

## **Self-Guided Tour for Second Level Teachers Guide**

Welcome to MoLI - the Museum of Literature Ireland. We are delighted to welcome you and your students. You and your students will engage with the written word in different ways; through film, sound, visual art, audio-visuals, text/books/rip-off flyers.

### **In this guide you will find:**

- **Practical info about your visit; wifi code, toilets etc (Pg 1 and 2)**
- **The museum layout (Pg 2 and Pg 3)**
- **Some question prompts you can use with your students to encourage them to delve deep into 'seeing' the museum exhibitions according to their own perspective (Pg 3)**
- **Museum highlights of each floor, as well as the garden (Pg 3, 4, 5, 6 & 7)**
- **Some material to enjoy before/after the visit with your class (Pg 7)**

### **Practical Info About Your Visit:**

- The toilets, cafe and shop are on the ground floor. Press 0 in the lift.
- There are 4 floors of exhibitions, as well as a Scavenger Hunt specifically designed for teenagers, which is available from staff at reception.
- A good place to have a chat with your group is in the Common Room, the yellow room you first walk into - this gives a history of Newman House, the building MoLI is located within, throughout the years.
- Did you know - the back gate at the end of our Readers Garden leads into the Iveagh Gardens: have a look!
- We have free wifi - "Welcome to MoLI"
- We also have a [Social Guide](#) that you can share with your students before they visit. Some exhibitions are temporary, so change regularly, however, it will give you/your students a sense of the space as a whole.

- Our [LitLab](#) on the 4th floor may be available for your group to use to chill out and do some creative resources, play board games, and check out our Siamsa Tire x MoLI Exhibition 'A Way Home/Slí Abhaile'. This exhibition is all visual and displayed lower to the ground, made accessible for kids. Ask a member of staff about availability and enjoy!

### **General LitLab Opening Times:**

Tuesday: 2pm - 4pm, Wednesday: 1pm – 4pm, Thursday: 2.30pm – 4.30pm, Friday: 1pm – 6pm, Saturday & Sunday, 10.30am – 4pm.

Please leave the room as you found it.

### **Museum Layout:**

- **On floor 0:** On the ground floor, we can find the toilets, the shop and The Commons Café. There is a courtyard on the ground floor and up the steps, a Readers Garden that leads into the Iveagh Gardens.
- **On floor 1:** We have the Common Room, The Iveagh Room, and into the Aula Maxima for the exhibition including Riverrun, Dear Dirty Dublin, a timeline of James Joyce's life, and a video of Finnegans Wake.
- **On floor 2:** We have the State and Irish Writing, a seating and video area, a small reading area and steps up to the Young Adult Fiction display and Literary Cities. There is also a stair lift here.
- **On floor 3:** We have the James Joyce Inspiration and Creativity Zone and a screening room with changing installations.
- **On floor 4:** When available, we have the LitLab. Schools and other learners use this space to relax, create, play, and reflect. When available, this is also used as a Relaxed Space for families with children with autism and additional needs, and it can be accessed by a member of the Visitor Experience Team. The room also features a children's exhibition.

**Here are some questions you can use as discussion prompts with students to encourage individual and unique ways of seeing as they make their way through the exhibitions:**

*1. What's going on in this poem/video/song/painting? (What is your impression of the narrative, characters, and environment, as depicted in the work?)*

2. *What makes you say that? (What words, imagery, sounds, or structural decisions of the poet/writer/artist, build this impression?)*
3. *How does it make you feel? (What emotional or physical response does the work prompt within you?)*

## **Museum Highlights:**

### **Floor 1:**

#### ***The Riverrun***

We call this installation “A Riverrun of Language”. In the novel *Finnegans Wake* by James Joyce, Joyce shows the River Liffey as a river of voices, constantly chattering. So we thought we’d take that idea and make a river of Irish writing, from our earliest mythology and poetry, right up to the present day. And not just in English, but in the Irish language too. If you stand under these “sound showers”, you’ll hear a wonderful selection of poems and excerpts being read by living Irish writers, academics and students. And you can take these little excerpts away with you from the pads on the table.

### **Floor 2:**

#### ***YA Exhibition***

We felt it was important that teenagers coming to MoLI would see the kinds of books they were reading here in the museum too. Here you can read about some current Young Adult Fiction writers like Darren Shan, Sarah Maria Griffin and Dave Rudden. Many of these writers are huge bestsellers around the world, with enormous teen audiences for their work and are involved in helping us with new exhibitions and our learning programme for young people.

### **Floor 3:**

#### ***Translation Wall***

This room shows us a wall of Joyce’s works translated into languages from all over the world, giving a sense of just how internationally popular he has been. We are still having copies sent to us - only a few weeks ago we received the Japanese Manga version of *Ulysses*!

What language do you speak at home? Can you spot a language you know on the wall? Feel free to take down a book and share it with your classmate.

### ***Copy no.1 of Ulysses and James Joyce Notebooks***

If you look up you will see a sculpture we have created from pages of Joyce's Ulysses notebooks, all flowing downward to this, an extremely valuable modern literary artefact. This is the famous 'Copy No.1' of Ulysses, the very first copy that was presented to Joyce from his publisher on his birthday Feb 2nd, 1922. Joyce then did something quite traditional - he inscribed the copy to his patron, Harriet Shaw-Weaver, who in turn, thirty years later, inscribed and donated this copy to the National Library of Ireland. Joyce was of course extremely superstitious and a little obsessed with numerical significance, so it was important that the book was published on his birthday, the 2nd day of the 2nd month, 1922.

He was also very particular about the physicality of the book, the typography, the margins, and of course the distinct blue colour used on the cover. This was to reference the Greek flag - Ulysses is based on Homer's Odyssey.

And like the Odyssey, it is a book ostensibly about, as we say in Dublin, "getting back to your gaff". So there is something touching about the fact that this most important of books has made its way back to this house, the house that Joyce studied in as a young man, and where he took his first steps as a writer.

### ***Creativity and Inspiration Zone***

This installation contains interviews with ten living Irish authors - a great selection of writers like Anne Enright, Doireann Ni Ghriofa, Nuala Ni Dhomhnaill, Roddy Doyle, and John Banville all talking about their own creative processes, the rooms they write in, how they face writer's block. Some of their answers are incredible and humbling, and they have each left a little prompt to help you start your own novel. Anne Enright tells us her motto nowadays is "Shut up and write!".

We're not telling you to shut up, but we are asking you to try to write just the first line of a novel. They say we all have a book in us - maybe this is where you start yours and stick it onto the magnetic wall!

### **Floor 4:**

#### **The LitLab**

#### **Current Exhibition: A Way Home / Slí Abhaile**

*Two siblings get lost in the woods. There they meet a mysterious traveller and embark on an adventure that sees them encountering a cheeky píuca, some lost souls, and a choir of banshees...*

These illustrations by twelve Irish artists are a selection from a larger exhibition, which was originally exhibited in Kerry in 2021. They are each based on aspects of writer Olivia Hope's story of two children lost in a forest on a night when the veil between the world of humans and spirits is at its thinnest.

Presented by MoLI in partnership with Siamsa Tíre, The National Folk Theatre of Ireland, *A Way Home / Slí Abhaile* is an exhibition for kids and the young at heart. And, just like the muralist Klo Wi, who has decorated our walls, you can leave your mark too; show us your creativity by writing, drawing, and doodling on the woodland chalkboard.

### **Readers Garden:**

MoLI's Courtyard and Readers Garden contain two protected trees, most notably the ash tree that James Joyce had his graduation photograph taken against, and a beautiful Killarney Strawberry tree.



The [Readers Garden](#) is designed and the work is carried out by UCD gardener, Ciaran Beattie, and his team. Their great work allows for all our senses to be engaged and rewarded: the white Birch attracts moth larvae and, so, birds; the ivy ground cover captures the sound of rainfall, the lavender hedge provides a scent to attract butterflies and bees, the David Austin roses have a lovely scent and are a lovely visual, the Irish yew creates a hub around each bench seat. More recently, a lot of Iris and Bluebell bulbs and some Allium were planted.

Down at the gate into the Iveagh Gardens there is a plaque dedicated to Maeve Binchy from her book (made into a film) - 'Circle of Friends' - "It was peaceful there and unfamiliar. Not like almost every other square inch of Dublin".

There is a statue by Bob Quinn called Bird Song of a young Jesuit priest who stops his study, with his beads behind his back so he can listen to the birds sing.

As you face the back of MoLI - we can see the main visible architectural intervention that brought the three buildings of MoLI together. It is this intervention which allowed for the practical issues needed for a public space – access, fire and safety, bathrooms and shop that we see from here – the lift and stair core are clad in Okalux glass (insulating glass optimizing the use of daylight and low energy consumption). That orange colour you see is from expanded copper mesh which was stretched and assembled by hand in Frankfurt. We hope that the gardens will continue to be a place of reading, learning and gentle enjoyment of nature.

**Teachers can engage students before your visit:**

- [Ulysses TED-Ed](#)
- [NovelTeens Podcast](#)
- [Sensory Places and Spaces Podcast](#)