

Create a multilingual glossary

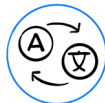
How does it work?

In this activity, museum professionals make a word list with pictures in Dutch and the children's home languages. By using the list, children learn new words and understand the museum topic better. You notice it works when children look at the list, use the words, or ask and answer questions.

Translanguaging forms



Combining languages



Translating



Collaborating multilingually



Using language brokers

What is the goal of the activity?

By using a multilingual glossary, children:

- ◇ Take part more in the visit and learn about the museum topic.
- ◇ See and connect words in their home languages and Dutch, and learn new words.

Zin uit het bezoek	Woord	Plaatje	Wat zijn de woorden in je thuistaal? Schrijf het op!
Dit bezoek gaat over de Mont Blanc. Dat is de hoogste berg van Europa. Het gaat ook over Horace. Hij beklom de berg in 1785 voor het eerst.	De berg		
	Klimmen		
Wetenschappers deden in de 18 ^e eeuw al veel onderzoek . Daardoor weten wij nu meer over bijvoorbeeld elektriciteit en magnetisme.	De wetenschapper/ het onderzoek		
Wetenschappers zijn nieuwsgierige mensen.	Nieuwsgierig		
De instrumenten in deze zaal werden gebruikt om verschillende dingen te meten .	Meten met een instrument		
Dit is een tekening van de beklimming van de Mont Blanc. Horace wilde onderzoeken hoe hoog de berg was. Dus nam hij meetinstrumenten mee (gedragen door al die mensen). Hij was nieuwsgierig en wilde van alles onderzoeken .			

Multilingual glossary used in school visits to Teylers museums (Source: Teylers museum)

In short

Age group: All ages

Subject: Mathematics Science & Technology Both

How long it takes: Continuous (could take the whole visit)

Who can lead this?: Teacher Museum guide & museum educator Parents & caregivers



What do you need?

Materials to create the glossary.

- ◇ You can use [Template multilingual glossary](#) (see below) if you would like.
- ◇ You can check out [Example of multilingual glossary created for Teylers](#) (see below) for some inspiration.

Optional: digital tools to create the glossary (computer, printer)

Preparation

1. Decide on the format

Will the glossary be a leaflet, a poster, or displayed digitally?

2. Choose keywords

Pick only the most important words that explain the exhibition's main ideas. Avoid too many words; 5-10 is a good range (think of fitting them onto one page).

3. Decide which languages to include

Consider the languages of your visitors and the local community.

4. Add pictures and icons

Choose images that help explain the meaning of keywords.

5. Add contextual sentences

From a science and language education perspective, it is important to show how each keyword is used in a sentence.

Example:

"Photosynthesis – plants make food through photosynthesis."

6. Make the glossary

Print or create the poster, leaflet, or digital version

7. Plan how visitors will use it

Decide who will explain the glossary (reception, guides, or teachers) and how visitors will be introduced to it.



Step-by-step instructions

During the museum visit

1. Display or hand out the glossary at the start of the visit.
 2. Encourage visitors to use their home language(s) to read the keywords
 3. Use the glossary during guided school visits or self-led visits to support comprehension.
 4. Invite children or families to look up unknown words or explore translations further (DeepL or Google Translate).
 5. Review the glossary periodically and update it based on visitor feedback or new exhibition content.
-

Tips & Variations

- ◇ Families can receive this glossary at the start of their visit.
 - ◇ Schools can use the glossary in advance to prepare students for the visit.
 - ◇ Keep it simple: a few keywords with clear pictures and sentences work best.
 - ◇ Be aware that many museum topics and objects include the use of very complex or unfamiliar terms (for example, names of scientific instruments or preserved specimens). Consider sticking to the few essential terms that encourage learning about the museum topic.
 - ◇ This activity could also be performed by the school and teacher if they receive enough information on the visit topic before the visit.
-

Who made this


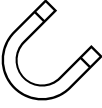
Developed by Multi-STEM, based on our research and the current literature on multilingualism in museums.

Multilingual glossary © 2026 by Multi-STEM is licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 4.0. To view a copy of this license, visit <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/>

Materials

1







A VISIT TO [NAME MUSEUM] Glossary – Guided tour

Sentence from the visit	Word	Picture	What are the words in your home language? Write them down!
<p>Scientists were already conducting extensive research in the 18th century. As a result, we now know more about magnetism, for example.</p>	<p>The scientist/the study</p>		
	<p>The magnet</p>		

2

Example of multilingual glossary created for Teylers

At Teylers Museum, we made a multilingual glossary for the Climbing Mont Blanc tour. The glossary shows key scientific words in Dutch, short explanations, and clear pictures and icons. There is also space for children to add words in their home languages. Teachers said the glossary helped them prepare children for the museum visit.

  Multi-STEM <small>Multilingual voices in STEM education</small>		NAAR DE TOP VAN DE MONT BLANC: EEN BEZOEK AAN TEYLERS MUSEUM Woordenlijstje – Rondleiding		Wat zijn de woorden in je thuistaal? Schrijf het op!
Zin uit het bezoek	Woord	Plaatje		
Dit bezoek gaat over de Mont Blanc. Dat is de hoogste berg van Europa. Het gaat ook over Horace. Hij beklom de berg in 1785 voor het eerst.	De berg			
Wetenschappers deden in de 18 ^e eeuw al veel onderzoek . Daardoor weten wij nu meer over bijvoorbeeld elektriciteit en magnetisme.	Klimmen			
Wetenschappers zijn nieuwsgierige mensen.	De wetenschapper/ het onderzoek			
De instrumenten in deze zaal werden gebruikt om verschillende dingen te meten .	Nieuwsgierig			
Dit is een tekening van de beklimming van de Mont Blanc. Horace wilde onderzoeken hoe hoog de berg was. Dus nam hij meetinstrumenten mee (gedragen door al die mensen). Hij was nieuwsgierig en wilde van alles onderzoeken .	Metten met een instrument	