

1. Face the crowd, not what you're talking about. We often get so wrapped up in our subject or topic that we forget to face the people we're addressing. Be sure to make eye contact with your students as well as the chaperones to maintain everyone's attention.

Suggestion: To avoid not making eye contact or speaking to low, "deputize" somebody in the group to tell you if they can't hear you while on tour.

2. Tell a story (historical or contemporary). Make sure you have a few fun and compelling stories to tell about the artifacts and the galleries you're touring through. People are more likely to feel engaged when they are listening to a story, rather than a list of dates and names.

3. Be inclusive. Include those on the "restless fringe". Often on tours you will find those who like to stay on the edge of the tour. Try to include them in the discussion, ask them questions, invite their comments; including teachers and chaperones.

4. Get moving right away. Tours often get bogged down before they ever begin with tour guides doing the "big wind-up" —introductions, setting the theme, providing context, etc. Keep it short and get your group moving through the gallery spaces.

5. Don't worry about being perfect. People don't expect you to be perfect. Set the stage for human imperfection by acknowledging that people who may know more than you should speak up and share their knowledge with the group. The more interactive the tour is, the better!

6. Be flexible. If the group seems to be losing interest, rethink your approach. Always encourage questions and answers. This will give you clues on how well the group understands what you have been saying.

7. End on time. (Or try very hard to.) Try like crazy to end on time. Nobody wants to feel like they are in tour jail. Tours on paper always seem too short and on the ground, are always too long. Two hours is the absolute maximum. An hour to an hour and a half is better.

8. Vary the tone and volume of your voice; use it to show emotion or to emphasize a point. Try not to sound "canned" like a television commercial or a telemarketing representative, but natural and engaging. Your voice is a powerful tool and can be used to create a lively and exciting presentation.

9. Be selective. Pick one or two points about each area of the exhibit. Don't be an "avalanche" interpreter and overwhelm the guests with so much information that they feel smothered. Particularly with students, try to give an "Inquiry/Discussion" tour. Ask a leading question, then give them a few seconds to think it over and respond.

10. Do not...

- **Get to personal,** it's great to have a few anecdotal stories included in the tour, but please refrain from including stories that are lengthy and don't connect to your audience or the tour outline.
- **Highlight non-age appropriate history,** you may know information about a subject or topic in the galleries, follow the tour outlines and discuss our history in an age appropriate manner.
- **Give your personal opinions,** we all have our own opinions and bias. Do not engage visitors in political issues, religious beliefs, or any other controversial topic; always remain neutral. We are here to provide information about the museum and the history of Detroit.