

# THE JURASSIC COAST

## INTERPRETATION TOOLKIT

A practical guide for the Dorset  
and East Devon Coast World  
Heritage Site

**JURASSIC  
COAST  
TRUST**



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# About the Toolkit

## What is the Toolkit?

It is a practical guide to help you to plan your interpretation. It provides guidance on planning, developing and delivering a range of interpretation which will help visitors enjoy and understand more about your site.

## Who is the toolkit for?

This toolkit has been produced for anyone who is about to embark on an interpretation project, from museum professionals to charities, volunteers or community groups.

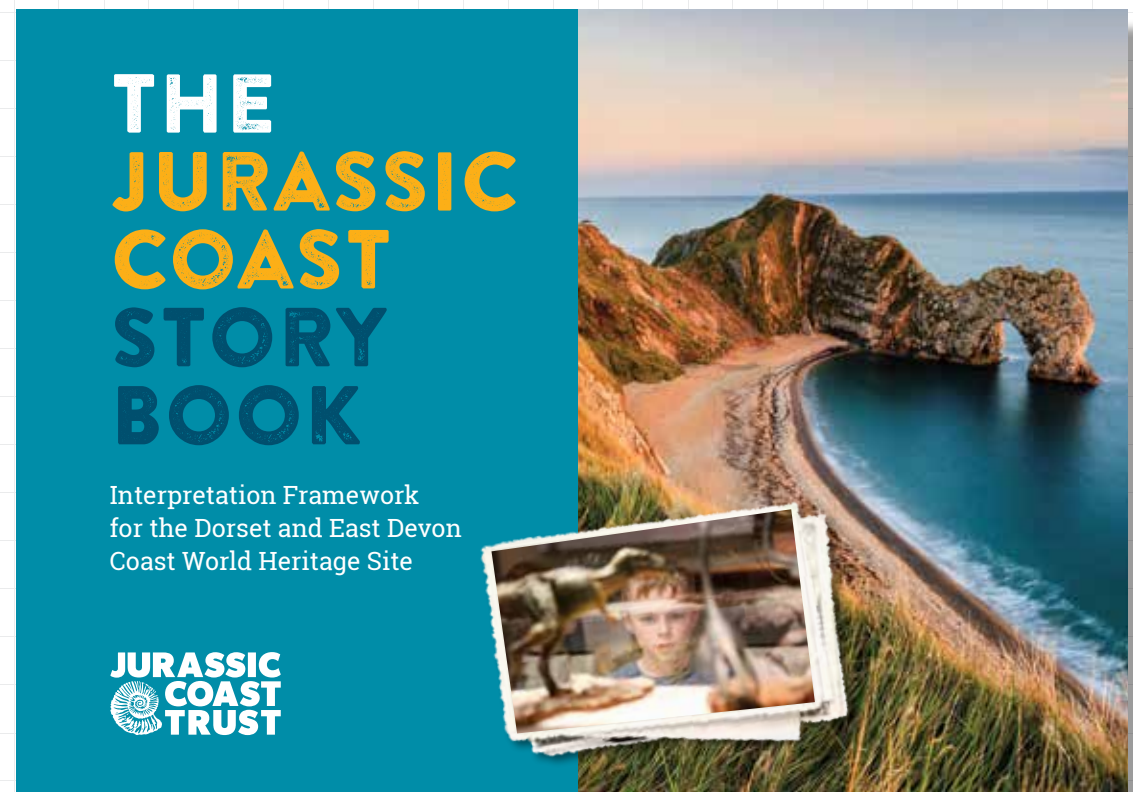


# Before we start...

## What's the relationship between the Toolkit and the Story Book?

The Jurassic Coast Story Book is our interpretation framework, packed with useful information to help you with **planning your interpretation strategy**, or **putting in funding bids**.

The Toolkit is the practical, how-to guide to interpretation for when you are ready to start **creating your interpretation**.



# A practical guide to using the Jurassic Coast Story Book

There's lots of information in the Story Book – everything you could possibly need for planning your interpretation – but don't be put off by its length.

You don't need to read everything, rather dip in and out depending on what you are working on. It roughly divides into three sections:

## PART ONE

What the World Heritage Site (WHS) is, and the impacts interpretation can have for the Site and its communities. This is what you need for planning larger projects where you might have to make applications for funding.

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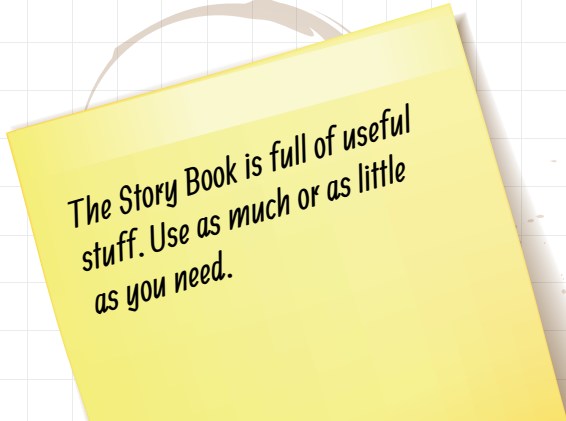
## PART TWO

This will help you understand some basics about geoheritage, and the ways it can help excite, inspire and inform your visitors.

## PART THREE

This helps you plan your approach to interpretation, from the coast-wide perspective, to your site-specific topics. It covers:

- **The 'Spirit of place statement' (page 7)** – gives you a general sense of the heritage identity of the coast.
- **Audience segment profiles (page 8)** – this is for the planning stage, to help identify who you are producing your interpretation for.
- **Key narrative concepts (page 10)** – the two concepts summarise the overarching stories about the coast's geology, and how it connects to people and place.
- **Themes (page 14)** – the seven themes will help you plan which stories to tell, and how to link them to the wider WHS stories. You shouldn't try to include all the themes in your interpretation – just the ones which link to your site-specific topics.
- **Site specific topics (page 43)** – an audit of the site-specific stories along the coast. You can look at the topics that are relevant to your site and see how you can link them to the overall WHS themes.



The Story Book is full of useful stuff. Use as much or as little as you need.

# What is interpretation?

Interpretation is a communication process which helps people understand more about your site, collection or event. It brings objects and ideas to life, and creates thought-provoking and memorable experiences for visitors, connecting them with our natural and cultural heritage.

It can be delivered in many ways, including live interpreters (such as guided tours), printed panels or trails, and audio or multimedia tours.

## Good interpretation:

- ✎ Attracts attention
- ✎ Helps us relate to places, objects or events
- ✎ Inspires and excites people
- ✎ Provokes thoughts and generates conversations
- ✎ Turns passive observers into active participants
- ✎ Leaves people enlightened, not mystified nor thinking 'so what?'



*"Through Interpretation, Understanding.  
Through Understanding, Appreciation.  
Through Appreciation, Protection"  
– Freeman Tilden.*

## Who is your audience?

This question can easily be overlooked in your enthusiasm to tell visitors all about your site. And in your desire to share your in-depth knowledge, you can quickly lose your visitors' interest.

So, to begin with you need to think about audience segmentation – dividing your visitors into meaningful groups – based on things like demographics, attitudes and interests, where they live, and family circumstances.

You can then define which segment your majority audience is, and what level of information they might want or need. You can then target them in your main interpretation.

You might also have secondary audience segments, for whom you provide extra interpretation.

Another audience is the people who are not already visiting your site. Could you provide interpretation which would attract these people to come?



You can find a useful breakdown of audience segments on the Jurassic Coast on page 18 of the Toolkit.

## What do you hope to achieve?

You need to set objectives for your interpretation, such as:

### Learning

What do you want people to know or understand after visiting? (Keep your learning objectives light – see Top Ten Tips, page 15).

### Behavioural

How do you want people to act after visiting? For example, to enjoy the WHS in a safe and responsible way, to support your fundraising, become a volunteer, attend events, spread the word to others.

### Emotional

What do you want them to feel? For example, pride in their local area, passion for protecting our heritage, excited about becoming involved, etc.

### Economic


How can interpretation benefit your revenue or that of the local economy? For example, by getting people to stay longer, make repeat visits, use local facilities, recommend visits to others, support your fundraising, or attend events.





Read more about the role of interpretation along the Jurassic Coast WHS on pages 2-10 of the Story Book.

## What will you interpret?

At any one place, there are endless subjects which could be interpreted. You need to decide:

 What features, qualities and stories make your site special?

 What will interest your key audiences? (Based on research, not guesswork)

 Which objects or stories help meet the objectives for your interpretation?

You'll probably end up with many more subjects that you can interpret, so you'll have to refine down. Remember, if you try to tell every story or interpret every object, your visitors will be overwhelmed.

*Knowing your audience, and what will work for them, is central to successful interpretation.*

# Why think about themes?

Themes are the main messages you want visitors to know or understand about your place.

They tend to present an idea about a topic, rather than just information.

Generally, a theme should be stated in one or two lines, ideally in less than 25 words. That can be very tricky, but themes can be enormously helpful!

By following a theme, you can bring cohesion to all the different elements of your interpretation, rather than just giving lots of unconnected facts. They help you plan your content, and crucially, decide what to include and what to leave out.



You can find the seven Jurassic Coast themes on page 14 of the Story Book. Remember you don't have to use all these themes – just those which link to topics at your site.

*If you try to tell every story or interpret every object, your visitors will be overwhelmed.*

## Case Study

### 'Finding my cornerstones'

by Sam Scriven, Jurassic Coast Trust

*"In my experience, there are particular cornerstones in interpretation that help to anchor me in the sea of possibilities. The most important ones for me are the audience and the aim. We did a piece of work recently for Abbotsbury Gardens as part of our partnership with them. After thinking about the initial reasons for doing the project, AND reflecting on the audiences we identified, we ended up with a very clear aim. This was to produce 'an entertaining self-guided trail for families with younger children'.*

*We went back to that again and again once we started creating the content. It meant that no matter how swamped we were with amazing information – where everything seemed important – we were able to pick out what would work to fit that very precise aim.*

*It was essentially a filtering process. We got all the potential stories to interpret in front of us (basically lots of cool facts about plants) and for each one asked ourselves*

*'Will it work as part of a self-guided trail? Is it entertaining? Will it work for younger children?'. That gave us a pile of stuff that was 'in' and a pile that was 'out'.*

*Then it was just a case of setting our themes and working through the sorts of things set out in the Toolkit to tie it all together into a coherent finished product. It always seems to me that being decisive is the hardest thing in interpretation, but ultimately it's what makes for a great end result."*





# What type of interpretation?



There is no perfect type of interpretation. What you choose will depend on the constraints of your site, your budget, your visitors' needs, and the availability and skills of your staff and volunteers.

Whatever media you use, you should review how well it is working regularly, and add or update as necessary.

Remember it's not the case that high-cost or high-tech is better. A low-budget but well-produced panel can be really effective. Equally, a badly thought-out or poorly-scripted multi-media trail can be boring – and very expensive!

Here are some of the ways you can deliver your interpretation, with pros and cons of each.

## Face-to-face interpretation

Guided tours, talks, demonstrations, live performances, re-enactments, storytelling, workshops.

### Pros

- People like people - research suggests this is the most memorable form of interpretation.
- Very flexible – they can be tailored to the interests and knowledge of your audience (both before and during the event).
- Useful for explaining complex things – people can ask questions if they don't understand.
- They can be inexpensive (if you have the right staff and volunteers on site).
- Can generate income and provide employment.
- Can be fun and entertaining, creating memorable and meaningful experiences.

### Cons

- Guides need to be knowledgeable and enthusiastic, and able to relate to the needs and interests of their audience.
- Guides need support and training, especially in relating to their audience, accommodating disabled people or non-English speakers, or dealing with rude or obstructive people.
- Guided tours don't reach a mass audience, and only take place at set times.
- You need time to organise, run and promote events.
- Outdoor events are at the mercy of the weather.

*Remember, people learn in different ways, so use a variety of interpretation types if you can.*

### Singing the Sidmouth Rocks

For many years, Sidmouth Museum has run geology walks, aimed at the general public and led by a volunteer who's an expert in geology education. In 2012, a new geology walk was devised which merged folk music and geology, to run during Sidmouth FolkWeek.

The walk leader worked with a professional musician who had a background in music education and performance (especially folk and classical).

They wrote six catchy 'geo-songs', each with a single geological theme, usually given in the title, such as 'Otter Sandstone', 'Jacob's Ladder's Fault' and 'Tectonic Plates Away-O'. Each song includes words, melodies, chords, musical comments and brief geological explanation.

#### The full-day event involves:

- The morning, based indoors, is run as a beginners' ukulele workshop where participants are invited to learn the geo-songs.
- In the afternoon, the walk-and-sing goes along the Esplanade, stopping six times to sing the song appropriate for that spot. Attendees of the morning workshop play and sing the songs, whilst those who came only for the afternoon – or even passers-by – are encouraged to join in.

### ★ Results

Now in its seventh year, the event attracts visitors and residents, mainly festival participants and especially novice ukulele players. Numbers range from 35 to 85. It is a fun family event, with a clear focus on outdoor singing, ukulele playing and public understanding of geology. The words and music are published as a 'Sidrocks Songbook'.



# Interpretation panels

## Panels, plaques and displays

### Pros

- Reach a mass audience – an on-site panel is always there, at times and places where guides can't be.
- Can orientate people as well as give information.
- They are good at highlighting points of interest or things to do at specific places.
- Can include numerous graphic devices such as birds'-eye-view maps, historic reconstructions, artists' impressions, or images of hidden features or wildlife.
- Can be very durable.
- They can be combined with other interpretation such as audio points or sculpture.

### Cons

- They aren't easy to update.
- They aren't good for repeat visitors.
- They can't accommodate large numbers of people at the same time.
- The maps on panels have limited use as visitors can't refer to them later – you still need waymarkers or a clearly defined trail.
- Budgets - they need a relatively high initial outlay for design and production.
- Poorly-sited and designed panels can be intrusive.
- Outdoor panels need cleaning and maintaining.
- Panels and plaques may require planning permission.
- Can be subject to vandalism.

 You can find more guidance on outdoor signs for the Jurassic Coast on page 20.

## Case Study

### Sidmouth

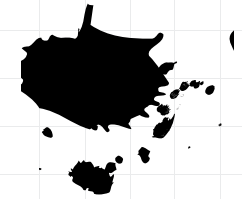
## Connaught Gardens viewpoint and Rock Detectives

In 2014, a new Jurassic Coast external interpretation panel was installed at a viewpoint at Connaught Gardens, Sidmouth.

Rather than interpret what people could see, the panel reveals what isn't visible – the fossils found in the rocks and what they reveal about prehistoric Sidmouth. An illustration recreates how the same view might have looked in the deep past. Its caption draws on the principle of 'Imagination' from the Story Book:

*“This image helps to show what the view from here was like 235 million years ago, but it is limited. It is left to us to imagine the intense heat of the sun, riding high in the blue Triassic sky. Or the feel of dust whipped into our mouths and hair by the dry wind. The Rhynchosaurs fell silent long ago but we can give them a voice of our choosing with which to grunt and call once more. Evolution, extinction, and time beyond comprehension separate us from this lost world, and yet we can bring it to life again with a thought.”*

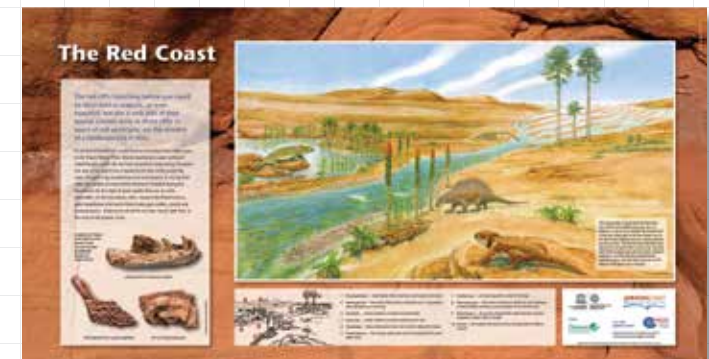
In addition, a small panel was installed along the promenade below the cliffs. Here it is possible to see various clues within the rock layers, and families are challenged to become 'Rock Detectives'.



### ★ Results

The Connaught Gardens panel is seen by thousands of people each year who visit the popular viewpoint. Roger Trend, who leads the geology walks for Sidmouth Museum, said of the 'Rock Detectives' panel:

*“Just the right balance of content and pitched at the right level. As it stands, it is accessible and appropriate for everyone. It is a model of good practice which has enriched our Sidmouth Geology Walk significantly.”*



## On-site installations

Seating, picnic benches, way-marking and sculptures

### Pros

- Can draw attention to specific features without being obtrusive.
- Ignite curiosity and imagination.
- Can be tactile, and so accessible for all.
- Reach a mass audience as they are always available.
- You can use local craftspeople and natural materials.
- An outlet for creative expression, both for the craftsman and for the audience (how they interpret the installation).
- Great for encouraging conversations amongst visitors.

### Cons

- Open to vandalism.
- Budgets – working with artists can be expensive.
- Not a medium for presenting complex messages.
- People will interpret sculpture in different ways, so might not necessarily pick up your message.
- Potential for criticism if people don't 'get' the point of them.
- Installations may require planning permission.
- Longevity – depending on the materials used.

## Publications

Guidebooks, leaflets, self-guided trails, children's trails

### Pros

- Can include a lot of information, as well as orientate people.
- They are portable and can guide people all round the site.
- Flexibility - the visitor can read them before or after the visit, on or off-site.
- As with panels, they can incorporate numerous graphic devices.
- They can generate income.
- They can act as a souvenir.
- Simple publications can be produced in-house (but see below).

### Cons

- They need to be well-written and designed – too many words, small text, or poor design will make them hard to read. The visitor will soon abandon them.
- They only appeal to people who enjoy reading.
- Budgets - they need a relatively high initial outlay for design and print.
- Leaflets need effective distribution points.
- They can generate litter – try to encourage reuse or recycling.

## Multi-media

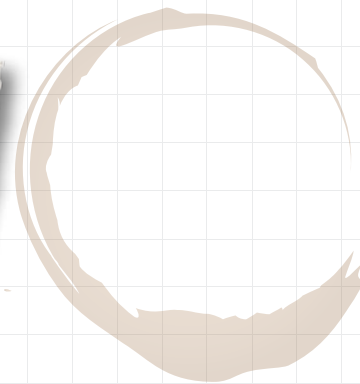
Websites, audio trails, audio-visual trails, videos, on-site computer screens

### Pros

- 'Experts' can talk directly to visitors
- They can offer masses of information, in bite-sized chunks.
- They can offer a selection of trails for different audiences or interests – from children to specialists.
- Can be creative, evocative and dramatic, creating memorable experiences.
- They can incorporate all kinds of additional media such as archive footage, film clips, music, cartoons, historical reconstructions.
- They don't intrude in the landscape – visitors bring the interpretation with them on their own devices, or on handsets provided by the site.
- Audio can meet the needs of visitors with visual impairment.
- Can be multi-lingual.
- They can be updated.

### Cons

- Budgets – it can be the costliest form of interpretation. You need professionally-produced material with high-quality sound and images.
- Need maintenance and updating.
- Can be problematic if reliant on mobile or Wi-Fi signals.
- Can be challenging for staff and volunteers who are not confident with using technology.
- Can isolate people from their group or surroundings.
- Some visitors want to get away from technology when they visit countryside or heritage sites.
- Technology changes rapidly – your interpretation may quickly become obsolete.



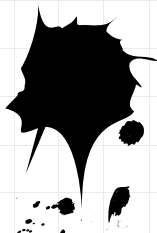
## Case Study

### Jurassic Coast Fossil Finder

The Fossil Finder is a database of around 1,000 fossils from Jurassic Coast Museums. The objective was to create a digital catalogue of key fossils and present them in a way that is appealing to specialists and non-specialists alike.

The work was carried out by a team comprising a geologist from the Jurassic Coast team, a copywriter and specialist photographers, working closely with staff and volunteers from the museums.

- The geologist worked with the museum curators to select the key objects.
- The geologist ensured the photographer captured the unique or important features of the fossils.
- After agreeing an approach to the writing, the geologist drafted the text for each fossil, then the copywriter edited to ensure it appealed to non-specialists.
- The copywriter wrote family/child-friendly text for 20 'Fossil Favourites'.
- An illustrator created artist's impressions to show how some of the fossils would have looked as live creatures.

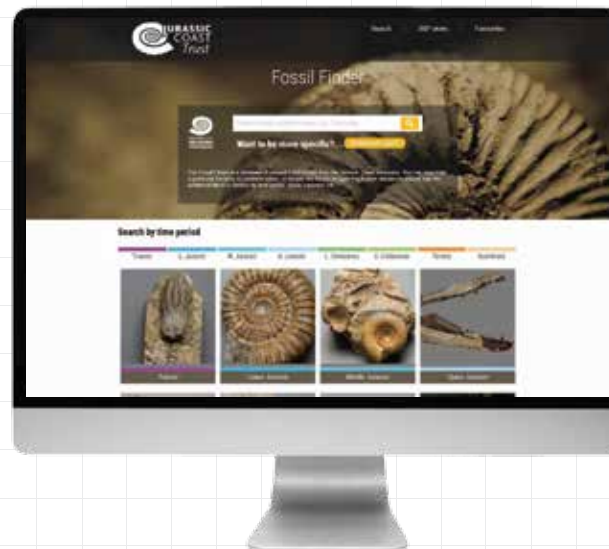


### ★ Results

The database was a successful collaboration between the core project team and the 10 Jurassic Coast museums. The museums' close involvement helped ensure they felt pride in – and ownership of – the database.

The database is an important and unique digital record of the Jurassic Coast fossils, and an invaluable resource for geologists, students, schoolchildren, visitors and local people. The site had 21,000 unique views between April 2017 and March 2018.

[www.jurassiccoast.org/fossilfinder](http://www.jurassiccoast.org/fossilfinder)



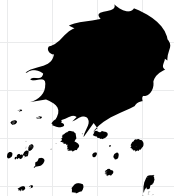
# Visitor centres and exhibitions

## Pros

- They can display artefacts and other three-dimensional materials.
- Can incorporate a range of interpretive media, including panels, audio, film, high and low-tech interactives.
- Can have different elements for different audiences.
- You can provide multi-sensory experiences.
- A year-round, all-weather solution.
- Can become a focus for community involvement.
- Can include retail and catering elements that generate income.

## Cons

- They are a major investment in time and money.
- Need careful planning and professional help.
- Require daylong staffing
- Exhibits need careful monitoring and maintenance (there's nothing more frustrating than broken interactives)
- Not likely to appeal to repeat visitors unless you have changing displays.
- Usually have a lifespan of about 10 years before they need refurbishment and updating.



## Case Study

### Bridport Museum

#### 'a refreshing and uplifting experience'

In May 2017, Bridport Museum reopened after a major redesign and reinterpretation project. The brief for the exhibition panels was to produce a creative, engaging and accessible narrative - aligning with the museum's values of being a friendly but professional organisation. The main audiences were local families, Bridport primary schools, adult learners with a passion for their local heritage, and existing and new volunteers.

Various specialists from the museum wrote first drafts of the text, then they were passed to a copywriter whose role it was to:

- Give a consistent overall tone of voice
- Ensure the content was concise and suitable for the non-specialist audiences
- Add engaging or fun headings to grab people's attention
- Add or emphasize the fascinating facts that would appeal to younger audiences

The designer used photos, archive material and graphics to create appealing displays, and interactive elements for the younger visitors.

## ★ Results

In less than a year, visitor numbers were almost double the museum's annual average.

A review of the newly-designed museum in Museums Journal said it is "A fine addition to the Jurassic Coast's museum scene", and "A delight to visit, with something to offer everyone".

Comments left by visitors include: "Couldn't believe how this museum has transformed. Tactile and child friendly", "This is the way to go for museums. It relates history to community", "What a refreshing and uplifting experience."



# Top Ten Tips

Remember, most people are in 'leisure mode' when they visit museums, attractions or countryside sites. So rather than read everything in depth, they 'graze' and find things that are relevant to them. They are also standing up or being distracted – so it's not the ideal reading environment.

## TIP ONE Keep it short and sweet

- ✎ Layer your messages – use intriguing headlines, straplines, sub-headings and short paragraphs.
- ✎ Keep sentence short – the Plain English Campaign recommends sentences should average between 15-20 words. [www.plainenglish.co.uk](http://www.plainenglish.co.uk)
- ✎ Keep the overall word count down – 250 words for a panel is plenty, ideally broken up into short paragraphs.
- ✎ Use pictures and captions to do some of the talking.

## TIP TWO Keep it simple

- ✎ Use a lively, friendly writing style, with everyday language so the majority of people can understand. This helps visitors for whom English is not a first language.
- ✎ Avoid specialist words, acronyms, jargon or heavy dialect.
- ✎ Remember that parents often have to explain concepts to their children – make it easy for them to do so.
- ✎ Use diagrams to explain more difficult concepts.
- ✎ Orientate maps so they align with the point of view of the person looking at them (north doesn't always have to be the top!).
- ✎ Always test your draft with a non-specialist audience.

## TIP THREE Start at the end

- ✎ Bear in mind that visitors might not read right to the end of your panel or leaflet, so don't write chronologically. Get your main message in the first paragraphs.
- ✎ For example, don't start with when someone was born and where they grew up – go straight into what they achieved or why they are significant. That way people will get the main message, even if they don't read on.

## TIP FOUR Relate to people/engage the emotions

- ✎ Visitors will remember things that are personally relevant, or those which relate to human emotions such as love, death, loss, fear, joy, etc.
- ✎ Try to tell the 'people' stories. For example, don't just talk about the technology in a factory, but how it changed people's lives. Don't just talk about the age of an object, but who used it and what for.
- ✎ Bring your exhibits alive with snippets of real people's stories – quotes and audio clips.
- ✎ Try to present measurements by using comparisons people can relate to. For example, for size and weight, try double-decker buses, football pitches, elephants, or well-known relevant landmarks.



Find out more about linking geology and people in the Story Book:

- Geoheritage narratives and interpretation principles (page 13)
- Narrative concepts (pages 20-23)
- Theme Six – the Land and its People (page 36).

## Case Study

### Bridport Museum Geologists' aural histories

During the major redesign and refit at Bridport Museum, the Jurassic Coast Trust worked closely with museum staff to plan and create the new geology and fossil displays. One of the overall priorities for the museum was to connect local social history with the unique geological heritage of Bridport and the Jurassic Coast. The team explored the story of 'How rocks made Bridport', with a focus on the strata known as the Inferior Oolite (a slab of which is on display).

Then, drawing on Theme Six (The Land and its People) and the Interpretive Principle of 'Intimacy' from the Jurassic Coast Story Book, they planned an audio station.

- An aural historian was commissioned to interview two geologists with connections to the area and knowledge of the local geology.
- The focus of the interview was to draw out their emotional attitudes towards rocks and how their interest in geology had shaped their lives.

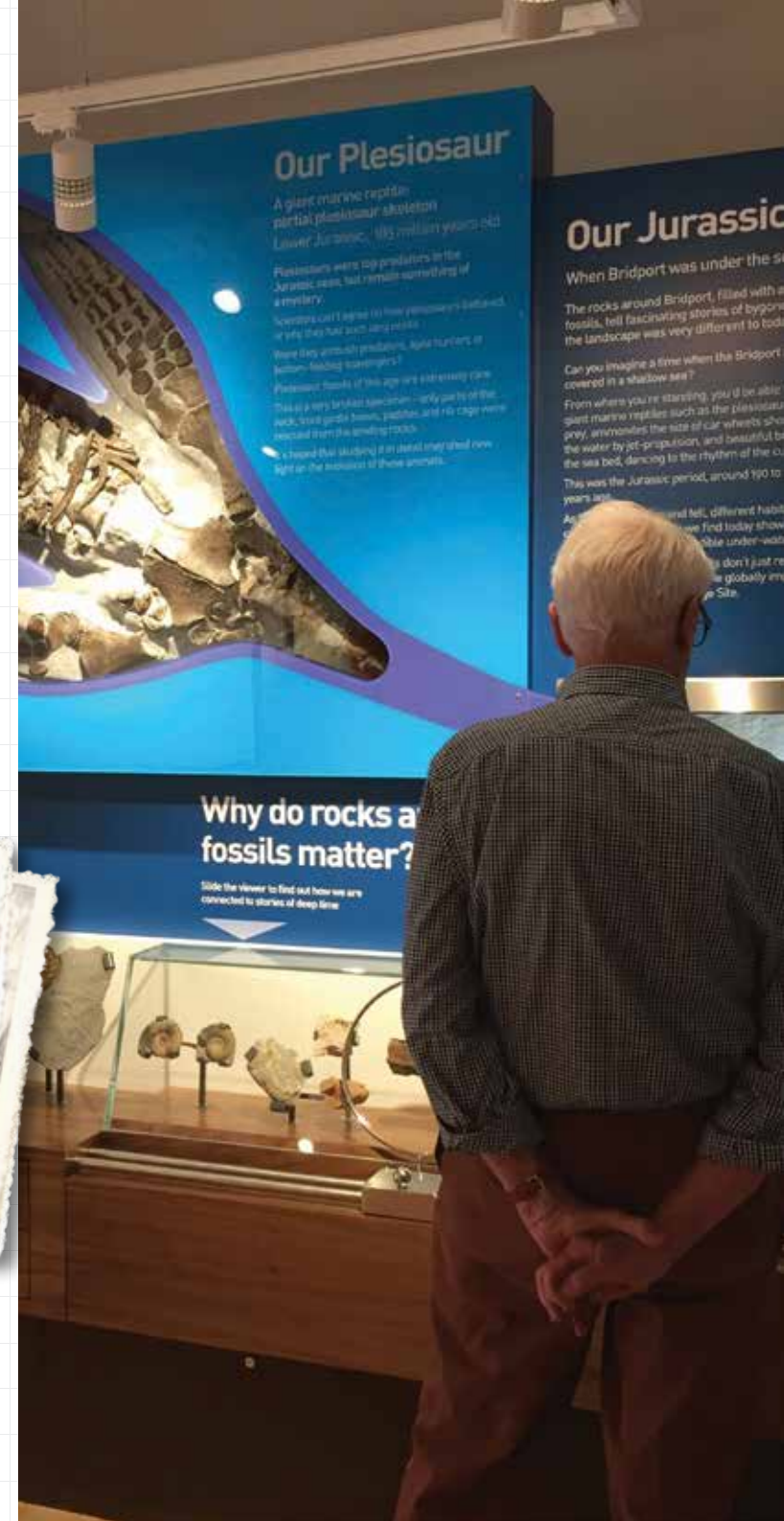
The interviews were then edited into short audio tracks, each just two to three minutes long. The heading and introduction for the audio installation reads:

#### ***“Why Stone Rocks our World***

*Do you think rocks are boring? Well these people don't. Listen, and find out how stone can be a source of passion, fascination, frustration and even obsession.”*

### ★ Results

The interviews provided a rich source of information and inspiration, as well as themselves becoming a valuable addition to the collections of Bridport Museum. The audio tracks offer a rare insight into the lives of geologists and help visitors to understand why, on a human and personal level, rocks can be inspiring, moving and important.





## TIP FIVE

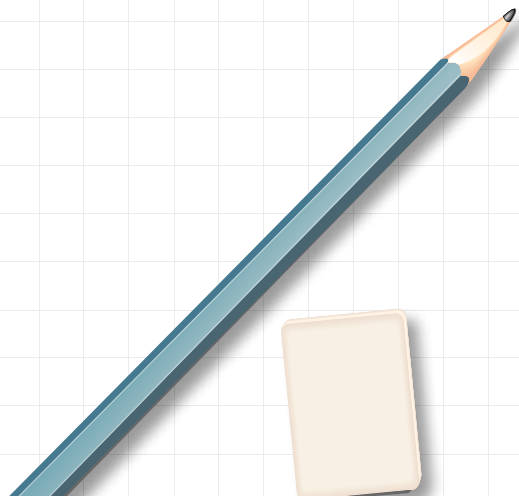
### Get them talking

- ✎ Visitors will remember things they talked about.
  - ✎ Encourage group interaction – ask questions, encourage them to share their experiences or give their opinions. Don't just give answers.
  - ✎ Use the 'wow' facts – the biggest, oldest, fastest, deadliest, most scary, etc.
- 

## TIP SIX

### Make it accessible to all

- ✎ Identify physical barriers to your interpretation, such as access routes and the height of panels with relation to wheelchairs.
- ✎ Think about readability, for example, the size of your text and the use of colours and contrasts. Be wary of having text over graphics.
- ✎ Seek advice from local disability groups or access groups.
- ✎ Check out the Heritage Lottery Fund's 'Making your project accessible for disabled people'.  
[www.hlf.org.uk/making-your-project-accessible-disabled-people](http://www.hlf.org.uk/making-your-project-accessible-disabled-people)



## TIP SEVEN

### Add the fun factor

- ✎ Make your family interpretation look like it will be fun right from the start. That way it will appeal to kids straight away.
  - ✎ Don't be tempted to link everything to the curriculum – you can still have a learning objective but make it subtle.
  - ✎ Keep your tone light and conversational, with lots of humour.
  - ✎ Don't introduce pointless activities, like counting things for no purpose other than to occupy the children. Any activities should link to an interpretation message.
- 

## TIP EIGHT

### Provide clear briefs

When contracting designers or specialist suppliers, set out a clear and detailed brief in writing.

This might include:

- ✎ The themes or messages you want to convey.
- ✎ The audiences you want to reach.
- ✎ Any house-style or colour palette they need to follow.
- ✎ Exactly what you are expecting them to do, and what you will supply. For example, are they expected to write the text, create maps or illustrations, source photos, project-manage the production side, install the interpretation?
- ✎ The budget and how payment will be phased.

## TIP NINE

### Be clear about copyright

- ✎ If you commission a photographer, illustrator or writer, copyright for their work will remain with them unless otherwise negotiated (even if you've paid them for the work).
- ✎ If you've sourced material from an archive, you might still have to pay a reproduction fee, even if it's out of copyright.
- ✎ Just because an image is publicly available on the internet doesn't mean you can use it without permission.
- ✎ You can't reproduce, or work from, Ordnance Survey maps without permission – find out more on [www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk](http://www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk)

You can find lots of useful information on [www.copyrightservice.co.uk/copyright](http://www.copyrightservice.co.uk/copyright)

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## TIP TEN

### Evaluation – is your interpretation working?

When you've completed your interpretation project, you need to evaluate it so you can measure your achievements, identify areas for improvements, and inform future projects. Ideally, you should evaluate at three key stages:

- ✎ Before – to gauge who your visitors are and what they need or want.
- ✎ During – once you are at draft stages, test what you have produced on a sample audience.
- ✎ After – to see if it's worked and achieved your objectives.

# Ways to evaluate

There are several ways to evaluate the effectiveness of your interpretation. Ideally, as part of your planning process, you should gather baseline data before the interpretation is introduced. This will enable you to compare what has changed as a result of your activity.

You can find out lots more about evaluation on the HLF website: [www.hlf.org.uk/running-your-project/evaluating-your-project](http://www.hlf.org.uk/running-your-project/evaluating-your-project)



## Observation

You can learn a lot by observing and counting visitors. Some of the things you can record are:

- What your visitors read, watch or listen to
- Who the interpretation appeals to
- How long they stay
- Whether it generates conversations
- Whether children are participating and engaged

## Visitor surveys

These can be for self-completion or conducted by an interviewer. The latter gives more reliable results with less scope for unanswered questions. Self-complete surveys can be conducted on site, via your website or via social media. It might be worth offering incentives to encourage people to fill it in.

## Focus groups

These are informal, interactive discussions led by a trained moderator. They are good for exploring opinions, perceptions and attitudes, ideally before you embark on your interpretation, then after it's completed. You can also use the groups to test draft interpretation. The group's participants should reflect your target audience.

## Satisfaction surveys

These are good for gathering feedback at the end of an event but keep them brief. Encourage people to fill them in there and then, and ask simple questions such as:

- What did you enjoy?
- What did you learn?
- What can we do to improve the experience?

## Informal feedback

This includes any feedback given informally, such as remarks made to staff or volunteers, or comments on social media. Devise a method so your team can easily record these comments, and make sure the information is then collated and reviewed regularly.



## Case Study

### Jurassic Coast Ambassadors Field training session

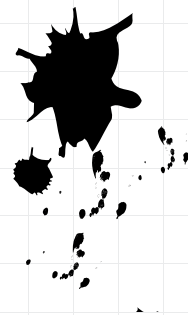
Jurassic Coast Ambassadors, a group of skilled volunteers working with the Jurassic Coast Trust, are provided with training sessions each year. A fieldtrip in 2017 consisted of a visit to Portland Harbour shore, Chesil Beach and the two Pleistocene-aged raised beaches at Portland Bill. The aim was to encourage the ambassadors to consider the management of the WHS and Jurassic Coast heritage stories in relation to Theme Four of the Story Book (The Power of Nature).

- Before the field trip, all relevant information about the sites was audited.
- The details which helped illustrate the theme were selected, and organised into a coherent narrative.
- The geoheritage interpretive principles within the Story Book helped draw out points of emotional connection and relevance.
- The content for the fieldtrip was then structured so that the overarching narrative could be developed as the group explored the three sites.

By using free discussion and open-ended questions, the ambassadors were encouraged to come to their own conclusions and reflect on what they had seen and heard.

### ★ Results

A few weeks after the trip, a brief evaluation exercise was undertaken to establish if the themes for the day had been effectively communicated. Feedback from the participating ambassadors was positive, and all who attended agreed that the overarching narrative came through strongly and that the content was both thought-provoking and relevant.



# Jurassic Coast interpretation

## Guidance for outdoor signs

### Signage clutter

- Install as few signs as possible.
- Review any other interpretation on-site or nearby and avoid repetition.
- When creating new outdoor panels, consider removing old or redundant signs (with owners' permission).

### Safety

- Use high quality photographs to illustrate the dangers being highlighted in any warning signs or information.
- Avoid positioning panels or signs in hazardous locations.
- Avoid content that might encourage people to explore unsafe areas, such as the base of the cliff or fresh rock falls.

### Fossils and fossil collecting

- Don't use fossil stories for the sake of it – fossils can be popular, but are they central to the aims of your interpretation?
- In general, responsible fossil collecting is allowed on the Jurassic Coast. But before you promote fossils at your particular site, consider whether it's safe or responsible for people to collect them *there*.
- Promote local museums or visitor centres as places where people can see real, local fossils.

## Case Study

### Charmouth visitor welcome hub

New signage on the eastern side of the river at Charmouth intentionally leaves out interpretation, and focusses on essential or useful information.

The project aimed to rationalise the signage and improve the visitor welcome. The location is one of the main routes onto the beach, used by thousands of people each year. Research indicated that these visitors weren't likely to engage with anything but useful information. It was also felt that the nearby Charmouth Heritage Coast Centre already provided in-depth interpretation of the area.

The work was carried out by a partnership of the parish council, Heritage Coast Centre and Jurassic Coast team.

They devised a signage hub which included a small landscaped area with seating, and a large information panel. The information includes:

- Fossil hunting safety advice with drawings and photographs to help illustrate the hazards (this was crucial).
- Current tide timetables with guidance on how to read them.
- An orientation map indicating the heritage centre, life buoys, toilets, etc.
- Dog access information, particularly times of year when dogs are allowed on beaches at Charmouth.

Beyond this hub, the clutter of signage was removed, apart from a single warning sign to reinforce the safety advice.

### ★ Results

Essential information is collected into one place and presented in a simple, clear and accessible style. Visitor flow is improved, and the important warning messages are more prominent due to the removal of other distracting signage.



The blank spaces in the design are for frames that hold monthly tide time-tables and up-to-date dog access information.

# Branding

Your external interpretation will have its own design style and branding. To help tie relevant outdoor panels into the wider World Heritage Site, we suggest the following small strapline is included alongside the logo for the Jurassic Coast.

The location (in this case it says Dorset) can be changed to match the location of the panel. The format and relative position of the strapline and logo can be adapted to fit the panel's design style.

**Dorset is world famous for its remarkable rocks, fossils and landforms. Find out more about our unique Earth heritage at: [jurassiccoast.org](http://jurassiccoast.org)**



The logo above is the brand for the Jurassic Coast itself – it doesn't represent an organisation. Design files of this logo are available from the Jurassic Coast Trust.

The Jurassic Coast Trust has a distinct brand and logo of its own. We would normally only expect our logo to be included in interpretation if we provided funding or support for the project.

## Case Study

### Beer Heritage Centre and Self Shelter panel

The Beer Fine Foundation Centre is a hub for interpretation activity, allowing local people to engage visitors to Beer in the natural and cultural heritage of the village. As an extension to this facility, a large interpretation display was installed in the Self-Shelter, just above the beach.

The content details the intimate relationship between geology and local history, linking to Theme Six in the Jurassic Coast Story Book (The Land and its People). The panel was produced in close partnership between Jurassic Coast Trust staff and volunteers from the village.



### ★ Results

Local involvement in this project created a strong sense of ownership and pride over local geological heritage and the Jurassic Coast at large.

*“The Self-Shelter continues to have the WOW factor for local people and visitors alike. One local lady told me today that she has sent photos of it to friends all over the world. Everyone seems to be very proud of it.”*

Norah Jagers, Beer Village Heritage volunteer and Jurassic Coast Ambassador

*Don't use fossil stories for the sake of it – fossils can be popular, but are they central to the aims of your interpretation?*

# Find out more

## About the Jurassic Coast

### Printed publications

*The Official Guide to the Jurassic Coast*  
Prof. Denys Brunsden (editor), Coastal Publishing, 2015

*Fossils of the Jurassic Coast Trust*  
Sam Scriven, Jurassic Coast Trust, 2016

*Geology of the Jurassic Coast: The Red Coast Revealed, Exmouth to Lyme Regis*  
Richard A Edwards, Coastal Publishing, 2013

*Geology of the Jurassic Coast: The Isle of Purbeck, Weymouth to Studland.* Paul Ensom and Malcolm Turnbull, Coastal Publishing, 2011

*Wildlife of the Jurassic Coast*  
Bryan Edwards, Coastal Publishing, 2008

*Exploring the Undercliffs*  
Donald Campbell, Coastal Publishing, 2006

*Geology of the Dorset Coast, Geologists' Association Guide No.22.* John C.W. Cope, The Geologist's Association, 2012

*Geology of the South Devon Coast, Geologists' Association Guide No.73*  
John C.W. Cope, The Geologists' Association, 2017

*Stone Exposures, A Cultural Geology of the Jurassic Coast World Heritage Site*  
Rose Ferraby, unpublished PhD, Exeter University

### Online publications

*Nomination Document for the Dorset and East Devon Coast World Heritage Site:*  
[www.jurassiccoast.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/Dorset-East-Devon-Coast-Nomination.pdf](http://www.jurassiccoast.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/Dorset-East-Devon-Coast-Nomination.pdf)

*Dorset and East Devon Coast World Heritage Site Management Plan 2014 – 2019*  
[www.jurassiccoast.org/documents](http://www.jurassiccoast.org/documents)

*Creative Coast – A case study in how the arts can support management of a natural World Heritage Site*  
[www.jurassiccoast.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/Creative-Coast-A-Case-Study.pdf](http://www.jurassiccoast.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/Creative-Coast-A-Case-Study.pdf)

*Culturally Natural or Naturally Cultural? – Exploring the relationship between nature and culture through World Heritage.*  
IUCN publication: <https://iucnuk.files.wordpress.com/2017/05/naturally-cultural-web.pdf>

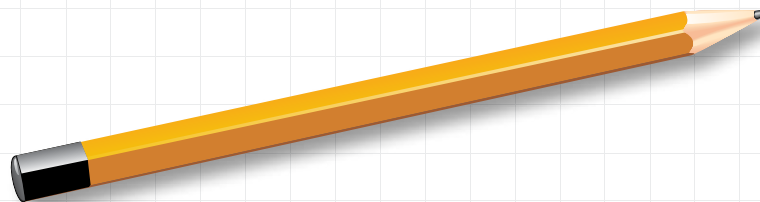
### Websites

[www.jurassiccoast.org](http://www.jurassiccoast.org)  
*The official website for the Jurassic Coast World Heritage Site and the Jurassic Coast Trust*

[www.soton.ac.uk/~imw](http://www.soton.ac.uk/~imw)  
*Geology of the Wessex Coast, including the UNESCO World Heritage Jurassic Coast and the Isle of Wight.*  
Ian West

<http://whc.unesco.org/en/about/>  
*About World Heritage*

<http://whc.unesco.org/en/convention/>  
*The World Heritage Convention*



## About interpretation

### Printed publications

*Interpretation: Making a Difference on Purpose*  
Sam Ham, Fulcrum Publishing, 2016

*Interpreting our heritage*  
Freeman Tilden, University of North Carolina Press, 1957

*Interpretive master planning*  
John Veverka, Falcon Press, 1994

*Exhibit Labels, An Interpretive Approach*  
Beverley Serrell, Altamira Press, 1996

### Online publications

*Heritage Lottery Fund*  
[www.hlf.org.uk/interpretation-guidance](http://www.hlf.org.uk/interpretation-guidance)  
[www.hlf.org.uk/running-your-project/evaluating-your-project](http://www.hlf.org.uk/running-your-project/evaluating-your-project)

*A Sense of Place, James Carter*  
[www.jamescarter.cc/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/A\\_Sense\\_of\\_Place\\_James\\_Carter.pdf](http://www.jamescarter.cc/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/A_Sense_of_Place_James_Carter.pdf)

### Organisations

*The Association for Heritage Interpretation*  
[www.ahi.org.uk](http://www.ahi.org.uk)

*Museums Association*  
[www.museumsassociation.org](http://www.museumsassociation.org)

*Interpret Scotland*  
[www.interpretscotland.org.uk](http://www.interpretscotland.org.uk)

*Visitor Studies Association*  
<http://museum.cl.msu.edu/vsa/>

*The Audience Agency*  
[www.theaudienceagency.org](http://www.theaudienceagency.org)



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The Jurassic Coast Trust is the independent charity responsible for managing the Jurassic Coast World Heritage Site (registered charity number 1101134).

**Our vision is that everyone loves, understands and values the Jurassic Coast.**

Our mission is to enable everyone to have the best possible experience of the Jurassic Coast, whether they want to learn, enjoy, work or study.

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