Guidelines for Text in Exhibitions

How much text is there room for?
When developing a new exhibition or updating an existing one, it is important to clarify early in the planning phase where text will be placed and how much text each surface can accommodate.

Remember to consider:

- How many languages the text will be presented in (Norwegian and English, or Norwegian, English, and Sámi).

- Universal design in text placement: it should not be necessary to be two meters tall or lie on the floor to read one of the languages—this is an exaggerated point, but the text must have a font size that ensures good readability.

Where is there room for text?
Texts should work together both with each other and with the objects/items on display. Where the text can be placed influences which stories we can tell. It is therefore crucial to clarify early which surfaces can be used for text and how much text each can hold.

What information must be conveyed through text?
Text in exhibitions should be used sparingly, as it is easy to overwhelm visitors with too many words. It is therefore important to decide what will be conveyed through other elements: some stories are better told through video, while some information is conveyed by the objects themselves. It is essential to understand how the various exhibition elements interact so you can determine what must be told through text—and what perhaps should not be.

Who is the target audience?
We aim to reach a broad audience with our exhibitions, so the texts should be written in a clear and engaging language and format. See our language guidelines for more.

Clear brief
The scientific expert usually provides the factual content, while someone with writing expertise creates the actual exhibition text. It is important that both the scientific expert and the writer receive a clear brief regarding content and scope.

The scientific expert must receive a clear brief on:

- What information is needed (preferably as specific questions to be answered or points to be filled in—e.g., habitat, fun facts, etc.)

- Scope. For example, a maximum of 250 words per answer, with optional additional links.

- Clear deadline.

The writer must receive a clear brief on:

- Text length (number of characters including spaces)

- Text format/layout (to some extent determined by language policy)

- How the texts are intended to be placed relative to one another and interact with other content elements.

- Clear deadline.

- Target audience: While we generally aim for a broad audience, individual exhibitions may have a specific group we especially want to reach.

The final text must be reviewed by the scientific expert, and the project manager has the final say in what story the text should tell.

Be concise
One thing is how much text there is room for—another is how much text you *should* have. The text should not be so sparse that the visitors do not understand what they are seeing, but also not so much that they lose interest halfway through.

Universal design

- Font size must be at a level from the floor that ensures good readability.

- The text should be readable without bending or stretching.

- Contrast must be sufficient to allow readability even for those with impaired vision.