



a broader population sample of U.S. Adults, we wanted to learn more about the role and impact of imaginative learning in museums, and asked respondents a series of questions on the topic. In this Data Story, we'll share these overall results, and explore more deeply in follow-up infographics.

Our answer choices presented an expansive approach to imagination, and respondents were supportive: the average respondent selected four of the answer choices, and only 3% of frequent museum-goers admitted "I don't really want to use my imagination when visiting museums."

MUSEUM-GOERS

Mental "time travel" to the PAST



Brainstorming or idea-building activities

guardians were the most enthusiastic about these answer choices, especially the more STEM-oriented

To follow-up, respondents

imaginative learning

were asked what outcomes of

experiences in museums they

MUSEUM-GOERS Recharge us mentally, as we experience awe,

wonder, or beauty

76%

56%■

1%

4%

They said:

59% 53% Build excitement about the new ideas and creativity the experiences spark **59%** 52% Help us imagine a better future, giving us something positive to work towards 49% **48%** None of these

of the questions. ---- AMBIVALENT: these respondents like the idea of imaginative learning, but are not necessarily seeking it out. They typically chose one to four answer

choices to each question.

ENTHUSIASTIC: these

To help us understand how enthusiastic

respondents were about imaginative

learning in museums, we sorted

respondents into three categories:

RESISTANT: these respondents

answered negatively to one or both

more ambivalent respondents are also happy to go along with imaginative learning, responding positively (just less enthusiastically). We'll

Data Story.

explore these three

segments more in our next

popular and generally

Nearly half of frequent

museum-goers fall in the

welcome among our visitors.

"enthusiastic" segment. The

visitors to feel good about their own

imaginative learning, the more effective

we can be in their learning experiences

and outcomes.

*Data Stories share research about both frequent museum-goers (typically visit multiple museums each year) and the broader population

More Data Stories can be found at wilkeningconsulting.com/data-stories. lead author

Immersion in beauty 75% 58%

70%

68%

61%

54%

39%

38%

47%

3%

5%

47%

Innovative thinking through STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) 47% 55% Mental "time travel" to the FUTURE 45% 52%

answers around innovative thinking, problem-solving, and idea-building.

when visiting museums

Additionally, parents and

75% **59%** Broaden our minds to imagine life experiences different than our own 74% 59%■ Develop greater understanding of the experiences of people from the past through historical imagination 72% 60%

most likely or the best choice

Again, respondents were supportive, with the average respondent choosing nearly five of the answer choices (and only 1% of frequent museum-goers saying "none of these").

5% Ambivalent: Imagination 52%1 58% Enthusiastic: Imagination 45% 37% Clearly, imagination is

MUSEUM-GOERS

questions.

Resistant: Imagination

3%

Annual Survey of Museum-Goers Data Stories are created by Wilkening Consulting on behalf of the American Alliance of Museums. Sources include: • 2024 Annual Survey of Museum-Goers, n = 90,178; 202 museums participating 2024 Broader Population Sampling, n = 2,154

my right brain."

• 2017 - 2023 Annual Surveys of Museum-Goers

(including casual, sporadic, and non-visitors to museums).

WilkeningConsulting

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We first asked respondents: How would you like to use

your imagination while learning in museums?

Personal stories that build empathy and connection

U.S. ADULTS

I don't really want to use my imagination

wanted visitors to experience. U.S. ADULTS Inspire curiosity to wonder and learn on our own

Promote critical thinking by imagining different possibilities and using evidence to understand what is

respondents loved the idea of imaginative learning, and chose five or more answer choices to both questions; in fact, 85% of this segment chose ALL of the answer choices in one or both of the U.S. ADULTS

Overall, however, this suggests that we can be very proactive talking about imagination in museum. The more we talk about and support imagination, helping

"Imagination is very important to me...it keeps me interested in the many layers of life's complexity and quality, opportunities. It inspires me beyond 'what is' to 'what could be.' It is soul food for