

In a Manner of Speaking

Why Language Matters in Museums

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Why language?

Our Questions

Why is certain language used in museums?

What is the role of language in the museum setting?

How does language affect the visitor experience?

What are alternatives to the use of problematic language?

Language in Museums

Language is one of the primary tools museums can use to create meaning and mediating in museum's messages (Ravelli 1996, 367)

In displays, words and items work together in an equal and complementary dependent relationship. Text explains why the museum has items on display (McManus 1989, 186)

Language is a way to describe or communicate about aspects of something else, visually, intellectually and spiritually (Fritsch 2011, 103)

Implications of Language in Museums

Texts not only impart information, but are economies of meaning, selecting what they would ideally like the visitor to know - what is important (Lidchi 1997, 176)

Generate an emotional response (Jeffery and Wandersee 1996, 7)

Creates context and dialogue (Ravelli 1996, 369)

Sexist Language and Text Panels



manwhohasitall

@manwhohasitall

"I'm not hung up on the term 'spacewoman' because I know it refers to both women & men." Tim, age 44, male spacewoman



PRESIDENT DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER

"What makes the Soviet threat unique in history is its all-inclusiveness. Every human activity is pressed into service as a weapon of expansion. Trade, economic development, military power, arts, science, education, the whole world of ideas... The Soviets are, in short, waging total cold war."

PRESIDENT JOHN F. KENNEDY · 1961

"Finally, if we are to win the battle that is now going on around the world between freedom and tyranny, the dramatic achievements in space which occurred in recent weeks should have made clear to us all, as did the Sputnik in 1957, the impact of this adventure on the minds of men everywhere."

PRESIDENT JOHN F. KENNEDY · 1962

"We have a long way to go in the space race. We started late. But this is the new ocean, and I believe the United States must sail on it and be in a position second to none."

When the race to the Moon ended, the Soviet and American **manned** spaceflight programs moved in other directions. In the United States, many expected the Apollo missions to be the beginning of an era in which humans would move out into space, to bases on the Moon and space stations in Earth orbit, perhaps on to Mars. Others questioned whether costly manned spaceflight should continue, now that the race was won.

Skylab was a **manned** space station launched into Earth orbit by the United States in 1973. Separate crews of three astronauts occupied it during three missions: Skylab 2, Skylab 3, and Skylab 4. The Skylab 1 mission was the **unmanned** launch of the space station itself.

Where Do We Go from Here?

For over 50 years **humanity** has ventured outward in space, sending people and automated explorers beyond Earth. These forays yielded many successes and discoveries, a few tragedies, and enough remaining challenges to make the future uncertain. Only one thing is inevitable: the unexpected will occur.

What do you think **humanity's** future in space might be?

THE CANADIAN HUMAN SPACE FLIGHT PROGRAM

Throughout the ages, the stars have fascinated humankind and fired our imagination. Compelled by our desire for knowledge, we have sent our astronauts to explore that vast cosmic expanse and return with new, profound understanding and insight.

Canada, a country of sweeping terrain and far-ranging vision, has invested its scientific and technological expertise in the international endeavour of space exploration.

Embodying this effort, our modern-day explorers have realised humanity's dream and positioned Canada as a major space-faring nation. They have orbited around our planet in the most advanced spacecraft, contributed their skills to space shuttle missions, and have lived and worked on board the International Space Station, a microgravity research laboratory and stepping off point to the wider exploration of our solar system and beyond.

Meet the members of Canada's Astronaut Corps.

Manned Space Program vs. Human Space Program:

All references referring to the space program should be non-gender specific (e.g. human, piloted, un-piloted, robotic). The exception to the rule is when referring to the Manned Spacecraft Center, the predecessor to the Johnson Space Center in Houston, or any other official program name or title that included "manned" (e.g. Associate Administrator for Manned Spaceflight).

Source: NASA Style Guide 2015
<http://history.nasa.gov/styleguide.html>

Lions and Tigers and Sharks!





Massive, powerful, strong,
mesmerizing, gorgeous,
menacing, mysterious, elusive,
cunning, toothy, stealthy
carnivorous predators.

Animal-Focused Language

PHYSICAL TRAITS

Massive, menacing/fearsome-looking, torpedo-shaped, many, many sharp teeth, weight/length/size rank, toothy predator

BEHAVIOURAL TRAITS

Elusive, enigmatic, mysterious, lurking, encircling, ultimate/top/cunning/nature's most feared predator, ultimate blend of power and efficiency, sea monster

PHYSICAL TRAITS

Powerful, strong, mesmerizing, gorgeous, large teeth, sharp claws, size rank, sexual dimorphism, senses

BEHAVIOURAL TRAITS

Stalk, stealthy, enigmatic, nocturnal, nomadic, lounging, deadly/excellent hunter, carnivore, social, solitary, superheroes

Visitor-Focused Language

Thrill-seeker alert

Surrounded by sharks

Exhilarating/thrill

Wonder

Sharks!



Say *Awe!* *Awe* inspired
daily.

Get to know the tigers.

Conservation Concerns



Thank You