

TELLING THE TRUTH: TRUSTWORTHINESS, LEARNING, AND SHARING AUTHORITY

A Museums for Me data story

At a time when confidence in public institutions is becoming increasingly tenuous, museums continue to hold the trust of Canadians. Research affirms that the public continues to value museums as trustworthy sources of information. Even people who identify as non-visitors trust museums.

Museums are a highly credible source of information

80%
(NON-VISITORS: 65%)

Daily newspapers are a highly credible source of information

48%

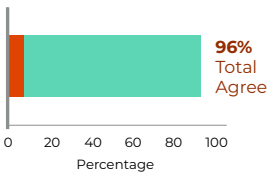
Television is a highly credible source of information

33%

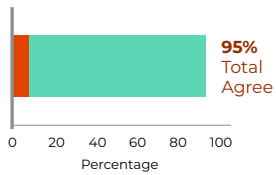
The Canadian public's trust in museums is connected to their role as institutions that preserve objects and stories, and provide access to learning and information. Museums preserve tangible and intangible heritage, and allow visitors to learn about our shared past. **93% OF RESPONDENTS** agree that museums spark curiosity, provoke wonder, and promote creativity and a 'love of learning'!

■ Somewhat Agree ■ Strongly Agree ■ Total Agree

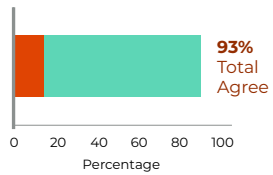
The museum is a place to learn and be inspired.



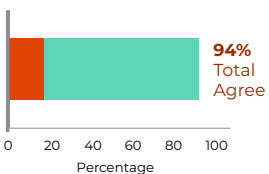
The museum is a place to preserve and care for art and objects, and to tell their stories.



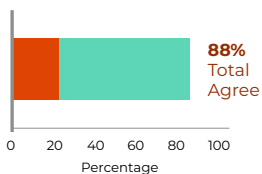
Museums help me understand other cultures and communities.



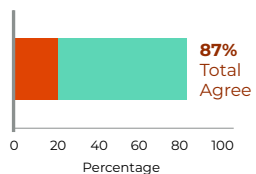
Museums help visitors and tourists explore a region or place.



Museums give us information and perspective on important cultural and social issues.



Museums advance knowledge as research institutions.



Canadians expressed appreciation for the opportunity to learn from preserved objects. As one respondent put it, "museums taught me about new ways to communicate. They taught me the value of objects as messages from other times or places."

"Museums preserve common inheritances. They keep objects and archives as historical evidence."

– SURVEY RESPONDENT

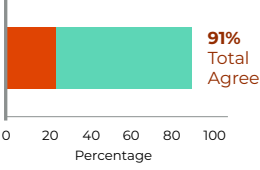
HOW IMPORTANT ARE THE FOLLOWING TO YOUR OVERALL MUSEUM EXPERIENCE?

When asked to rate the importance of various aspects of a museum visit, Canadians rated exhibits, collections, and programs as the most important aspects of their visitor experience.

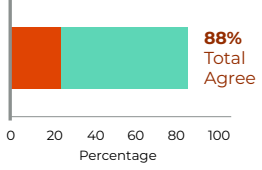
88% OF RESPONDENTS listed the relevance and quality of the exhibits as the number one consideration before planning a visit to the museum, whereas amenities like gift shops, restaurants, and event spaces were of secondary importance. Visitors come to museums to learn and feed into their curiosity in creative ways through the exhibits and objects presented to them.

■ Somewhat Agree ■ Strongly Agree ■ Total Agree

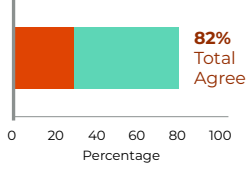
New, changing or temporary exhibitions



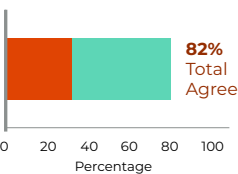
The museum's permanent collection



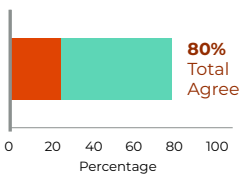
Special touring exhibitions



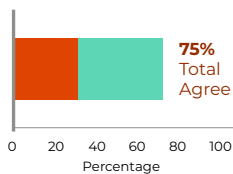
Learning programmes (demonstrations, docent talks)



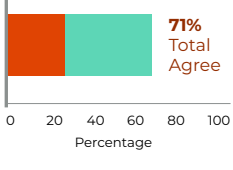
Activities for children (interactive exhibitions, discovery programming, day-camps)



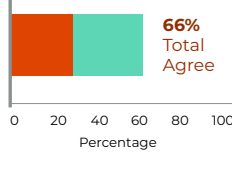
Special events (Open-Doors events, festivals, etc.)



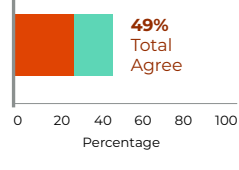
Places to sit



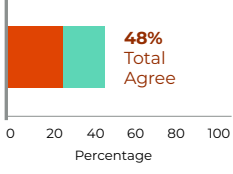
Museum tours



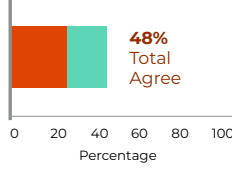
Places to shop (shops and kiosks)



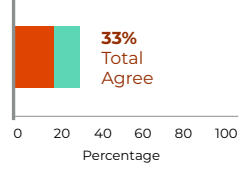
Membership benefits



Places to eat (cafes, restaurants or snack-bars)



Spaces for events (wedding, birthdays, corporate events, etc.)



Trust and authority are also connected to the ability of the museum to share multiple perspectives. Canadians want museums to share interesting stories that represent their lived experiences. They want museums to engage them in the process of designing exhibits and programs. Sharing authority allows museums to provide a platform for the community to be the storytellers and share their own perspectives.

For more see *Getting to Relevance Through Accessibility and Representation*

Community members should be involved in designing material and exhibits for museums.

49% Agree

I think museums should have dialogues with local communities to develop programs that resonate with community members.

58% Agree

Local museums can be a place to engage with the community.

68% Agree

Local museums, in particular, can be a place to engage with the community and explore community-driven narratives. Nearly **1 in 3 RESPONDENTS** want to participate in a brainstorming or engagement session with a museum, and **1 in 4** would like to volunteer with a museum. Museums can cultivate trustworthiness through community engagement efforts such as dialogue sessions or embedding community members into the museum through volunteering opportunities, board participation, and membership.

The perception that museums are places for dialogue, to participate, to ask questions, and to seek out differing views all contribute to the trustworthiness of the institution. Museums can build on their trustworthiness by continuing to collaborate with community, share authority, and encourage the exploration of ideas.

"Museums are for perspective, to widen our worldview and build historical consciousness."

"[Museums] take me beyond my own experience" and "are a place for dialogue on issues."

– SURVEY RESPONDENTS

All data collected as part of a 2021 national survey, *Museums for Me*, undertaken as part of *Reconsidering Museums*. For detailed information on questions and responses, see the [Museums For Me: Engaging Canadians on the Future of Museums – What We Heard report](#).

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