



**Awesome
museum**



Sculpture of Xiuhtecuhtli. Photo by Michel Zabe © The Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia (INAH)

Primary Education Kit

AZTECS

Exhibition 13 September 2014 – 1 February 2015

australianmuseum.net.au    

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Aztecs was developed by the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa in partnership with Mexico's National Council for Culture and the Arts and the National Institute of Anthropology and History (CONACULTA-INAH), along with the Australian Museum and Museum Victoria.

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Excursion Essentials

Familiarising students

Our research indicates that students gain maximum benefit from their excursion if they have an overview of their program for the day and are familiar with the Museum's floor plan (attached).

Accompanying adults

We highly recommend additional adults accompany each group of 25–30 students. This allows classes to be divided into smaller groups and enhances access to the exhibits. All accompanying adults should be familiar with the day's program, floorplans and any written materials the students will be using.

One adult is admitted free for every **ten** secondary school students.

Photocopying

Please photocopy the appropriate materials for students and all accompanying adults before your visit.

Further questions

If you have any questions, please phone our Bookings Officer on (02) 9320 6222.

Briefing

On arrival at the Museum the students will be met and briefed about the Museum. It is important that accompanying adults are present for this briefing.

Bag Storage

Museum staff will securely store the students' bags.

Exhibitions

Outside of any programmed session times students may explore the Museum's exhibitions. Please manage large groups to avoid crowding in any one exhibition or around individual exhibits.

Lunch

We recommend that students bring their lunch and eat it in Hyde Park (just across the road). Re-entry to the Museum is free. Alternative locations will be provided in wet weather.

Photography

Photography **is** permitted in the Aztecs exhibition but **not flash photography or video recording**.

About the Aztecs exhibition

Over 200 cultural treasures from Mexico's major museums tell the story of Aztec daily life, beliefs and values, war and human sacrifice, social structure, economy, sport and agriculture, their downfall at the hands of the Spanish and their resounding legacy.

Students are able to walk into the Great Temple, reconstructed at one-tenth real size and, through archaeological finds, intricate models, multi-media, and objects, students can learn about this fascinating culture.

Teacher Notes

The activities are designed for a self-guided visit to the Aztecs exhibition.

Photocopying

Please photocopy the following materials for each student:

- The onsite student activity sheets you have selected to use
- Australian Museum Guide Map

Pre-visit student activities

To make the most of your visit to the exhibition we recommend that you prepare your students by completing the suggested pre-visit activities on pages 6-8.

At the Museum

We suggest that you divide the students into groups to move through the exhibition to prevent overcrowding of the displays.

On-site student activities

We have included two suggested activities:

1. Aztec exhibition self-guided activities.

We recommend that these 8 onsite activities for the Aztecs exhibition be completed in groups, with a group focusing on one (or two maximum) aspects of Aztec culture:

- Activity 1A: Aztec Daily life – clothing **or** jewellery
- Activity 1B: Aztec Daily life – weapons **or** armour
- Activity 1C: Aztec Daily life – Food
- Activity 1D: Aztec Daily life - Sport and Leisure
- Activity 1E: Aztec Daily life - Music
- Activity 1F: Aztec Society - Social Structure
- Activity 1G: Aztec Society - Economic Activities
- Activity 1H: Aztec Society – Beliefs

2. A contrast of cultures: the Aztecs and Indigenous Australians

Students need to visit both the *Aztec* and *Indigenous Australians* exhibitions to complete this activity.

We recommend that these activities be completed in groups with each group focusing on one or two aspects of both Aztec and Indigenous Australian culture.

Post-visit student activities

After your visit your students will be full of enthusiasm and ideas. We recommend some post-visit activities on pages 15-17.

Syllabus links

The exhibition and the student activities are relevant to the following New South Wales Board of Studies Syllabuses:

- HSIE
- Creative Arts

HSIE syllabus outcomes

The student activities included in this education kit are relevant to the New South Wales Stages 1–3 HSIE Syllabus outcomes:

Stage 1

- *Change and Continuity, CCES1*: Describes events or retells stories that demonstrate their own heritage and the heritage of others.
- *Change and Continuity, CCS1.1*: Communicates the importance of past and present people, days and events in their life, in the lives of family and community members and in other communities.
- *Cultures, CUS1.4*: Describes the cultural, linguistic and religious practices of their family, their community and other communities.

Stage 2

- *Cultural Diversity, CUS2.4*: Describes different viewpoints, ways of living, languages and belief systems in a variety of communities.

Stage 3

- *Cultural Diversity, CUS3.4*: Examines how cultures change through interactions with other cultures and the environment.

Visual Arts syllabus outcomes

The student activities included in this education kit are relevant to the New South Wales Stages 1–3 Creative Arts (Visual Arts) Syllabus outcomes:

Stage 1

- *Making, VAS1.2*: Uses the forms to make artworks according to varying requirements.

Stage 2

- *Making, VAS2.1*: Represents the qualities of experiences and things that are interesting or beautiful by choosing among aspects of subject matter.

Stage 3

- *Making, VAS3.1*: Investigates subject matter in an attempt to represent likenesses of things in the world.

Pre-visit Activities

To make the most of your visit to the exhibition we recommend that you prepare your students before their excursion with some of the following suggested activities.

1. Determining prior knowledge

An introductory activity could include a class discussion or brainstorm activity to determine what students already know about Aztec culture.

2. Historical terminology

Before their visit to the exhibition it would be useful to familiarise students with the following::

- Use of primary sources, BCE/CE, perspective, bias

3. Research: finding out about the Aztecs

Students could do some research about the Aztecs before their visit.

General:

- What did the Aztecs call themselves?
- What was the location of the city Tenochtitlan?
- When did they found the city Tenochtitlan?
- What was the extent of the 'empire' that they established?
- Where had these people been, before they arrived in the Valley of Mexico?
- When did they live?
- When were they conquered by the Spanish?
- What are some of the things that the Aztec culture is well known for?

Daily Life of Aztecs:

- What were the different levels in Aztec society?
- What did they use for weapons and armour?
- What did they wear?
- What did they eat?
- How did they acquire food?
- What did they use for transport?

Aztec beliefs and customs

- What gods did they believe in?
- What customs did they practise?

4. Personal profile of an Aztec

Students could imagine themselves as an Aztec and create a personal profile using the template provided on page 7. They could be:

- A farmer
- A warrior
- A priest
- A slave
- An emperor

5. The Aztec Fact File

This activity encourages students to question the interpretation, perspective and reliability of a source for research to determine its usefulness as evidence for their understanding of Aztec culture.

Pre-visit Activity: Personal Profile of an Aztec

Profile of _____

Hometown:

Birthday:

Education:

Occupation:

Family:

Relationship status:

Favourite quote:

Interests:

Great things about me:

Not so great things about me:

Profile Picture

(Draw picture)

Pre-visit Activity: The Aztec Fact File.

Research the following looking at a variety of information sources – books, magazines, internet sources, access to film clips etc.

Facts	Information Source
Levels of society:	
Agriculture:	
Beliefs:	

Often the information from a variety of sources on one topic is not the same. Why do you think this is?

It is important that we take into account bias or writing information from one point of view when gathering information especially about other societies and cultures.

Onsite Activity 1A:

Aztec Daily Life – Clothing or Jewellery

Select one object that tells us about Aztec clothing or jewellery.

My object is a:

Sketch your chosen object:



- 1 Where is it from?
- 2 What year was it made?
- 3 What is it made from?
- 4 How was it made? (if known)
- 5 Who would have used it?
- 6 What does the object tell us about Aztec daily life?

Onsite Activity 1B:

Aztec Daily Life – Weapons or Armour

Select one object that tells us about Aztec weapons or armour.

My object is a:

Sketch your chosen object:



- 1 Where is it from?
- 2 What year was it made?
- 3 What is it made from?
- 4 How was it made? (if known)
- 5 Who would have used it?
- 6 What does the object tell us about Aztec daily life?

Onsite Activity 1C:

Aztec Daily Life – Food

Select one object that tells us about food in Aztec daily life.

My object is a:

Sketch your chosen object:



1. Where is it from?
2. What year was it made?
3. What is it made from?
4. How was it made? (if known)
5. Who would have used it?
6. What does the object tell us about Aztec daily life?

Onsite Activity 1D:

Aztec Daily Life – Sport and Leisure

Select one object that tells us about sport and leisure in Aztec daily life.

My object is a:

Sketch your chosen object:



1. Where is it from?
2. What year was it made?
3. What is it made from?
4. How was it made? (if known)
5. Who would have used it?
6. What does the object tell us about Aztec daily life?

Onsite Activity 1E:

Aztec Daily Life – Music

Select one object that tells us about music in Aztec daily life.

My object is a:

Sketch your chosen object:



- 1 Where is it from?
- 2 What year was it made?
- 3 What is it made from?
- 4 How was it made? (if known)
- 5 Who would have used it?
- 6 What does the object tell us about Aztec daily life?

Onsite Activity 1F:

Aztec Society – Social Structure

Select one object that tells us about the social classes in Aztec society.

My object is a:

Sketch your chosen object:



- 1 Where is it from?
- 2 What year was it made?
- 3 What is it made from?
- 4 How was it made? (if known)
- 5 Who would have used it?

Onsite Activity 1G:

Aztec Society – Economic Activities

Select one object that tells us about economic activities such as agriculture, trade and markets in the Aztec society.

My object is a:

Sketch your chosen object:



- 1 Where is it from?
- 2 What year was it made?
- 3 What is it made from?
- 4 How was it made? (if known)
- 5 Who would have used it?
- 6 What does the object tell us about Aztec daily life?

Onsite Activity 1H:

Aztec Society - Beliefs

Select one object that tells us about beliefs in Aztec society.

My object is a:

Sketch your chosen object:



- 1 Where is it from?
- 2 What year was it made?
- 3 What is it made from?
- 4 How was it made? (if known)
- 5 Who would have used it?
- 6 What does the object tell us about Aztec society?

Onsite Activity 2

A contrast of cultures: Aztecs and Indigenous Australians

You will need to visit the *Aztecs* exhibition **and** the *Indigenous Australians* exhibition for this activity.

For each of the 2 cultures find **one object** for each of the aspects of culture down the left hand side of the table below. Use the words in the boxes as a guide to the object that you could choose.

You have space in the boxes to:

- Sketch your chosen object. You could photograph the object too.
- Describe your chosen object. You could say the size, colour, what it is made from.
- Take some notes from the object label, for example, what it is made for, how old it is, where it is from, who would have used it.

Aspects of Culture	Aztec object (Use the words below as a guide)	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (Indigenous Australians) object (use the words below as a guide)
Tools Look for items for hunting, collecting, farming or holding food.	Spear, spear-thrower, bowls, plate, vase, goblet	Fish trap, Coolamon, digging stick, spear, boomerang, spear, woomera (spear-thrower), tree climber, stone axe, basket, dilly bag, wallaby trap
Clothing and adornments Look for items worn for warmth or decoration.	Feathers, mask, headband, jewellery, lip plug, sceptre	Jewellery, head dress,
Toys Look for items related to sport, leisure, play	Ball game ring, Pelotas (rubber ball), rattle, whistle	Practice boomerang , string games, spinning top, sling shot, rattle

Aspects of Culture	Aztec object (Use the words below as a guide)	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (Indigenous Australians) object (use the words below as a guide)
Music Look for items related to making music	Flute, drum, bell, whistle, conch shell	Didgeridoo, clap sticks, boomerang
Beliefs Look for objects related to gods and religious practices	Statue of a god, mask, ceremonial object, sacrificial knife, funerary urn, incense burner, tombstone, altar, temple plinth	Pukumani pole, tunga, crocodile mask, women's song and dance board
My Chosen Object		

Post-visit Activities

After your visit, students will be full of enthusiasm and ideas. Perhaps you could consider the following activities.

Activity 1 – Comparing technology of the present with the past

Students should refer to their chosen object to discuss the following –

1. Show what their chosen object is in a photo or drawing.
2. Show the modern day equivalent in a photo or drawing.
3. List the similarities between the two objects i.e. materials, design and use.
4. List the differences between the two objects i.e. materials, design and use.

Activity 2 – A contrast of two cultures: the Aztecs and Indigenous Australians

Students in small groups could research the aspects of Aztec and Indigenous Australian culture that they investigated at the museum.

They could compare the similarities and differences between the two cultures.

Give a mini presentation of their findings.

Please note: Teachers should emphasise that the process of comparing and contrasting cultures leads to a greater understanding of the individual cultures.

Activity 3 – The Storyboard

1. Divide the class into 4 groups.
2. Assign each group one of the following scenarios from the Aztec story:
 - ☐ Arrival in the valley of Mexico, after a long search for their homeland
 - ☐ Banishment to island in Lake Texcoco, founding of Tenochtitlan
 - ☐ Gaining power over other people in the area, establishment of empire
 - ☐ Conquest by the Spanish
3. Each group could create a poster to depict their scenario, with images and supporting text. The poster should indicate the historical time being covered, in years AD.
4. The class could display their posters together in chronological order, to form a storyboard (and timeline) of the time of the Aztecs.

Activity 4 – An Aztec Book of Letters

Each student contributes a letter written from the perspective of someone in Aztec times or someone who was part of the Spanish culture at the time of colonisation.

- Choose an object of Aztec or Spanish culture that fires their imagination. It should be an object that they have an image of – students could look back at photographs taken at the Museum, or look at images sourced from elsewhere. Students should record the known details of this object – e.g. location found, age, type of object.
- Adopt a role that is connected to that object (e.g. warrior, farmer, emperor or builder) and research the life that that person would have had. As part of this research, gather images of other objects that may have been related to 'their' person's life.
- Write a letter from 'their' person, conveying the news of an ordinary day, or of an extraordinary day.
- The letter should mention their chosen object and its importance.
- Address the letter to a specific person.

Compile the letters into a book.

Activity 5– Aztec Maths

In our modern times, we use a base 10 number system. The Aztecs used a base 20 number system.

- Research what this means and how the Aztecs would write numbers, using certain symbols.
- Write some numbers using symbols like an Aztec would.
- Write some simple number statements in Aztec e.g. $8 \times 9 = 72$

Some useful sites:

<http://www.lawrencehallofscience.org/pass/passv11/PASSv11cAztec-MayanMath.pdf>

Activity 6 - Culture and the environment

Students create a piece of reflective writing on culture and the environment. Have the students think about:

- How did the Aztecs use the materials of their natural environment to make tools, weapons and clothing?
- What do we know about the Aztecs by looking at archaeological evidence?
- How did the Aztecs change their natural environment to increase their food supply?

Activities for Gifted and Talented Students:

1. Each student chooses one of the following roles.
 - Warrior
 - Farmer
 - Artisan
 - Emperor. Perhaps even the last emperor, Montezuma
 - Priest
 - Slave
 - Spanish conquistador
 - Spanish leader – Cortez
2. Students undertake further research, so as to understand what life would have been like for their chosen person, and what happened during the Spanish conquest of the Aztecs.

Questions to consider:

What do you think they would have seen during the Spanish Conquest? What would they have thought and felt?

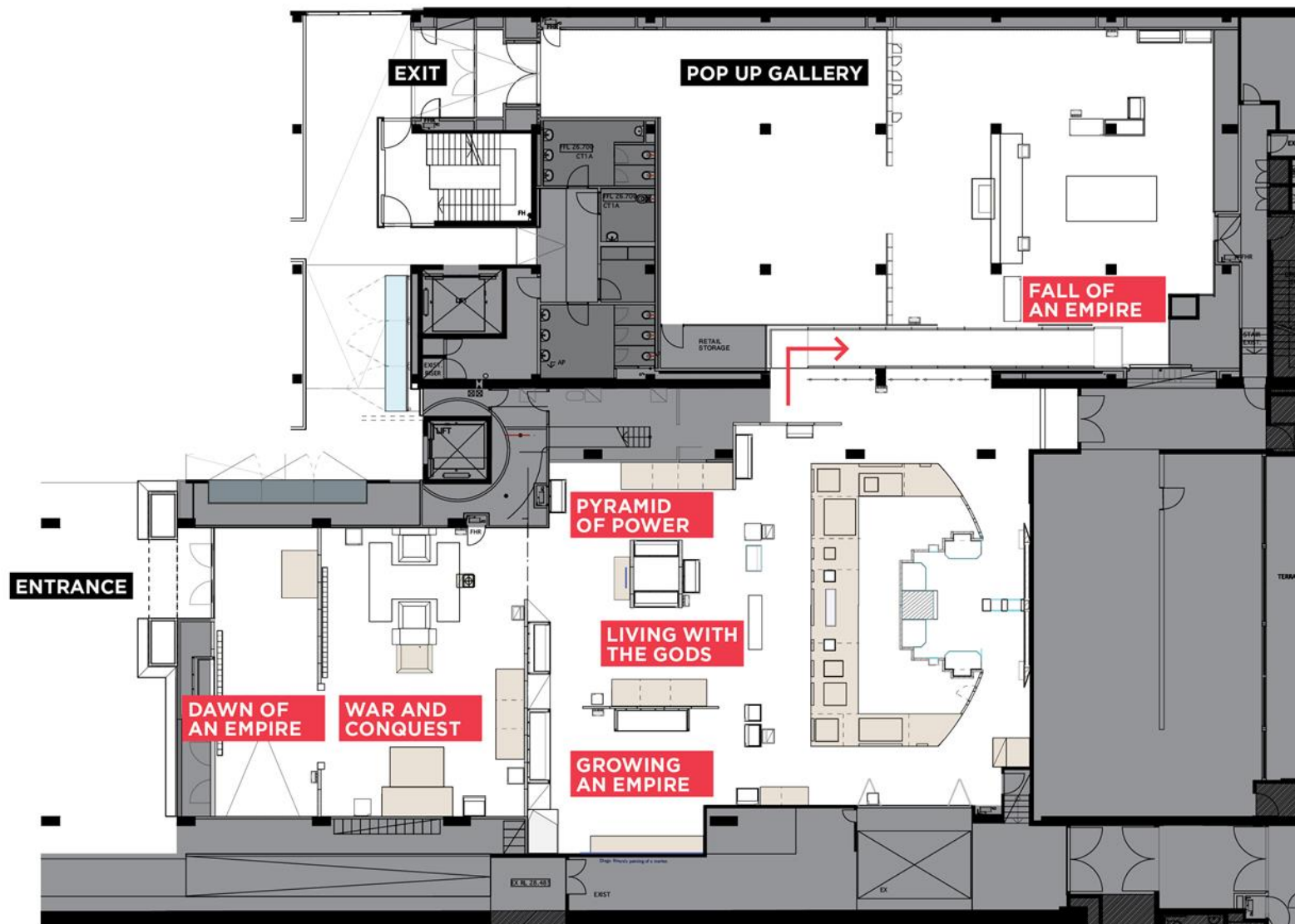
What would have been their plans, hopes or fears?

Writing Activities

1. Write diary entries over a period of a week. Illustrate with pictures or diagrams.
2. In small groups write a script for a short drama presentation.

Art/Craft activities:

1. Design and create a piece of gold jewellery from the Aztec period. Use gold foil, or make the piece from other scrap materials such as macaroni, polystyrene or card and spray paint in gold.
2. Design and create a mask or headdress following the Aztec style – perhaps googly eyes and wicked fangs! Use mosaic tiles or coloured card to represent jade and other precious stones, then complete with feathers and fur to embellish.



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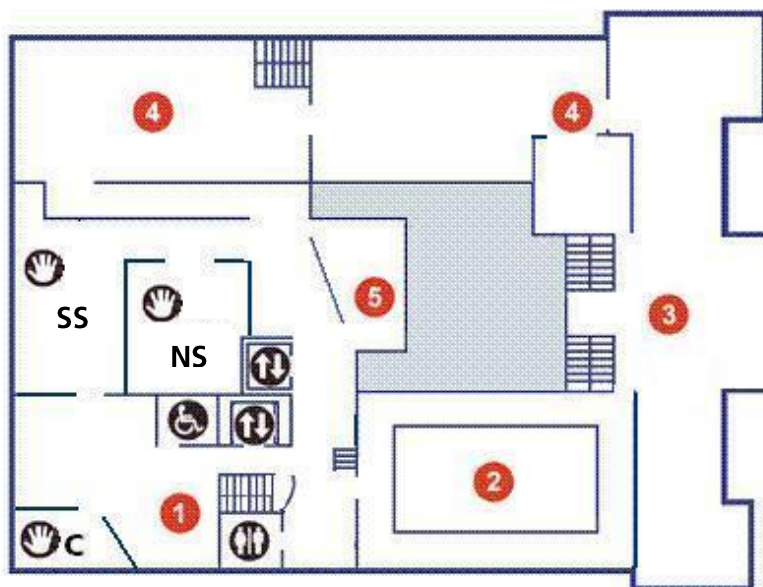
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Australian Museum Guide Map





Updated May 2014

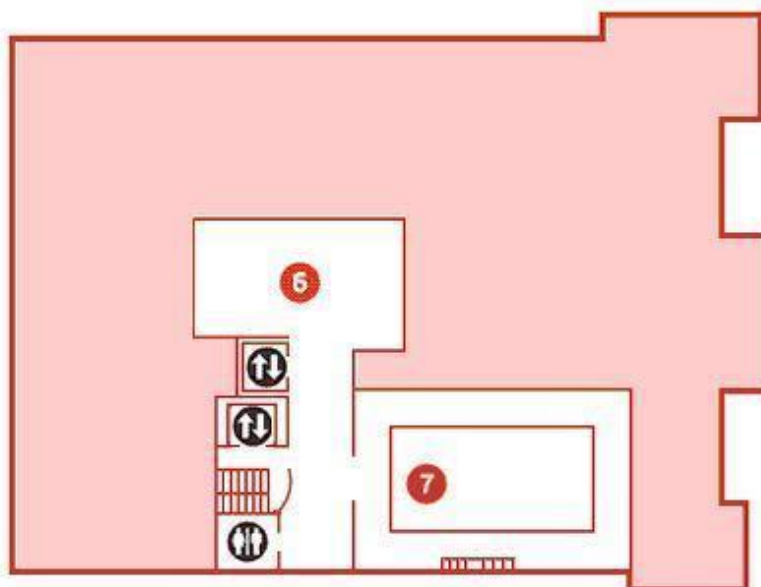
Level 2

-  **SS** Science Studio (booked educ groups)
-  **NS** Nature Space (booked educ groups)
-  **C** Culture Space (booked educ groups)
-  **1** Search & Discover
-  **2** Birds & Insects exhibition
-  **3** Dinosaurs exhibition
-  **4** Surviving Australia exhibition
-  **5** Kidspace (for under 5s)
-  Lift (educ groups please use stairs)
-  Accessible toilet / Toilets



Level 1

-  **6** Albert Chapman Mineral Collection exhibition
-  **7** Planet of Minerals exhibition
-  Lift (educ groups please use stairs)
-  Toilets



Level G (Ground floor)

-  **8** Indigenous Australians exhibition
-  **9** Skeletons exhibition
-  **Aztecs exhibition**
- Main Entrance (College Street)
-  Atrium – information and cloaking
-  Toilets
-  Café
-  Museum Shop
-  Theatrette
-  Lift (educ groups please use stairs)

