

Guidelines for Developing a Ten-Minute Room Lesson Hillwood Estate, Museum & Gardens 2022-2023 Mansion Docent Training

All of the components you used in developing a single object lesson apply. The conversation develops in an orderly fashion. It contains the big ideas (think framework), objectives, and a sequence of events. All of these components have to be built on what you know about the audience for whom it is being designed and what you know about the room and the objects in it.

Follow these steps when developing a room lesson.

1. Identify your audience.

- a. For training purposes, think about the audience as a group of typical Hillwood visitors:
 - i. Intelligent, curious adults with little to no knowledge of the lesson's subject.
- b. Review the "Learners and Learning" handout and "The Visitors' Bill of Rights" to think about the audiences' needs.

2. NEW: Choose the room.

- a. Please choose only from the ten rooms included on the docent-led tour:
 - i. entry hall; pavilion; French drawing room; Russian porcelain room; icon room; first floor library; dining room; kitchen and pantry; French porcelain room; and Post's bedroom suite.
- b. This means that several docents-in-training may present a lesson about the same room; that is ok.

3. "Read" the room and its objects.

- a. Brainstorm what you see and what you know about the room and its objects. Record the storm on paper.
- b. A good framework to use to help you brainstorm is to complete the "Brainstorming in the Mansion for the Ten-Minute Room Lesson" distributed during class.
- c. Select no more than three objects you might use and make connections among them.

4. NEW: Focus on the BIG IDEA. The big idea has already been identified for you. It is the overarching framework of estate, collection, and collector. However, your challenge is to present this framework as a meaningful focus that engages the visitors' interest and curiosity. It derives from your own experiences and interests in the room you have chosen. Focus on the big idea in a way that stimulates you and your visitors to think and make connections.

5. Research objects and ideas thoroughly.

- a. Finalize your choice of no more than three objects to focus on.
- b. What additional information do you have to know in order to enhance the visitors' explorations of the room and objects? Be selective.
- c. Research should pull strongly from the training resources like the readings, lectures, digital handouts, and class notes.
- d. Distill the information. Remember, you can't share all you know. Visitors do not want to be overwhelmed with information.

6. Write down your objectives.

- a. Remember, objectives are clear statements of the outcomes you expect for your visitors – what you want them to be able to do or “take away” as a result of their exploration of the room.
- b. They spring from the big idea.
- c. Begin with this phrase: “As a result of participating in this lesson, visitors will be better able to...”
- d. Begin the objective statements using action verbs from the following selection: identify, discuss, and describe.

7. Develop and write down an advance organizer. This is the introduction to the room. The advance organizer helps your group feel comfortable and gives them a sense of what will be happening (refer to your objectives). It sets a conversational tone and also provides an opportunity to challenge them to think and/or arouse their curiosity. It has three parts:

- a. It finds out what your visitors already know about this room;
 - i. Have any of you been here before?
- b. It gives a brief overview of what they will be doing by identifying the “big idea” of your conversation (refer to your objectives);
 - i. Today we are going to explore X, Y and Z.
- c. It arouses their curiosity or challenges them to think.

8. Identify the key questions you will use. The questions serve as guideposts in the conversation. The sequence of questions moves the conversation forward through the body of the conversation.

- a. Start with the “hook” question, typically placed somewhere in the advance organizer. It really needs to grab the group’s attention.
- b. Brainstorm what you think the answers to the questions might be.
- c. Continue to distill the information you wish to convey, as needed.

9. NEW: Write transitions. Yes, write them down.

- a. Use transitions to link each section of a sequenced experience to the next. They:
 - i. generate anticipation for what will be seen or heard next;
 - ii. invite visitor involvement (mental and sensory);
 - iii. create a bridge or connection between ideas;
 - iv. provide direction or focus during group movement;
 - v. allow visitors to apply their own experiences and knowledge;
 - vi. create a foundation for new information.
- b. Transitions are short (only one or two sentences), and can use questions, provocative statements, summaries, and analogies.
- c. Examples include:
 - i. Relates to the “big idea” ... “As you can see, both of these features show us X.”
 - ii. Hints at reason for the next stop on the tour... “If you think this is X, let’s see how it compares to Y in the next room.”
 - iii. Includes visitor comments... “You think of X when you think of Easter. Let’s see how people in Faberge’s time related to Easter.”
 - iv. Can be an action or activity... “As we move to the next stop, watch out for X.”

10. Develop an evaluative conclusion with two parts: a summary and a question probing for take-aways. A conclusion completes the lesson's structure and creates a solid framework.

- a. The Summary:
 - i. brings visitors back to the original advance organizer and assists them in reflecting on what has taken place.
- b. A Question Probing for Take-aways:
 - i. Include a broad question that lets you know if you have met the objectives that you established for yourself at the outset of the lesson. Evaluating the experience provides you with information that can help you decide what to keep and what to change for future groups.
 - ii. Use one of the following examples:
 1. "What new information (or one important idea) from our tour do you leave with?"
 2. "What do you take away from this tour?"
 3. "What will you remember from this tour?"
 4. "What was your favorite moment of this tour?"
 5. "What did you enjoy most about the tour?"
 6. "What did you find most memorable about this tour?"
 7. "What will you take away from the tour that you'd like to tell a friend?"

11. Write a lesson plan for your room lesson.

- a. This lesson plan will be submitted to Audra, Lisa, and Marisa.
- b. Follow the structure of the written lesson plan for the French porcelain room demonstrated by Lisa.
- c. A written lesson plan for a room will include these components:
 - i. Audience description (for this purpose: typical Hillwood visitors)
 - ii. Name of room and objects
 - iii. Objectives (As a result of participating in this lesson, visitors will be better able to...)
 - iv. Big idea: from framework of estate, collection, collector
 - v. An advance organizer including hook question
 - vi. The sequence of questions (and distilled answers)
 - vii. Transitions and summaries between features and sections
 - viii. Evaluative conclusion: summary & take-away question

12. Practice, practice, practice.

- a. Time the lesson so that it doesn't exceed the ten-minute time requirement.
- b. Practice out loud multiple times.
- c. Spend time in the mansion room, and plan where you will stand and where visitors will gather.

Helpful Tip: In steps #11 and #12, this is where the ruthless editing process occurs.

13. After the lesson plan is delivered, assess how it went.

- a. Use the Self-Assessment Worksheet. Determine how those assessments influence your tour lesson plan.