

The British Museum

Your Name

Educational Institution

A massive triangle roof with eight columns below make it easy to recognize one of the best-known places of London – the British Museum. Being a famous tourist attraction, the British Museum performs as well an educational function for students! Besides, it's a perfect place to visit with the whole family! Its area covers almost three miles with historic exhibitions and modern galleries. It turns out to be impossible to see everything just in one day!

The Museum is situated in Great Russel Street. Originally it was founded in 1753 and designed in the middle of 19-th century. The collection grew significantly during the times of the British Empire. The naturalist, physician and collector Sir Hans Sloan (1660-1753) managed to collect a great number of relics from different parts of the world. These were nearly 71,000 of various objects, the collection of herbarium and a library. Books, manuscripts and natural history made the main part of the collection. The artifacts reflect nearly two million history period of the world, including plant and animal life as well as earth crust. The well-known naturalist bequeathed his collection to King George II, in his pursuit to safe the collection and make it a part of the cultural heritage of the heirs/future generations. In return he got £20,000 for his heirs for all the items in his collection. On the 7-th of June, 1753 the British Museum was established by the act of the parliament.

The dinosaur Gallery is of special interest, as far as real fossil skeletons of a great deal of ancient birds and monsters can be found there.

In the Whale Room a full size cast of a long blue whale is presented. Its size reaches 90 foot long.

The architecture of the building is really impressive and reminds about the power of the British Empire. The Egyptian room is specially fascinating. Ancient columns with symbolic pictographs and antique scrolls seem to carry all the visitors of the room into the ancient times.

In 1857 the luxurious Reading Room was restored. Soon afterwards it was unanimously admitted to be among the most impressing London sights. The interior of the room is truly splendid. Interior

of the dome and gold decorative scheme, first introduced by Sydney Smirke, were fully restored in 1857.

The Prints and Drawings exhibition depicts London during the 18-th century. The substantial collection of works painted by William Hogarth, Tomas and Paul Sandby, Canaletto reveal the peculiarities of the city life and the citizens at those times. When looking at their paintings the time seems to hold still.

Among numerous watches and jewelery, it's also possible to find the very first edition of the English Language dictionary, composed by Samuel Johnson. The two other priceless treasures of the museum are Sophocles' head, made of bronze and dating 300 and 100 BC, and “Passionflower” by Maria Sibylla Merian.

One more striking thing about this first national public museum is that here's also a restaurant inside, that is between the The Egyptology Department and The Reading Room, which was initially constructed by Sir Norman Foster.

In 2003 the Museum celebrated its 250-th anniversary. Two events were closely connected with this date – the King's Library restoration and a launch of a new permanent exhibition called “Englishment: Discovering the world in the eighteenth century”.

Thus, when visiting the British Museum, it looks like one gets a chance to travel both – around the world and in time.

References

Wilson, D. M. (2002). *the British Museum: A History*. London: British Museum Press