Museum & Audio Tour corporate & narration scripts

30 practice scripts from VO Journey Academy. Free to record, free to use in your reel. Download the PDF to mark up in the booth, or print it straight from here.

Stop 3: The Orchard at Dusk

Art gallery, landscape painting · Adult (40-55) · Neutral American · 90 seconds

Stop 3. The Orchard at Dusk, painted by Ada Merriwether in 1894.

Step back two or three paces, so you can see the whole canvas.

[pause]

At first glance, it is a quiet scene. A row of apple trees, a low stone wall, and a sky fading from gold to violet.

Now look at the bottom left corner. You will see a small figure in a white apron, bending to pick up fallen fruit. She is easy to miss. Merriwether painted her no bigger than your thumb.

Follow the line of the wall from that figure toward the right. It leads your eye straight to a farmhouse window, where a single lamp has just been lit. That warm dot of yellow is the brightest point in the whole painting.

Merriwether grew up on a farm like this one in the Hudson Valley. She painted this picture years later, in a city apartment, entirely from memory.

If you step closer now, you can see how she did it. Look at the leaves on the nearest tree. Up close, they are just quick dabs of green, blue and even pink. From where you were standing a moment ago, they turned into leaves.

Merriwether once wrote that she painted "the hour when the work stops."

Find that small figure in the corner again.

Has she finished for the day, do you think? Or is she still working?

Stop 7: A Girl with a Pearl Earring

Art gallery, Dutch painting · Adult (40-55) · Neutral British · 2 minutes

Stop 7. Girl with a Pearl Earring, by Johannes Vermeer.

Vermeer painted this picture in the Dutch city of Delft, in about 1665. It is smaller than many people expect, so if you can, take a step closer.

[pause]

A young woman looks back at us over her left shoulder. Her lips are slightly parted, as if she is about to speak, or has just heard her name.

She wears a blue and yellow turban, an exotic costume for the time. Behind her, there is nothing at all, only darkness. Nothing to tell us where she is.

And here is the first surprise. We do not know who she is.

This is probably not a portrait of a particular person. Dutch painters of the period made pictures known as tronies: studies of a face, an expression or a character, often in costume. No record tells us whether someone sat for this painting, or who that might have been.

So, instead of a name, Vermeer gives us a moment.

Now look at the pearl.

From a short distance, it looks perfectly round and solid, hanging just below her ear. But up close, it is barely there. Vermeer has suggested it with very few strokes: a soft, bright highlight at the top, and a fainter reflection underneath, picking up the white of her collar.

There is no outline. Your eye fills in the rest.

Look, too, at the blue of the turban. Vermeer used a pigment called ultramarine, made from ground lapis lazuli, a semi-precious stone. It was one of the most expensive colors a painter could buy.

[pause]

Vermeer died in 1675, and for a long time afterward his work was largely forgotten. Today, this small painting is one of the most famous in the world.

Before you move on, step back once more.

Notice how, wherever you stand, she still seems to be looking at you.

Stop 12: The Great Wave

Art gallery, Japanese print · Adult (30-45) · Neutral American · 90 seconds

Stop 12. Under the Wave off Kanagawa, better known as The Great Wave, by Katsushika Hokusai.

You have almost certainly seen this image before. So, for the next minute, let's try to see it fresh.

This is not a painting. It is a woodblock print, made in Japan around 1831. An artist designed it, carvers cut it into wooden blocks, and printers pressed it onto paper, one color at a time. Many impressions were made, and they are now in collections all over the world.

Start with the wave itself. Look at the very tip of its crest, at the top. It breaks into curling white fingers, like claws, reaching down.

Now look underneath it.

There are three long, narrow boats, low in the water. They are bent forward, heads down, gripping their oars. They are not fighting the wave. They are riding it out.

[pause]

And now, look for the mountain.

In the center, low down, framed by the curve of the wave, is a small, snow-capped peak.

That is Mount Fuji, the tallest mountain in Japan. This print belongs to a series called Thirty-six Views of Mount Fuji. Here, Hokusai has made the great mountain look tiny, almost like another wave.

Notice the deep blue, too. It is a pigment called Prussian blue, which was newly available in Japan at the time.

Hokusai was around seventy when he made this print.

He was only getting started.

Stop 5: The Bronze Swimmer

Art gallery, sculpture · Adult (25-40) · Neutral American · 1 minute

Stop 5. The Bronze Swimmer, by Lena Okafor, made in 1998.

Before you read the label or listen any further, walk slowly around the sculpture once. Take your time.

[pause]

You may have noticed something strange. From the front, the swimmer looks like she is diving down. From the back, she seems to be rising up toward the surface.

Okafor did that on purpose. She was a competitive swimmer until her twenties, and she said that underwater, she could never quite tell which way was up.

Now, if you are able to, crouch down so your eyes are level with the base.

Look at the rippled bronze beneath the figure. From this angle, it stops looking like a base and starts to look like the surface of the water, seen from below.

The bronze has been polished in only a few places: the hands, the face and the top of the head.

Those are the parts that catch the light first.

Stop 9: The King of the Late Cretaceous

Natural history, dinosaurs · Adult (30-45) · Neutral American · 2 minutes

Stop 9. Tyrannosaurus rex.

Stand at the rail and look up. Way up.

This skeleton is nicknamed Big Mae. She was found in Montana by a team from this museum, and she is one of the more complete T. rex skeletons ever discovered.

Tyrannosaurus lived around sixty-eight to sixty-six million years ago, at the very end of the age of dinosaurs, in what is now western North America.

Start at the head. The skull alone is about five feet long. Look at the teeth. The largest ones, including the root, are about the size of a banana. They are thick and strong, made for crunching through bone, not just slicing flesh.

Scientists estimate that T. rex had one of the most powerful bites of any land animal that has ever lived.

[pause]

Now look at the arms.

Yes. They are short. Each one has just two fingers. But look closely at the bones. They are thick and sturdy, and scientists think the muscles attached to them were strong. What T. rex actually used its arms for is still debated.

Now walk around to the side, and look at the tail. It stretches out behind, counterbalancing that enormous head, like a seesaw with the hips as the pivot.

Big Mae probably weighed as much as a large elephant, or more.

But they were not just giants. They were animals that grew up, hunted, healed from injuries, and lived in a world very different from ours.

Before you go, look at her ribs. Some of them have healed breaks.

Big Mae survived a lot.

Stop 2: The Blue Whale

Natural history, ocean life · Mature (55+) · Neutral American · 1 minute

Stop 2. The Blue Whale.

Find a spot under the middle of the whale and look straight up.

[pause]

This model is built to the size of a fully grown female blue whale, about ninety feet from nose to tail. Blue whales can grow even larger than this.

It is the largest animal known to have ever lived. Bigger than any dinosaur.

And it lives on some of the smallest food in the ocean. Blue whales eat krill, tiny shrimp-like animals, often no longer than your finger. A whale takes in enormous mouthfuls of water, then pushes the water out through fringed plates in its mouth, called baleen, trapping the krill inside.

Blue whales are also among the loudest animals on Earth. Their low calls can travel for many miles under water.

Walk now toward the tail, and look up at the flukes.

One stroke of that tail can move all this weight through the ocean.

Stop 14: Stones from the Sky

Natural history, meteorites · Adult (25-40) · Neutral American · 90 seconds

Stop 14. Stones from the Sky.

In the case in front of you are meteorites: pieces of rock and metal that fell to Earth from space.

Most meteorites are fragments of asteroids, the rocky bodies that orbit the Sun, mostly between Mars and Jupiter. A few are pieces of the Moon, or of Mars.

Look at the large slice at the center of the case. It has been cut and polished, and you can see a criss-cross pattern of lines across its surface, like woven threads.

That pattern forms only in iron meteorites, as the metal crystals grow during cooling that took place incredibly slowly, over millions of years, deep inside an asteroid. You will not find it in iron made on Earth.

[pause]

Now step to your right, to the pedestal with the dark, rounded stone on top.

This one, you are allowed to touch. Go ahead, place your hand on it.

Feel how cold it is. And how heavy it looks for its size. That is because it is made almost entirely of iron and nickel.

Many meteorites are older than any rock you can find on the surface of the Earth. Scientists date the oldest of them to about four and a half billion years ago, when the solar system itself was forming.

So the stone under your hand was already old before our planet had finished taking

shape.

When you are ready, continue to Stop 15.

Stop 4: The Kitchen at Whitlow House

Historic house, Victorian kitchen · Adult (40-55) · Neutral British · 2 minutes

Stop 4. The Kitchen.

Step inside and stand just to the left of the door, by the long wooden table. Try to imagine the noise in here at six o'clock in the morning.

[pause]

In the 1880s, Whitlow House employed a staff of around twenty. And this kitchen fed all of them, as well as the family upstairs and their guests.

Look first at the great black range along the far wall. That is a cast-iron coal-fired cooking range. It had ovens, hot plates and a boiler for hot water, and it was lit before dawn and kept burning all day, even in high summer.

Above it, on the rail, you can see the copper pans. They were cleaned by the scullery maid, usually the youngest member of staff, with a paste of salt, vinegar and sand.

Now turn and look at the table in front of you. Scrubbed so often, over so many years, that the wood has worn into shallow dips. Stand at the end nearest the window, and you are standing where the cook would have stood.

Her name was Mrs. Eliza Hale. She ran this kitchen for twenty-two years.

We know a good deal about her, because she kept a notebook. It sits in the glass case to your right. It is full of recipes, shopping lists and costings. But scattered between them are other notes. Reminders of birthdays. A remedy for burns. A list of the kitchen maids

who had passed through her hands, and where each of them went next.

Some became cooks themselves, in other houses.

Before you leave, look back at the range. Under the hot plate, the iron is worn smooth.

That is where Mrs. Hale rested her hand, thousands of times a day, to feel whether the heat was right.

When you're ready, head through the door on your left, down the stone passage to Stop 5, the Scullery.

Stop 6: The Library at Carrow Hall

Historic house, Georgian library · Mature (55+) · Neutral British · 2 minutes

Stop 6. The Library.

Come in and stand on the edge of the carpet, facing the fireplace. You will see this room just as the family last arranged it, in the early nineteenth century.

[pause]

Carrow Hall was built in the 1760s, and the library was its grandest room. Look up at the ceiling. The plasterwork, with its garlands and medallions, was designed to impress visitors before they had even sat down.

The shelves hold a little over four thousand books. History, sermons, travel, poetry and a great many volumes on farming, drainage and the breeding of sheep.

Now, here is a confession. When the house was catalogued, we found that a good number of the finest leather-bound sets had never been opened. In a house like this, books were for reading, yes. But they were also for being seen to own.

On either side of the fireplace, you will notice a pair of globes. One shows the Earth. The other shows the heavens, the constellations of the night sky. A gentleman's library was expected to have both.

To the right of the window, there is a set of library steps, which folds away to look like a small table. Clever furniture of this kind was very fashionable at the time.

And finally, look at the bookcase in the far left corner. Look closely. The books on its middle shelves are not books at all. They are painted wooden spines.

That bookcase is a door.

It leads to a narrow passage, which allowed servants to tend the fire without crossing the room.

Please do not try to open it. Continue instead through the main doorway, to Stop 7.

Stop 8: The Back Stairs

Historic house, servants' quarters · Young adult (18-25) · Irish · 1 minute

Stop 8. The Back Stairs.

You have just left the grand staircase behind. This narrow one is the staircase the family almost never saw.

Put your hand on the rail and look down. The stone steps are worn into soft hollows in the middle, by more than a century of feet.

In the 1890s, the housemaids at Glenarra House climbed these stairs dozens of times a day. Carrying coal, hot water, trays and linen.

They were often fifteen or sixteen years old, and most came from farms within a few miles of here.

The rule was simple: stay out of sight.

There are seventy-four steps from the kitchen to the attic bedrooms, where the maids slept, two to a room.

Count them as you climb, if you like.

At the top, the small window on your left looks out over the fields. On a clear day, some of those girls could see their own homes from here.

Stop 11: The Long Walk to Cemetery Ridge

Battlefield, American Civil War · Mature (55+) · Neutral American · 2 minutes

Stop 11. Seminary Ridge.

Stand at the edge of the trees and look east, across the open fields, toward the low ridge on the far side. Find the small cluster of trees on that ridge.

[pause]

It is about a mile away.

On the afternoon of the third of July, 1863, the third day of the Battle of Gettysburg, Confederate soldiers waited here, along this line of trees, in the summer heat.

Early that afternoon, their artillery opened fire on the Union position on that far ridge, Cemetery Ridge. The Union guns answered. For a long time, the noise was enormous, and smoke covered the fields.

Then the guns went quiet.

And about twelve thousand Confederate soldiers stepped out from these trees and began to walk across the open ground toward that ridge.

Look at the distance again. Picture walking it, in step, in heat and dust, with no cover. Fences cut across the fields, and the men had to climb over them, or tear them down, under fire.

Union artillery and infantry fired into the lines as they came. Some of the attackers reached the stone wall on Cemetery Ridge, at a point now known as the Angle, close to that cluster of trees. They could not hold it.

The assault, known today as Pickett's Charge, lasted under an hour. More than half of the men who took part were killed, wounded or captured.

[pause]

The next day, the Confederate army began its retreat. It never again invaded the North on this scale.

Four months later, President Abraham Lincoln came to Gettysburg to dedicate a cemetery for the Union dead.

Take a moment here before you move on.

This field has been quiet for a long time now. Try, if you can, to listen to it.

Stop 1: The Names on the Cross

Memorial, First World War · Adult (40-55) · Scottish · 90 seconds

Stop 1. The War Memorial.

You are standing in front of the war memorial of Glenbrae, a village that had fewer than four hundred people at the time of the First World War.

The memorial is a simple Celtic cross of grey granite. The villagers paid for it themselves.

Look at the base. On the front face are the names of the men from this parish who died in the war of 1914 to 1918.

There are twenty-three of them.

[pause]

Read along the second column. You will see the name Cameron, three times. Duncan, Alexander, and James Cameron were brothers. They worked on the same farm, about a mile along the road you came in on. All three enlisted together in 1914. None of them came home.

Further down, you will find a shepherd, two fishermen, a schoolteacher and the son of the minister.

For a village this size, twenty-three was a terrible number. There was hardly a family without a gap at the table.

Many villages across Britain built memorials like this one in the years after the war. Each one is a list of neighbors.

On the eleventh of November every year, the people of Glenbrae still gather here at eleven o'clock in the morning, the hour the guns fell silent in 1918. The names are read aloud.

All twenty-three.

When you are ready, follow the path past the church gate to Stop 2.

Stop 3: The Waterline

Memorial, flood memorial · Adult (30–45) · Neutral American · 1 minute

Stop 3. The Waterline.

Look at the brick wall to your left. Running along it, a little above your head, is a narrow strip of bronze.

That line marks how high the river rose in the spring flood of 1937.

[pause]

If you can, reach up and touch it.

For six days, Main Street was under water. Homes and shops were flooded to their ceilings. Families were taken out of upstairs windows in rowing boats.

The bronze strip was set into this wall in 1987, fifty years later, by people who had lived through the flood as children.

Along the line, you can see small words cast into the metal. They are the names of the streets that went under. Every one of them is still here today.

The river is calm now, and it is a long way below you.

But this town has never forgotten how far it can rise.

Continue along the riverwalk to Stop 4.

Stop 6: Watch the Floor Turn

Science center, physics · Young adult (18-25) · Neutral American · 90 seconds

Stop 6. The Foucault Pendulum.

Look down into the pit. A heavy brass ball hangs on a long wire from the ceiling, swinging slowly back and forth.

Watch it for a few swings.

[pause]

Around the edge of the circle, you will see a ring of small pegs. Every so often, the ball knocks one over. Over the course of the day, it works its way around the circle, peg by peg.

So the pendulum seems to be slowly changing direction.

But here is the strange part. Nothing is pushing it sideways. Once a pendulum is set swinging, it tends to keep swinging in the same direction.

So what is changing?

It's not the pendulum that's turning.

It's you.

The pendulum keeps swinging in the same direction, while the Earth, and this building, and the floor under your feet, slowly rotate beneath it.

The French physicist Léon Foucault showed this to the public in Paris in 1851. It was one of the first simple, visible demonstrations that the Earth spins.

How fast the pegs fall depends on where you are on the planet. At the North or South Pole, the swing would turn all the way around in about a day. At the equator, it would not turn at all.

Check the clock on the wall, and note which peg is next. If you come back before you leave today, you will see how far the world has turned.

Stop 10: Hair-Raising

Science center, electricity · Adult (25-40) · Neutral American · 1 minute

Stop 10. Hair-Raising.

The big metal dome in front of you is a Van de Graaff generator. A moving belt inside carries electric charge up to the dome.

If you'd like to try it, wait for the green light, then step up onto the platform. It keeps you insulated from the floor.

Keep both feet on the platform, and don't touch anyone while you're up there.

Now, rest one hand gently on the dome.

[pause]

Within a few seconds, you may feel a slight tingle. And if your hair is dry and not tied back, it may begin to rise.

Here's why. The charge spreads over your whole body, including every single hair. Each strand picks up the same kind of charge. And like charges push each other away.

So your hairs are trying to get as far from each other as possible.

When you're done, lift your hand and step down.

You might feel a little spark. That's normal.

Stop 8: The Cloud Chamber

Science center, particle physics · Adult (40-55) · Neutral American · 2 minutes

Stop 8. The Cloud Chamber.

Bend down a little and look through the glass into the dark box below. The light inside is angled so you are looking at a thin layer of mist, just above a cold black plate.

At first, it may look as though nothing is happening.

Keep watching.

[pause]

There. Did you see it? A thin white streak appears in the mist, then fades away, like a tiny vapor trail.

And another.

Each of these lines is the track of a particle passing through the chamber, something far too small to see.

Here's what's going on. The bottom of the chamber is kept very cold, and the air above it is full of alcohol vapor. That vapor is on the edge of turning into droplets, but it needs a nudge. When a fast-moving particle shoots through, it knocks electrons off the molecules it passes. That leaves a trail of charged molecules, and the vapor condenses around them, forming a line of tiny droplets.

So you are not seeing the particle itself. You are seeing its wake.

Look at the shapes of the tracks. Some are long and straight. Some are short and thick. Some wobble and curl. Different kinds of particles leave different kinds of trails.

Many of the long, straight ones are made by particles called muons. They are created high in the atmosphere, when cosmic rays from space slam into the air. They rain down on the Earth all the time, passing through buildings, through the ground, and through you.

Right now, as you stand here.

[pause]

Scientists used cloud chambers like this one in the early twentieth century to make some major discoveries about the particles that make up our universe.

Stay as long as you like. No two minutes in here ever look the same.

When you're ready, Stop 9 is just around the corner.

Stop 4: The Moon Jellies

Zoo and aquarium, jellyfish · Adult (30-45) · Neutral American · 90 seconds

Stop 4. The Moon Jellies.

Find a spot in front of the big round tank and pick out one jelly. Just one. Follow it for a moment.

[pause]

Watch how it moves. The bell opens, then gently squeezes closed, pushing water out behind it. Open, and close. Open, and close.

These are moon jellies. They live in coastal waters around the world.

Look at the top of the one you are following. You will probably see four rings, shaped a little like horseshoes or a four-leaf clover. Those are its reproductive organs, and they show through because the jelly's body is almost transparent.

A moon jelly is made mostly of water. It has no brain, no heart and no bones. Instead, it has a simple net of nerves spread through its body, which lets it sense light, touch and its own movement.

And yet it has been drifting through Earth's oceans in one form or another for an extraordinarily long time. Jellyfish were here long before the dinosaurs.

Around the edge of the bell, you can just make out a fringe of very short tentacles. Moon jellies use them, and the sticky mucus on their bodies, to catch plankton.

In the wild, many animals eat jellyfish, including some sea turtles.

Now take a breath, and watch your jelly pulse one more time.

Open. And close.

When you're ready, Stop 5 is to your left, at the octopus den.

Stop 9: The Penguin Shore

Zoo and aquarium, penguins · Adult (25-40) · Australian · 1 minute

Stop 9. The Penguin Shore.

Stand by the glass and listen for a moment. If you hear something that sounds like a donkey, you're in the right place.

These are African penguins. They come from the coasts of South Africa and Namibia, and they make a loud braying call, which once earned them the nickname jackass penguins.

Look at their faces. See that patch of bare pink skin above each eye? That helps them cool down. When a penguin gets hot, more blood flows to those patches, and they turn a brighter pink.

But in the wild, they are in serious trouble. Their numbers have fallen sharply, and they are now among the most threatened penguins on Earth.

That is why this colony is part of a breeding program.

Have a look at the nest boxes on the far rocks.

You might spot a chick.

Stop 12: The Otter Stream

Zoo and aquarium, sea otters · Young adult (18-25) · Neutral American · 90 seconds

Stop 12. The Otter Stream.

Find a spot by the glass, and watch the water's surface. Our sea otters spend a lot of their day floating on their backs, so look up, not down.

[pause]

Sea otters live along the coasts of the North Pacific. Unlike most marine mammals, they do not have a thick layer of blubber to keep them warm.

Instead, they rely on their fur.

Sea otters have the densest fur of any animal. On some parts of their bodies, there can be close to a million hairs in a single square inch. It traps a layer of air against the skin, which keeps the cold water out.

That is why they spend so much time grooming. Watch one rubbing and rolling. It's keeping that coat in perfect condition, because its life depends on it.

Now, look for an otter lying on its back with something on its chest.

Sea otters are among the few mammals that use tools. In the wild, an otter will float on its back, place a rock on its chest, and bang a clam or a sea urchin against it until the shell cracks open.

And if you're lucky enough to be here at nap time, look for two otters floating close together. Sea otters sometimes hold paws while resting, so they don't drift apart.

Stop 13, the kelp forest, is just through the archway to your right.

Stop 1: The Harbor Steps

Walking tour, harbor town · Mature (55+) · Neutral American · 2 minutes

Welcome to Port Halloway. This is Stop 1 of our walking tour, which takes about an hour and covers just over a mile. You can pause the tour at any point, and every stop is marked with a small brass plaque in the sidewalk.

Right now, you should be standing at the top of a wide set of granite steps, looking down toward the water.

[pause]

These are the Harbor Steps. And for more than two hundred years, nearly everything that mattered in this town came up them.

In the early 1800s, Port Halloway was a busy fishing and trading port. Look out across the harbor. Where you see sailboats and kayaks today, there were dozens of schooners, packed in so tight that people said you could walk across the harbor on their decks.

Fish, salt, timber and molasses were hauled up these steps by hand. And families stood right where you are standing, watching for a familiar sail to come around the point.

Look down at the steps themselves. You'll see that the middle of each one is worn into a shallow curve. That's two centuries of boots, barrels and bare feet.

Now turn around, with the water at your back.

Straight ahead is Front Street. The tall brick building on the corner, with the green door, was the Customs House, where every ship's cargo was recorded and taxed. To its right, the white clapboard building with the bell was the sailors' chapel.

Before you leave the steps, look for a small carved anchor on the edge of the third step

from the top. Nobody knows who carved it, or when. Local children say that if you touch it on your way past, you'll always come back to Port Halloway.

Most people touch it.

When you're ready, walk up Front Street toward the Customs House. Stop 2 is at the green door.

Stop 4: The Closes of the Royal Mile

Walking tour, Edinburgh · Adult (30-45) · Scottish · 2 minutes

Stop 4. The Closes of the Royal Mile.

You are standing on the Royal Mile, the old main street of Edinburgh. It runs downhill from the Castle, at the top, to the Palace of Holyroodhouse at the bottom.

It is roughly a mile long, but it is a Scottish mile, which is a bit longer than the English one.

[pause]

Now, look at the buildings on either side. They are tall and narrow, often six storeys or more. The Old Town was built along a narrow ridge of rock, and the people of Edinburgh had nowhere to go but up.

At one time, the whole social ladder could be found in a single building. Wealthier families often lived on the middle floors. Poorer families crowded into the cellars and the attics.

Now, look for a narrow opening between two buildings, like a gap in a row of teeth. Find one? That is a close.

Closes are the narrow lanes and alleys that run off the Royal Mile, down the steep slopes

on either side. There are dozens of them. Many are named after a person who once lived there, or a trade that was carried on there.

Step just inside the entrance of the close nearest to you and look down. Feel how quickly the ground drops away. On a busy day, it is the quietest place in the Old Town.

For hundreds of years, these closes were where most of the city's people actually lived.

When you are ready, come back to the main street and walk downhill. Stop 5 is outside the next church you come to.

Stop 6: Weavers' Lane

Walking tour, Irish market town · Adult (25-40) · Irish · 1 minute

Stop 6. Weavers' Lane.

You've just turned off the main street into a narrow lane of small stone cottages. Stop for a moment outside number twelve, the one with the red half-door.

In the 1800s, nearly every house on this lane had a loom inside it. Linen was the business of the town, and whole families worked at it. The clatter went on from first light until dark.

Now look up at the windows on the upper floors. Notice how wide they are, compared with the doors. That was for the light. Weaving is close work, and in the days before electricity, every bit of daylight mattered.

The last weaver on the lane was a woman called Bridie Nolan. She worked her loom here until 1961.

People say she could tell who was walking past by the sound of their shoes.

Carry on to the end of the lane for Stop 7.

Trail Stop 3: The Old Ones

National park, old-growth forest · Mature (55+) · Neutral American · 2 minutes

Trail Stop 3. The Old Ones.

Step off the trail onto the wooden platform, so others can pass. Then stand still for a moment, and listen.

[pause]

You are standing in one of the last stands of old-growth forest in this part of the range. Some of the trees around you were already large when the first European settlers arrived in these valleys.

Look up at the giant directly in front of the platform. Follow the trunk with your eyes, as high as you can. Its bark is deeply furrowed, thick enough to help protect it from fire. Its lowest branches are far above your head.

Now look down, at its base. You will see that the bark is scarred black on one side. That is an old fire scar. This tree has survived at least one forest fire, and probably more.

Now, turn to your left, and look at the long, moss-covered log lying on the forest floor.

This tree fell many years ago. But it is far from dead. Look closely along the top of the log. You can see small seedlings growing right out of the rotting wood: ferns, mosses, and young trees.

Foresters call this a nurse log. As it slowly breaks down, it holds water and nutrients, giving young trees a head start above the competition on the forest floor. In a forest like this, a fallen tree can go on feeding new life for a very long time.

That is the thing about an old forest. Nothing is wasted. The old ones feed the young

ones.

[pause]

Take one more moment here, if you like. Notice how much cooler the air is, how quiet.

Then, when you're ready, return to the trail and continue uphill. Trail Stop 4 is about a quarter of a mile ahead, beside the creek.

Trail Stop 5: Reading the Canyon Wall

National park, geology · Adult (30-45) · Neutral American · 2 minutes

Trail Stop 5. Reading the Canyon Wall.

Walk to the railing at the overlook, and look across to the opposite wall of the canyon.

[pause]

You will see that the rock is not one color. It is striped, in horizontal bands. Pale cream near the top. Then a deep, rusty red. Then a band of grey. And far below, near the river, a dark, almost purple layer.

Each of those bands is a layer of rock, laid down over a very long period of time.

Here is the simplest rule for reading a canyon wall. In most places, layers like these were laid down one on top of the other. So, as a rule, the lower the layer, the older it is.

The rock at the top is the youngest. The rock at the bottom, next to the river, is the oldest you can see from here.

The different colors tell you about different worlds. Some layers formed from sand dunes. Others formed from mud at the bottom of ancient seas, or from sand and pebbles carried by long-vanished rivers.

So when you look down that wall, from top to bottom, you are looking back in time.

And the river at the bottom? That is the artist. Over a very long time, it has cut down through all of these layers, carrying the rock away grain by grain.

Before you move on, find the thin white line, about halfway down. That is a layer of volcanic ash.

Once, a long time ago, it snowed ash here.

Trail Stop 6 is a short walk to your right, along the rim.

Stop 5: The Rose Window

Cathedral, stained glass · Adult (40-55) · Neutral British · 90 seconds

Stop 5. The Rose Window.

Find a place to stand in the middle of the nave, facing the west end of the cathedral, and look up, high above the great doors.

[pause]

This is the Rose Window. It was made in the fourteenth century, and it is more than thirty feet across.

It is a circle of glass, divided by delicate stone tracery, like the petals of an enormous flower. On a bright afternoon, the light coming through it can paint colors across the stone floor around you.

Now let's look more closely. Start at the very center. You'll see a small circle with a figure seated on a throne. From there, the window spreads outward, ring by ring.

The first ring holds twelve panels, each showing a figure. The outer ring shows small scenes of everyday life: a man sowing seed, a woman spinning wool, a figure warming his hands by a fire.

These are the labors of the months, the work of the farming year, from January to December.

Notice the colors. The deepest blues and reds are among the oldest pieces of glass in the window. Some panels were damaged over the centuries and replaced.

[pause]

For the people who first saw this window, many of whom could not read, it told stories in light.

When you're ready, continue down the north aisle to Stop 6.

Stop 3: The Great Hall

Castle, medieval hall · Adult (40-55) · Neutral British · 2 minutes

Stop 3. The Great Hall.

Come in through the doorway and walk to the middle of the room. Stand roughly where you see the circle of darker flagstones on the floor.

[pause]

Try, for a few minutes, to imagine it full.

In the fourteenth century, the great hall was the heart of the castle. It was where the lord's household ate, met, did business, heard disputes and celebrated.

Look down at the circle of dark stones beneath your feet. That is where the open hearth once stood. A fire burned here, in the middle of the room, through much of the year.

Now look straight up, to the roof. See the small wooden structure at the very top? That is a louvre. With no chimney, the smoke from the hearth drifted up and found its way out through there. Mostly.

Now turn to face the far end of the room. You will see that the floor is raised there, by a step. That is the dais. The lord, his family and his most important guests sat there, at the high table, looking down the length of the hall. Everyone else sat at long trestle tables below, in order of rank.

Turn around now, to face the end you came in by. Look up at the wooden gallery above

the doorway. Beneath it runs the screens passage, and beyond that were the doors to the kitchens and the buttery. Food came out through there, and on special occasions musicians might play from the gallery above.

[pause]

So picture it. Smoke curling up to the roof. Torches on the walls. The noise of a hundred people eating, arguing and laughing.

And at the far end, on that raised step, the lord, watching it all.

When you're ready, leave by the small door to the left of the dais, and climb the spiral stairs to Stop 4.

Family Stop 2: Meet the Big Teeth

Family tour, dinosaurs · Young adult (18-25) · Neutral American · 1 minute

Family Stop 2. Meet the Big Teeth!

Hello again, explorers! Look up. Way, way up. Can you see that great big skull with all the pointy teeth?

That's Tyrannosaurus rex. T. rex, for short.

T. rex lived a very, very long time ago, about sixty-six million years ago. That's way before people, way before cars, and way before pizza.

Now, here's your first challenge. Can you count the teeth you can see on the top jaw? Go!

[pause]

Lots, right? Some of T. rex's biggest teeth were about as long as a banana. Imagine brushing those!

Next challenge. Look at the arms. Are they big, or tiny? Tiny! Each arm had just two fingers. Can you hold up two fingers like T. rex?

Now, a T. rex was very, very heavy. Let's do a big T. rex stomp. Ready? Stomp! Stomp! Stomp!

Great stomping, explorers.

Now tiptoe, very quietly, so we don't wake it up, over to Family Stop 3.

Family Stop 4: The Touch Pool

Family tour, aquarium · Adult (25-40) · Australian · 90 seconds

Family Stop 4. The Touch Pool!

G'day, ocean explorers. You've found one of my favorite places in the whole aquarium.

Today, you can touch some of the animals in this pool.

But first, the touch pool rules. Hold up two fingers, like this. These are your touching fingers. In this pool, we only ever use two fingers, and we touch gently. Like you're stroking a sleeping kitten.

And one more rule. We never pick the animals up. This water is their home.

Okay. Ready?

Look for a star-shaped animal on the rocks. That's a sea star.

Gently touch the top of its arm with your two fingers.

[pause]

How does it feel? Bumpy? A bit rough?

Now look underneath one of the arms, if you can see it against the glass. Can you see lots of tiny wiggly tubes? Those are its tube feet. A sea star has hundreds of them, and it uses them to slowly creep along.

Here's an amazing fact. If a sea star loses an arm, it can often grow a new one.

Now look in the corner for a round, spiky ball. That's a sea urchin. Its spines can be

sharp, so this one is for looking, not touching.

Before we go, let's dip our hands in the rinsing bowl and say thank you to the rock pool animals.

Thank you, sea stars!

Now let's head to Family Stop 5, to meet the sharks.

Stop 6, Audio Description: The Harvest Supper

Audio description, painting · Adult (40-55) · Neutral American · 2 minutes

Stop 6. Audio description of The Harvest Supper, painted by Thomas Ardley in 1872.

This is a large oil painting in a gold frame, about seven feet wide and five feet high.

The painting shows the inside of a farmhouse kitchen, at night, lit by a single oil lamp.

In the center is a long, rough wooden table, running left to right. The lamp in the middle of the table gives almost all the light in the painting. Its warm, yellow-orange glow falls on the faces nearest to it, while the corners of the room fall away into deep brown shadow.

Seven people sit around the table. Let's go around it from left to right.

At the far left end sits an elderly man with a white beard and a dark waistcoat. He is leaning back in a wooden chair, his hands folded over his stomach. His eyes are half-closed, and he is smiling slightly.

Next to him, on the near side of the table, with their backs partly turned to us, are two young boys, perhaps eight and ten years old. One is reaching across the table toward a loaf of bread.

In the center, directly behind the lamp and facing us, is a woman of about forty in a plain grey dress and white apron. She is pouring something from a brown jug into a cup. She is the only figure looking straight out of the painting, toward the viewer.

To her right sit two young women, close together, their heads tilted toward each other. One has her hand over her mouth.

At the far right end of the table, a young man with sunburned forearms is cutting into a large round cheese.

In the bottom right corner, a black and white sheepdog lies on the stone floor, head raised, looking up at the cheese.

When you're ready, the next stop is six steps to your right.

Stop 2, Audio Description: Woman Reading

Audio description, sculpture · Adult (30-45) · Neutral British · 1 minute

Stop 2. Audio description of Woman Reading, a white marble sculpture by Clara Voss, made in 1909.

The sculpture is life-sized. It sits on a low stone plinth.

It shows a young woman seated on a bench, reading. Her body faces forward, but her head is bowed toward an open book resting on her lap. Her hair is pulled back in a loose knot.

Her long, loose dress falls in deep folds to her bare feet. Her right hand holds the book open. Her left hand rests flat on the bench beside her.

This sculpture may be touched, with clean hands.

Reach forward to the front edge of the plinth. Move your hand up and slightly to the left, and you will find her left hand on the bench. The marble is cool and smooth.

Follow her arm upward to the shoulder. Then move across to find the edge of the book. The pages are carved as thin, separate layers.

Practice with these, record them, post them as demos or reels, use them in auditions. Please do not resell them as scripts. © VO Journey Academy · avosjourney.com