

# Marketing the Past

Guiding tourists round places of interest

## Preview

- 1 Work in groups and discuss these questions.
- When was the last time you visited a museum?
  - What did you see there?
  - How was it displayed?
  - Why do we keep things from the past in museums?
  - What is the role of a museum in society today?

## Reading

- 2 Read the introduction from a guidebook to the Louvre and answer these questions.
- What was the aim of the Grand Louvre project?
  - What was it that made people very angry?
  - What is the purpose of a museum according to Ieoh Ming Pei?



## Listening 1

- 3 Listen to an expert talking about the reconstruction of the Neues Museum in Berlin and answer these questions.
- What are the choices facing the architects?
  - How do the expert's views on the design of a museum compare with Ieoh Ming Pei's?
- 4 Work with a partner and discuss how a museum can encourage visitors to keep coming back. Then listen to how the Neues Museum intends to deal with tourists, and answer these questions.
- How does the museum intend to encourage the frequent visitor?
  - What will the museum do for the groups on a thirty-minute tour?
  - How will this help the individual visitor?
  - According to the speaker what are the disadvantages of museums like the Louvre?
- Do you agree with the speaker's view of how a museum should be organised? Give your reasons.

THE DECISION TO turn the Louvre into the world's biggest museum was taken in the autumn of 1981 by the French President François Mitterrand. The challenge lay in turning what was basically a nineteenth-century museum into a modern museum equipped to handle the ever-growing number of people anxious to see and learn about art. The first step towards creating the "Grand Louvre" was to create more exhibition space and to reorganise the collections, so that works could be presented both more logically and with more breathing space.

According to a number of experts the most rational way to reorganise the museum was to use the area beneath the courtyard itself. This is just what the Chinese-American architect Ieoh Ming Pei decided to do. He had been named to design the project, without a prior competition being held, in March 1983.

The architect's choice of a 71-foot high pyramid, albeit of glass, created a storm of protest. Many believed that this historic site was already "saturated with architectural styles..." I.M. Pei, who designed the striking East Wing at Washington's National Gallery, wanted to turn this historic palace into a modern museum. He wanted to create something alive and welcoming, without destroying the history of the place, and he succeeded in persuading the authorities to accept his transparent, reflecting prism.

Pei is convinced that museums should play a role in educating the public. With competition from so many other forms of recreation, museums must be inviting enough for people to want to spend the day there. At the same time, the architecture must be functional, so that museums can offer better service in more comfortable surroundings. Even more important, museums should not only be a place to see art but, thanks to their architectural quality, should be an aesthetic experience in themselves.

## Speaking 1

- 5 Work in groups. Describe your favourite museum or art gallery to your group. Tell them:
- why you like it.
  - how the museum attracts tourists.
  - how it copes with large groups.
  - how the architecture of the building is used to show off the exhibits.

Have you ever taken a party round a museum?

## Vocabulary

- 6 The guides at both the Louvre and the Neues Museum need specialised vocabulary to describe the artefacts. Work with a partner. Put these words into logical sets. Give each set a title. Add three words to each set. Which sets would a guide describing Ancient Egyptian exhibits in the Neues Museum need? Which sets would a guide in the National Gallery in London need?

arch	necklace	shield	portico	facade
gateway	statue	fresco	sculpture	gable
coronet	spire	mural	frieze	spear
mosaic	gold	bronze	etching	pistol
helmet	chariot	cloak	watercolour	carriage
copper	carving	bracelet	column	cart

## Writing 1

### Descriptions of artefacts

- 7 Use the words in the box to complete this short description of the bust of Nefertiti.

The bust of Nefertiti. Look at the faultless symmetrical face enhanced by make-up tastefully applied to brows, ...

ribbon	necklace	neck	lips	flowered
flat-topped	eyelids	crown	graceful	

- 8 Write a short description of one of these paintings.



Christina of Denmark by Hans Holbein the younger (1538)



Lord John and Lord Renard Stuart by Anthony van Dyke (1638)



Madame Moites Sier by Ingres (1856)



### Learning Tip

When you visit a museum, monument or art gallery it is a good idea to pick up leaflets, or buy the guidebook, in your own language and in English. Then you can study the quality of the translations (they're not always good!) and also learn any new vocabulary.