INITIATING MESSAGE-BASED DIALOGUE

Personal interpretation offers a unique opportunity to initiate message-based conversations or meaningful interactions with visitors while still communicating important information. The following exercises will guide you through the process of selecting props, actions, and questions can be strategically used as the catalyst for these interactions.

A. Begin by determining the **location** where you want or anticipate the interaction to occur
B. Create or enter the **theme** ('big idea') and main messages (important supporting ideas) of the location, exhibit, or collection where interaction will occur.
C. Brainstorm **props** that can be used to illustrate that point and might attract attention.
D. Brainstorm **actions** that can be used to initiate conversation about the concept.
E. Complete the activities on the following pages to create effective **questions.**

LOCATION/COLLECTION:

THEME:

MESSAGE 1:

Props:_____ Actions: _____

_____ _____

_____ _____

_____ _____

MESSAGE 2:

Props:_____ Actions: _____

_____ _____

_____ _____

_____ _____

MESSAGE 3:

Props:_____ Actions: _____

_____ _____

_____ _____

_____ _____

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Identify each type of sample question as one or more of the following:

R … if it asks visitor to recall, identify, or enumerate

P … if it asks visitor to process, analyze, or compare data

A … if it asks visitor to apply, predict, or theorize

QUESTION TOOLBOXES

RECALL	*PROCESS*	*APPLICATION*
Counting	Analyze	Finding examples
Describing	Classify	Hypothesizing/Predicting
Identifying	Compare	Inventing
Listing	Contrast	Generalizing
Matching	Analogies (how is x like y)	Imagining
Observing	Organizing	Applying a principle

Type	Sample Interpreter's Questions
____1.	What do you see in the crevice of that rock?
____2.	How do you think our lives would be different without museums?
____3.	What do you observe the people doing in this painting?
____4.	Based on what you can see, what evidence is there that people lived here 200 years ago?
____5.	How do you think this landscape will look in 2020?
____6.	In a prairie that could tolerate drought conditions, how might the roots of these prairie plants look underground?
____7.	How do you think the people in this photograph felt when this picture was taken?
____8.	When was the last time you saw a monarch butterfly in your neighborhood?
____9.	What might be some reasons for removing all of the English ivy from this natural area?
____10.	In what ways do crystals and diamonds differ?
____11.	Why might birds return to the same migration grounds every year?
____12.	How might the pioneers that arrived here in 1890 dress differently than we do today?

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USING QUESTIONS TO CONVEY MESSAGES

Visitors who recall facts, process data and apply ideas are more likely to derive meaning from their experience than those who simply respond "yes" or "no" to the questions they are asked. Planning for successful interpretive interaction includes creating a variety of thoughtful questions. The following exercise will help to plan questions that will initiate message-based interaction or conversations.

A. **Record the theme and messages** for a desired location or collection in the designated boxes below to utilize as a reference during the activity.
B. **Create questions** that will initiate conversation related to that message
C. **Indicate** the various ways your question asks the visitor to ***Recall*** **(R),** ***Process*** **(P),** or ***Apply*** **(A)** ideas in the shaded box (referencing Question Toolboxes from p.3)

Theme:

R/P/A

Message 1.

1.

2.

3.

Message 2

1.

2.

3.

Message 3

1.

2.

3.