

## Why Museums Essay

The past is the foundation on which the future is built. And there is nothing more important we have that helps the public understand the past than museums. I appreciate the value of modernism, but you cannot have modernism without keeping track of history. Museums tell us what something was like and guides us to predict what it will be like. As a person who cherishes memories, I value museums for its role in preserving history and heritage.

Furthermore, museums bring people together and aid them to learn about different cultures. They allow one to assess the history of a particular area which brings a local community together. Museums also provide an opportunity for people of all ages to process the type of creativity that existed in the past and form opinions of their own.

A very fitting example of such a museum is the National Museum - justifiably one of the leading museums in India. It gives the story of a successful event in the past - an exhibition organised in the Rashtrapati Bhawan in order to display a collection in Delhi which was once displayed in London. The museum was inaugurated in 1949 and as of today it holds approximately 2 lakh objects of diverse nature, Indian and foreign, and the objects cover the history of a time frame of about 5000 years of Indian cultural heritage.

As an opportunity presented itself to me which consisted of interning at the museum I enrolled immediately. Having done an internship with ITIHAAS a few years back I expected the internship to be a valuable experience. I remember researching an object in the Gandhi Museum and telling visitors about its historical and cultural significance. Not only did that internship improve my research and interpersonal skills but it also exposed me to a new way of thinking outside my field of interests.

After interning at the Gandhi Museum I realised that hands-on experiences in museums are valuable, even in the age of online documentation. That experience developed my interest in the idea of holding exhibitions and I began visiting museums at every place I travelled to. One of my recent visits was the Louvre Museum in Paris which holds many priceless artwork spanning centuries, including the iconic Mona Lisa. I further understood the uniqueness a museum holds over documentation over the internet as I witnessed the power of art and historical artefacts.

Having had a great experience with ITIHAAS previously and developing an interest in history ever since, I decided to apply for the internship at the National Museum. This is the same explanation I have given to everyone in the program after they ask me what stream I have taken and I reply with science. I have always been more excited for the journey than the destination and museums portray the journey of human and cultural evolution which for me is not just a personal fascination but a commitment to preserving the collective memories of our ancestors and providing a more informed timeline to our future generations.

I am excited to work with ITIHAAS in the National Museum to serve the visitors with an interactive and knowledgeable tour and portray the museum as an epitome of national identity.

- Dhruv Mantri