

BUILD YOUR OWN MUSEUM WITH LEILA SALES

The Museum of Lost and Found

Vanessa isn't sure which happened first: finding the abandoned museum or losing her best friend, Bailey. She doesn't know what to do with herself now that Bailey has left her behind—but when she stumbles upon an empty, forgotten museum, her purpose becomes clear. Vanessa starts filling the museum with her own artifacts and memories, hoping that perhaps if she can find the right way to tell the story of her broken friendship, she can figure out how to make it whole again.

As Vanessa's museum grows, it seems like the place might have the answers to other questions, too. Like why a mysterious work of art was left behind. Or how to deal with a military dad who's trying to parent from thousands of miles away. Or why Vanessa's bad habit is getting harder and harder to quit. Or even, maybe, how to set the past to rest and find a way to move forward.

Moving and charming, *The Museum of Lost and Found* is about how we grow apart from some people as we grow up—and how sometimes we can find new pieces of ourselves in the aftermath.

★ “This is an outstanding book for its unique and wonderful approach to relatable themes.”—*School Library Journal*, starred review

About the author

Leila Sales is the author of eight critically acclaimed middle-grade and young adult novels, which have been optioned for stage and screen, received multiple starred reviews, been translated into a dozen languages, and appeared on many state lists and best-of-the-year lists. Leila grew up outside of Boston, Massachusetts; graduated from the University of Chicago; worked in book publishing in New York City; and now lives in Austin, Texas. Find Leila online at leilasales.com, and invite her to visit your school to run a writing workshop, give a book talk, or lead your students in creating their own museums by emailing her at leila@leilasales.com.



Learning Objectives and TEKS standards

- **Make Connections to Personal Experiences:** Students will explore their individual interests and will express themselves through the ideation, design, and creation of their museum exhibits.
- **Interact with Sources in Meaningful Ways:** Students will apply the museum-building skills from the narrative to a tangible project of their own
- **Empathy and Perspective:** By selecting and interpreting artifacts that reflect various identities and experiences, students will cultivate empathy and understanding for different individuals and communities, thereby promoting inclusivity.
- **Identify and Gather Relevant Information:** Students will learn how to conduct research effectively by gathering information about their chosen topics. They will then analyze their gathered information, artifacts, and narratives to construct cohesive and engaging stories.
- **Museum Literacy:** Crafting their own museums will inform how students approach any museums they might visit in the future, giving them the tools to understand any museum and to feel like they belong there.

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Five steps to a “build your museum” lesson plan

Note: This lesson plan is designed for fourth through eighth grades

1. **Read *The Museum of Lost and Found*, by Leila Sales:** If you don't have time to read the entire book, just read chapters 11 or 15 to get inspired by the book's characters creating their own museum.
2. **Explore a real-life museum:** Take a field trip or look at a museum's collection online. Hone your curatorial eye by discussing questions like: Why do these items belong together in this collection? How has the museum curator chosen to display these pieces? If you were curating this museum exhibition, are there any items you would choose to remove or rearrange? What items would you want to add? What information do the labels provide (e.g. material, year, location, artist's name...)?
3. **Brainstorm ideas for *your* museum:** A museum can be about anything! Did you know that there are museums about bunnies (in California), salt and pepper shakers (in Tennessee), the circus (in Florida), pencils (in England), and chocolate (in Belgium)? Write down lists of things you collect, topics you know or care a lot about, and topics you *want* to know more about. Anything you list could be the topic of your museum!
4. **Create your unique museum:** Once everyone has selected the topic for their museum, it's time to bring these ideas to life. Start by building a floor plan. This can be a blank sheet of paper or even a 3-D model. (If you want to make a simple 3-D model out of paper, the first minute of this video shows you how: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F26LG0rYIz4>) Next, fill the museum with any items that you want to display. You can draw the item or write down what it is. Depending on how much time and art supplies you have for this activity, students may use pencils, markers, or even collage materials. Encourage students to write labels for each of their pieces, just like a real-life gallery!
5. **Give your museum its grand opening!** Students can take one another on “tours” through their museums. In this tour, they can explain things like why they chose this museum topic, how they decided what items would be included in it, and how they chose to display those items. Once the tours are done, students can leave their museums on display in the classroom or take them home and keep adding to them!



THE MUSEUM OF LIGHT



THE MUSEUM OF NEW BEGINNINGS



THE MUSEUM OF FOOD