

READING PASSAGE 1

You should spend about 20 minutes on **Questions 1-13**, which are based on Reading Passage 1 on pages 2 and 3.

Museums and family visitors in Australia

Museums in Australia have recognised the need to become more responsive to their audiences, especially families who visit museums in large numbers. Research has consistently found that positive early family visits to museums have a significant impact on later visiting habits. What is more, researchers have identified the importance of learning in family visits and the different roles that various family members play before, during and after their visit.

For many years museums in Australia have acknowledged the importance of families as visitors, with several establishing separate spaces for these groups, especially those with very young children. Major museums have developed dedicated spaces specifically designed for children and families. For example, the Melbourne Museum's Children's Gallery is aimed at three- to eight-year-olds and has a mandate to encourage children to discover and explore within a range of science issues. The goal is to provide an interactive, hands-on and playful space that engages all the senses through continually updated exhibitions. The National Museum of Australia in Canberra developed Kspace, an interactive space where children "design their own future with the help of technology". This museum also designed Our Place, a series of cosy play spaces where children can explore the museum's themes in their own ways.

Other museums have also considered the entire family when designing their dedicated spaces. The Australian National Maritime Museum in Sydney, when developing *Pirates*, its below-the-deck pirate ship experience, realised that exhibitions aimed at children, particularly school-aged children, also needed more sophisticated exhibits to occupy their accompanying parents. The Powerhouse Museum in Sydney, while catering to varying tastes within families through its many temporary exhibitions and programs, recognised the value of a dedicated space for children who were visiting with their parents. The museum's installation, *Zoe's House*, caters specifically for children aged three to five years, to facilitate cooperation in children through play.

Family visits to museums in Australia share a number of characteristics. Generally, visitors take time for orientation, enter with a sense of curiosity, link what they see to their own prior experiences and are most attracted to interactive displays. Their common viewing behaviour involves looking very closely at each display in the first gallery and then skimming and moving randomly in subsequent galleries. Their visiting behaviour is modified by increased experience with the setting: they like to revisit favourite displays, share their viewing and learning in a social context and interact with people from the museum. They respond to physical needs by using the comfortable chairs provided or having a break after a little more than an hour, and generally stay for two hours at most.

Research has found that adult members of family groups play three roles which are particularly relevant to the family group during the visit, visit manager by directing and organising; museum expert through explaining clarifying and correcting; and learning-facilitator in questioning and reminiscing. These roles occur simultaneously, are closely linked to the process of learning and are dependent on both the social context of the visit and the group composition, particularly the ages of any accompanying children.

Parents consider museum visits to be valuable in creating and strengthening relationships with their children and in enabling them to tune into what fascinates their children. Parents make use of learning facilities such as open access libraries and activity kits if they know the resources are there and understand their role. Family members each take notice of different aspects of an exhibit and construct a shared meaning together. Museums are seen as a good clay out, something the whole family can enjoy as a different form of education and are generally considered good value for money.

In this increasingly complex world, where the real and virtual are blurring, and where changes in society can seem overwhelming, museums are able to provide spaces for families to be together as well as learn together. Parents value museum visits because they provide children with opportunities to learn in different ways through bringing concepts to life and enhancing school learning experiences. Museums stimulate visitors of all ages and open their minds to new ideas, the world around them, history and other cultures. Children enjoy museums as places where they can fantasise, explore and learn in ways that are more engaging than they experience in more formal settings, such as school. Museums need to identify the elements that families value, the ways families interact with museums, and how museums operate as extremely effective learning units. The challenge is for museums to then apply these principles, not only to the development of future exhibitions and programs, but also to the ways they plan for all visitors.

Questions 1-5

Complete the table below

Choose **ONE WORD ONLY** from the passage for each answer. Write your answer in boxes 1-5 on your answer sheet.

Dedicated museum spaces for families with children

Museums	Dedicated spaces	Target users	Aim of dedicated spaces
Melbourne Museum	Children's Gallery	3-8 year olds	- present 1 topics in interesting ways
			- stimulate children's senses
National Museum of Australia	Kspace Our Place	Children	Use 2 to imagine the future
Australian National Maritime Museum	Pirates	- Children of school age 3	Stimulate the life of a pirate
4 Museum	Zoe's House	Pre-schoolers	Use play to encourage 5 between children

Questions 6-9

Complete the notes below

Choose **NO MORE THAN TWO WORDS AND/OR A NUMBER** for each answer. Write your answers in boxes 6-9 on your answer sheet.

Family visits to museums

When families visit museums, they usually:

- determine the location of exhibits
- prefer exhibits that are **6**
- move slowly through the first gallery
- move without planning through the remaining galleries
- enjoy seeing their **7** a second time
- speak to staff
- sit or take a **8**
- stay for a maximum of **9**

Questions 10-13

Do the following statements agree with the information given in Reading Passage 1? In boxes 10-13 on your answer sheet, write:

TRUE	<i>if the statement agrees with the information</i>
FALSE	<i>if the statement contradicts the information</i>
NOT GIVEN	<i>if there is no information on this</i>

10. Some adult visitors behave like a museum specialist when guiding younger visitors.
11. It is more enjoyable to visit a museum with a group of children who are all the same age.
12. Parents think that the cost of visiting museums is too high.
13. Children want to visit museums after they learn about a topic at school.