

Project 3: Objects and Narratives



Project 03

Objects and Narratives
#FutureMuseum

Design Lab ARTD6116
Launch: 20th March
Crits 14th and 15th May 2025

Formative Assessment
You will receive formative assessment
in the form of discussion and feedback
throughout the project. You are also
required to attend a formative feedback
review in March.

*“Real museums are places where
time is transformed into space”*

– Orhan Pamuk, 2009

The brief

Utilising your selected collection of objects from the Science Museum, explore imaginative ways to bring the objects to life and tell their stories tailored for a specific audience. Through innovative communication methods, you need to engage a specific audience into an immersive experience, bringing the significance of these artifacts to life in a memorable and impactful way.

Part 1. Preparatory research

Choose a group of objects from the content links. Explore the objects in lots of detail: What was the function? What materials? What narratives do they tell?

The whole collection is available at <https://collection.sciencemuseumgroup.org.uk>

There 200,000+ objects with images:
<https://collection.sciencemuseumgroup.org.uk/search/images>



And 3D scans:
<https://sketchfab.com/sciencemuseum>



Amulets during World War I

For this project, I chose six amulets that were used around the time of WWI, for different purposes. These objects would normally be looked at for a few seconds before people move on to something more eye-catching, which is why I wanted to make it more engaging.

Since the Science Museum is visited by a lot of children, I made them the primary focus of this exhibit, and created a short 'Create Your Own Story' exercise beside the amulets, which can then be printed out and taken home as a souvenir.

The Objects

1. Woollen doll amulet
2. Shamrock amulet
3. Amulet, hand of King Edward
4. Shell fragment used as an amulet
5. Amulet brooch in the shape of a black cat
6. Bronchitis amulet





Potential Museum Display

Image generated by Sora.

Prompt: Generate an image of 6 amulets on display at the Science Museum in London: one orange woollen doll, one black cat, one hand, one shell fragment, one beaded necklace and one silver shamrock. It should be in a glass display case, and beside the display, have screens (iPads) low enough for children to use to play a game on them.

Variation 1

Amulets

People throughout history have believed objects like these hold power to protect them and bring good luck.



Han

Hand

Shell

Shamrok

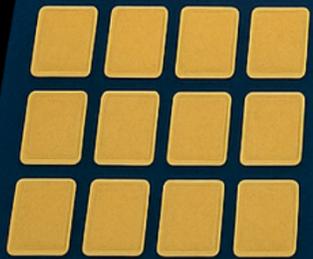
Variation 2

Amulets

People have carried amulets for thousands of years. These small objects are thought to have protective, magical or lucky powers. Is there an amulet that is special to you?



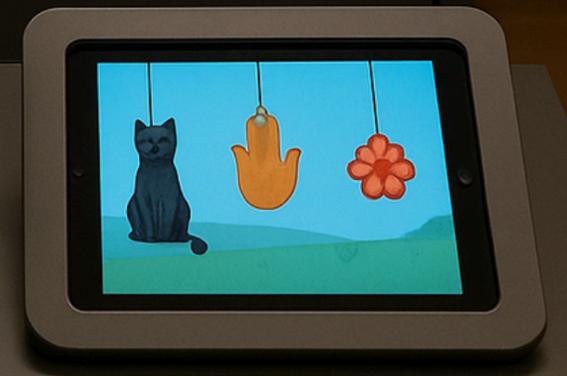
MATCH!



MATCH!



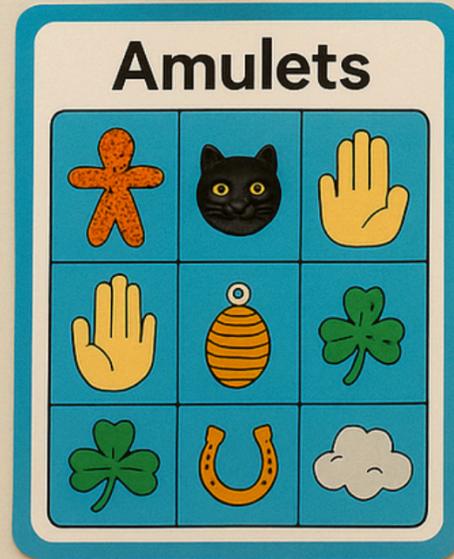
Variation 3



Gift Shop

Replicas of the amulets would be sold at the gift shop, available for anyone who believed they needed a little extra luck.

Amulets



Amulets

SCIENCE MUSEUM, LONDON



Images generated by Sora.

Prompt: Using these artefacts, generate an image of replicas that could be sold at the gift shop of the Science Museum

The Game

Start Page

Choose

Selection

Part 1

Part 2

Part 3

Part 4

Amulets: What's their story?

Play →

Which Amulet will you pick?



You picked...

Woolen Doll

People everywhere like to carry lucky charms to help keep them safe and healthy.

During the First World War (1914-1918), many soldiers believed that a little bit of luck could make a big difference. So, they carried tiny objects that made them feel braver and safer as lucky charms with them.

One soldier from London carried this little woolen doll as his special good-luck charm.

The doll ended up in a museum collection in 1930. It was bought from a man named Edward Lovett, who loved collecting all kinds of charms and learning about old medical ideas.

Write the story

Pick another

A Special Gift

Tommy was a young soldier getting ready to leave home for a big war far away. His little sister, Lily, gave him a tiny woolen doll. "It's for luck!" she said, hugging him tight. Tommy smiled and tucked the doll into his pocket. "She'll protect me," he whispered.



What should Tommy name the doll?

Wooly

Brave Bella

Sir Snuggle

Dot

The Long Journey

Tommy and his new friend (the doll!) rode on trains, crossed the sea, and marched through muddy fields. The doll was always with him, tucked safely inside his jacket. One day, his friend Joe looked worried. "I forgot my lucky coin!" Tommy reached into his pocket and showed the doll. "Want to borrow some luck?"



What should Tommy do next?

Let Joe hold the doll for a day

Tell a funny story to cheer him up

Make Joe a paper charm

Keep the doll to himself and say "Luck comes from inside!"

A Brave Moment

One foggy morning, the soldiers had to cross a field. Tommy was nervous, but he touched the doll and remembered Lily's smile. Just then, he saw something shiny in the grass—it was a tiny locket! Someone must have dropped it.



What should Tommy do?

Pick up the locket and keep it safe

Leave it there and keep moving

Ask if anyone lost something

Give the doll to someone else who looks scared

Home Again

After the war, Tommy returned home. The doll had stayed with him through every adventure. Years later, he gave the doll to a kind man named Mr. Lovett, who collected lucky charms for a museum so their stories could live on.



What should Tommy say as he hands over the doll?

"Take care of her—she's a hero too!"

"Maybe someone else will need her luck."

"She belongs in a storybook."

"Lily would be proud."

Before we print

Enter your name

Type here

Hooray! Your story is complete!

Print

Print

SCIENCE
MUSEUM
GROUP

The Woolen Amulet

A story by _____

Tommy was a young soldier getting ready to leave home for a big war far away. His little sister, Lily, gave him a tiny woolen doll. "It's for luck!" she said, hugging him tight. Tommy smiled and tucked the doll into his pocket. "She'll protect me," he whispered.



Tommy named the doll Wooly, and it made Lily giggle when it was time to say goodbye.

Tommy and his new friend (the doll!) rode on trains, crossed the sea, and marched through muddy fields. The doll was always with him, tucked safely inside his jacket. One day, his friend Joe looked worried. "I forgot my lucky coin!" Tommy reached into his pocket and showed the doll. "Want to borrow some luck?"



Tommy folded a tiny paper star for Joe, and they both felt a little braver holding their lucky treasures.

One foggy morning, the soldiers had to cross a field. Tommy was nervous, but he touched the doll and remembered Lily's smile. Just then, he saw something shiny in the grass—it was a tiny locket! Someone must have dropped it.



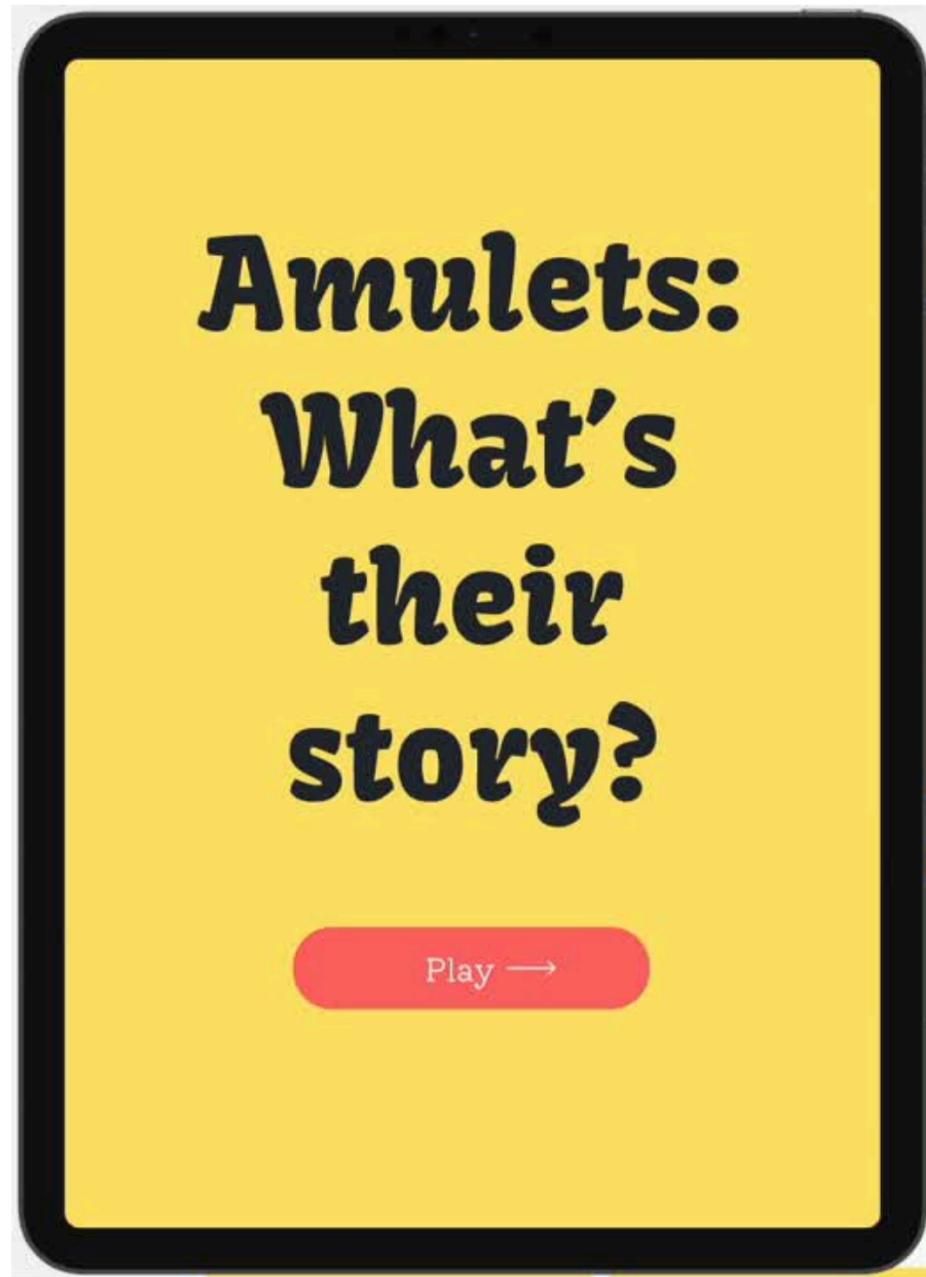
Seeing a young soldier shaking with fear, Tommy quietly slipped the doll into their hand and offered a grateful smile.

After the war, Tommy returned home. The doll had stayed with him through every adventure. Years later, he gave the doll to a kind man named Mr. Lovett, who collected lucky charms for a museum so their stories could live on.



"Take care of her—she's a hero too!" As Tommy passed Wooly to Mr. Lovett, he gave a proud grin. She had done her duty, just like him.

Walkthrough and audio



Watch the video and listen to the start of the story here

Prompt Questions from Brief

Q1) How might museums surface the lesser-known aspects of their collections?

This could be done by creating a short playable game near the artefact/exhibit. The game would give you additional information from what was previously presented physically. At the end, it could also direct the user to view more by adding a “what else do we have in our collection?” button where they would view more by category, as not everyone is aware that their entire collection is available online.

Q2) How might audiences be encouraged to share collections?

By organising eye-catching displays, but moreso, by creating displays that are social media-friendly. Social media has become the easiest way for people to share their thoughts and opinions with a larger number of people quickly. Having activities or different kind of exhibits would also allow audiences to share what they see. For example, making an exhibition tactile, or creating souvenir versions of artefacts that could be sold at the gift shop.

Ideation

PROJECT 3: Objects & Narratives

What was the function?
 What materials?
 What narratives do they tell?

Choose problem statement to frame objects.
 Create a speculative product or experience that tells the story of chosen object.

Amulets? (Ethnography & folk medicine)
 Railway posters, notices & handbills

Look up: What is science capital (video)
 designing Digital Experiences

- How does it deliver the museum's mission?
- Who is the audience?
- What is the product or content needs to be produced?
- What user need does it fulfil?
- What will users have to do to achieve this user need?
- Where does the activity happen?
- What messaging is needed to drive this behaviour?
- How is it possible to measure the audience behaviours?

Things to know:

- Visiting a museum is usually a social experience.
- Users tend to blame themselves for failure.
- Users won't read texts (intros or conclusions).
- Control functions need to follow familiar patterns.
- Changes due to interaction should be very obvious.
- Multi-user interactives should also support solo experiences.
- Great experiences do one thing well - simplicity/simplicity.

Create a game?
 Create an audio visual exp?
 Timeline? Pinplate? 3D gallery space
 Dataset? Browser tabs?
 Projection mapping

THE SCIENCE MUSEUM

Observations:

General:

- All the information boards are kept at a height suitable for children to read from.
- Same with interactive exhibits. Everything is easily accessible for children.

WHO AM I?

- Content put across nicely.
- Makes people want to stop & look at it.
- A variety of activities/games to learn more.

EXPLORING SPACE

- Some of the boards have jargon, may not be easy for children to understand, but it seems to be simplified.
- Some explanations are a bit long and do not hold the attention of the viewer (can be applied to other exhibits as well).
- Displays that make you look up (so if you were in space).
- Certain activities to try and do things as you would in space.
- A lot of activities to do.

ENERGY & REVOLUTION

- Eye-catching display.
- The interactive exhibit was under maintenance.
- Easy to hold people's attention with large objects.

ENERGY HALL

- Text is a bit too long, does everyone read?
- Models are displayed well, but not the most interesting exhibit.

MAKING THE MODERN WORLD

- A lot to see, people move through quickly.

Not too many activities

Once upon a time, _____ went to _____ and got _____

Choose outcome _____

OR

What happens next? _____

Fill in the blanks type story → for ^{the} amulets.

categories:

- war amulets
- Medicinal
- luck

Pick an object write its story.

Before the war, _____

During _____

After _____

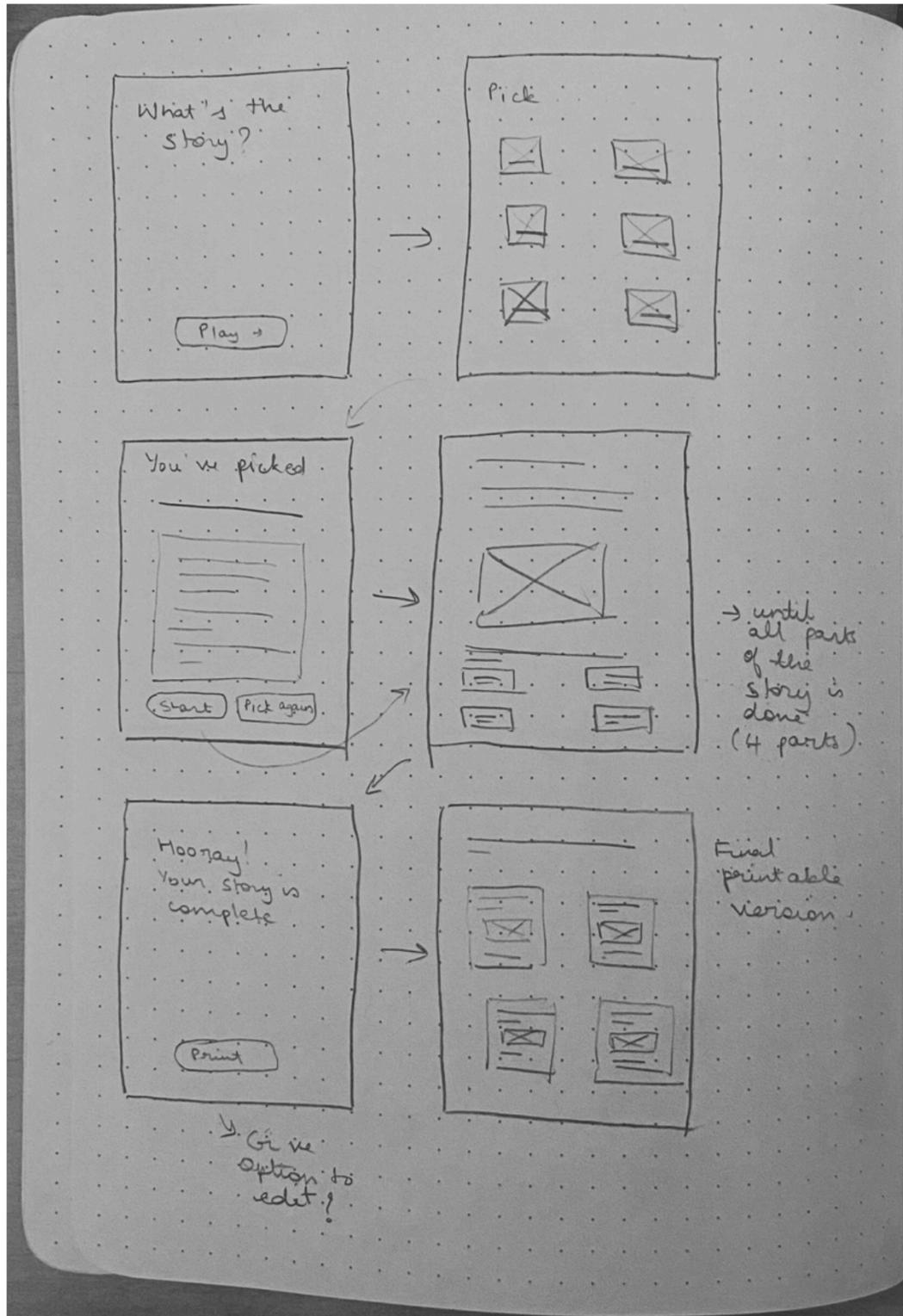
make dependent on previous option picked?

A B C D

A B C D

A B C D

How many types/scenarios would be needed?



People - Children,

Activities - Visiting for educational purposes / to learn / as a day out

Context - Read / look at / touch exhibited items; play games that are related to the exhibit.

Technology - Display cases, Small ^{touch} screens,

Ideas -

Display of amulets - tell their stories.

Have the amulets on display, and a game beside it.

Create a story based on an amulet & its background information.

Maybe include tactile displays → replicas to play with?

AR to see what you'd look wearing it?

Create a small animation → users pick from set scenarios?

View the story based on amulet picked?

Choose amulet, view story?

1. Choose

2. ~~Fill~~ Fill in the blanks to create a story

~~Information~~ Information

This was given to _____ before WWI.

3. Take a picture → can it be printed?

Also sell replicas at the gift shop!

Day in the life - before WWI

Toys through history.

People create amulets - then it plays out an animation of it being used.

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