see \_\_\_\_\_
6. the state of not looking after or caring for someone or something properly  
\_\_\_\_\_
7. a period of ten years \_\_\_\_\_
8. to make someone feel excited or interested in doing something \_\_\_\_\_
9. a soft cream used to stop infection \_\_\_\_\_
10. able to be entered or seen by people \_\_\_\_\_
11. small objects that help you remember a person, place or event \_\_\_\_\_
12. to give a place for something to be kept or for someone to live in \_\_\_\_\_
13. supporting a cause or person \_\_\_\_\_

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14. money provided for a special purpose \_\_\_\_\_
15. something that is very popular and successful \_\_\_\_\_

#### b. Complete the sentences with words from the previous activity.

1. Luckily, we received extra \_\_\_\_\_ from the council to complete the project.
2. Laurie was finally \_\_\_\_\_ by the head coach to join the water polo team.
3. As an organisation, we are always \_\_\_\_\_ the equal rights of female athletes.
4. The collection of ancient Roman coins is \_\_\_\_\_ in the museum's main building.
5. Milly had a real \_\_\_\_\_ for photography and spent hours taking pictures.
6. Put some \_\_\_\_\_ on that cut, so it doesn't get infected.
7. The new gallery will \_\_\_\_\_ a collection of art by Francis Bacon.
8. The files can't be \_\_\_\_\_ unless you have permission from the project manager.
9. \_\_\_\_\_ from ancient Egypt are on display in our local library.
10. The story of Malala Yousafzai's life will \_\_\_\_\_ many young people to follow their dreams.
11. Sophia worked at the same company for over a(n) \_\_\_\_\_ before she decided to change career.
12. We collected \_\_\_\_\_ for the earthquake victims totalling to 450 pounds.
13. The new waterpark has become a huge \_\_\_\_\_ with people of all ages.
14. The garden is looking very untidy and wild due to years of \_\_\_\_\_.
15. I keep a few \_\_\_\_\_ from my childhood in a box under my bed.

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*This people's museum is crammed with curios donated by Dublin residents. A major facelift has added a library, archive and exhibition on 'fearless women'*

**Fergal McCarthy**

**18 June, 2025**

- 1 Certain museums around the world not only house important artefacts but also somehow act as a window to the past. The Frick Collection in New York and Marcel Proust's bedroom at the Musée Carnavalet in Paris are two such examples. The Little Museum of Dublin is also such a space.
- 2 Within seconds of climbing the stairs of this beautiful townhouse, the modern world disappears, and I imagine myself back in Georgian times, when this house was built along with so many of the beautiful squares and parks throughout the city centre.
- 3 Dubliner Trevor White persuaded Dublin city council to lend him this building back in 2011 to open the first museum in the city dedicated to all things Dublin. He had a great idea, but no collection, so he asked the listeners of a popular radio show to look for mementoes relating to the Irish capital.
- 4 More than 1,000 exhibits flooded in, ranging from a pair of Bono's sunglasses to a ticket for the only Dublin concerts the Beatles played, in 1963. A bottle of lemonade rescued from a mail boat was offered for display, as well as a jar of Sudocrem from 1931 (the antiseptic cream was invented in the city). All the items were carefully organised according to the decade they came from and exhibited throughout the museum's rooms.
- 5 The museum became an immediate hit with locals and visitors, and more than a million people have taken the 29-minute guided tour of the exhibits over the past 14 years. Tripadvisor rates it as the third best visitor attraction in Ireland, and the 12th best in Europe.
- 6 I often find myself there, early on a Sunday morning, sitting in the recreation of Irish Times editor Bertie Smyllie's office on the top floor. Bertie was responsible for championing many of Ireland's greatest writers, including Patrick Kavanagh and Flann O'Brien. Next door, in the U2 room, I like to pick out the band members from a black-and-white class photo at Mount Temple, the school where they famously first met as schoolboys. This photo, just like this museum as a whole, brings a sense that the past can still be accessed.
- 7 As visitor numbers increased, the museum got funding to expand. After carrying out a year of work, at a cost of 4.3 million euros, the museum reopened on 5 June with a new library, a screening room and a new exhibition of important women on the stairway.
- 8 One of the world's finest doll's houses is on the first floor. Modelled on Leinster House round the corner, the home of the Irish government, Tara's Palace took more than 20 years to build, and it has been given to the museum along with a number of new donations to celebrate the reopening.
- 9 In 1988, Dublin held a year-long celebration of events. After decades of neglect, these brought about a huge change in how many Dubliners viewed their city. Trevor White also notes the start of his passion for Dublin to this time. Everything he has worked for at the Little Museum of Dublin, along with his team, has been designed to inspire a love of the city.

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#### 3 Comprehension check

a. Choose the correct option (a, b or c) according to the information in the article.

1. According to the author, certain museums act as 'windows to the past' because they ...
  - a. have the most expensive things in their collections.
  - b. give visitors more of an experience than just looking at objects.
  - c. are built in old and important buildings.
2. Trevor White put together the museum's collection by ...
  - a. buying things from antique shops and collectors.
  - b. asking the public to donate items connected to Dublin.
  - c. borrowing things from other Irish museums.
3. The donated items in the museum are displayed ...
  - a. according to their historical importance.
  - b. based on their connection to famous people.
  - c. by the time period they come from.
4. The museum's success can be seen from the fact that ...
  - a. it is one of the best places to visit in Europe.
  - b. it has the biggest collection of things from Dublin.
  - c. more local people visit than tourists.
5. The recent renovation of the museum included ...
  - a. moving to a larger building in central Dublin.
  - a. adding new facilities.
  - a. replacing all the original donated items.

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6. The 1988 Dublin celebrations were important because they ...
- started the idea for the Little Museum.
  - brought millions of tourists to the city.
  - affected how residents viewed their city.

#### 4 Key language

- a. Find the phrasal verbs from the box in the article. Then write the phrases next to the correct definition.

brought about

carrying out

dedicated to

flooded in

pick out

- to carefully choose something or someone from a group \_\_\_\_\_
- performing a task or process \_\_\_\_\_
- arrived or appeared in large numbers, often suddenly \_\_\_\_\_
- caused something to happen \_\_\_\_\_
- showed strong focus on a particular task, belief or cause \_\_\_\_\_

- b. Complete each sentence with a phrasal verb from the previous activity.

- Thousands of messages \_\_\_\_\_ after the charity campaign started.
- The changes in the law were \_\_\_\_\_ by the years of hard work from activists.
- Clara spent the afternoon \_\_\_\_\_ research for her science project.
- Volunteers are \_\_\_\_\_ helping clean up the park every weekend.
- Can you \_\_\_\_\_ the best photo from this album for the exhibition?

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#### 5 Discussion

**a. Discuss these questions.**

- Would you like to visit the Little Museum of Dublin? Why or why not?
- Do you think community-sourced museums are more historically important than traditional museums? Why or why not?

#### 6 In your own words

**a. If you were to choose one item to give to a local museum in your hometown or city, what item would you choose and why? Write 150-180 words explaining your choice.**

Consider:

- what the item represents about your local area or personal connection to it
- why it would be meaningful for future visitors
- how it reflects the character or history of your community

**b. Share your essays with your classmates.**