

At Home Collections

Create your own museum collection at home!

Summary:

The Field Museum is always adding to its collection of about 40 million items. Each item is organized and labeled, and each has a story. Explore your home and create your own collection that is meaningful to you.

Guiding Questions:

What items that you chose are similar?

Why are these items important to you?

How can you organize your items?

Experience Goals:

- Explore different items throughout the home and learn how to organize them.
- Think about why items are important to you.
- Use Field Museum labels to add data to your items.

Supplies:

- Field Museum labels (page 6)
- Collection at the Field Museum fact sheet (page 4)
- Scissors
- Pen or marker
- Items in your collection!
- Computer

Steps:

1. Explore the Field Museum's Collection
 - a. Learn about the Field Museum's Collection at <https://www.fieldmuseum.org/discover/on-exhibit/specimens/>
 - b. Read the Collection Fact Sheet on page 4 and explore our reptile and amphibian collection.
 - c. Think about how the Museum organizes their collection. Why are certain specimens together? Would you do it differently?

2. Build Your Collection
 - a. Do you have a collection? Gather it in one spot. What is similar about these items? How are they connected?
 - b. Don't have a collection yet? Gather items that are important to you. Think about how they are similar or different. Try to organize them into categories.

3. Label Your Collection
 - a. Print out as many Field Museum labels as you have items.
 - b. Fill out a label for each item. It is OK if you can't fill out all the sections! Do the best you can.
 - c. Take a picture and send it to us!
sciencehub@fieldmuseum.org.

Variations:

Don't have a printer? Create your own label! We have included an example. You can copy the same types of information onto notecards, post-its, or whatever you have available.

Extensions:

- **Build your own Museum!**

Organize your Museum into different areas.

What categories do you have?

Display your collection. How will you organize it? Are there multiple areas?

Give a tour! Tour your family through your collection, explaining how different items are interesting or important to you.

- **Share virtually with friends and family that are not nearby!** Make a video or do a live tour with FaceTime or another video chat platform.

Field Museum Label

FIELD MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY	
Common name	
Location	Date
Collection ID number	
Collector	

Collections at the Field Museum

A collection is a group of items, often brought together for a purpose, that teach us more when they are together.

Scientists and researchers use the Field Museum collection of about 40 million specimens and artifacts to answer questions about life on Earth.



Photos by Anna Villanyi

In the museum much of our collection is arranged in many rows of many shelves with many specimens. Our reptile and amphibian collection pictured here has around 300,000 specimens.

What is a specimen?

A specimen is an item in a collection and something a scientist can study. This is a specimen of a green frog that is no longer alive. It is in alcohol to keep it from decaying. This is one type of specimen in the reptile and amphibian collection.



Marcy Krause

FIELD MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY

Common name

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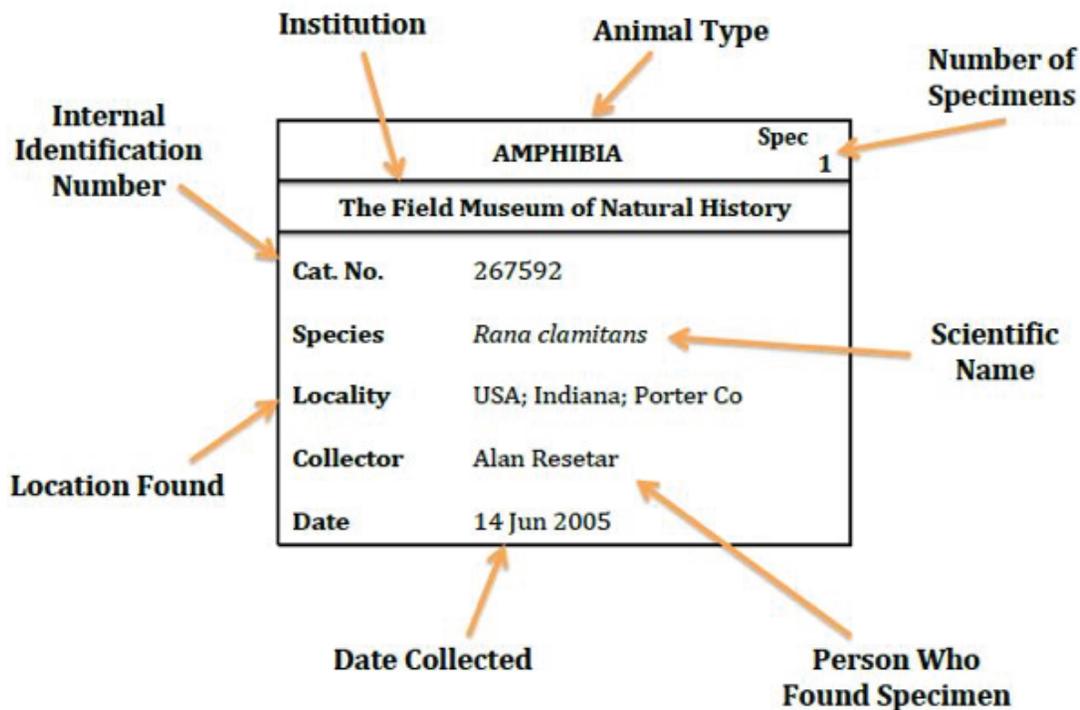
Collection ID number

Collector

What information do we collect?

Specimens need information, or data, collected with them; otherwise, the items are not useful for research.

Scientists must know: **what** the specimen is, **where** the specimen was collected, **when** the specimen was collected, and **who** collected the specimen.



More data are often collected with the specimen, such as DNA, habitat type, and weather.

How is the Field Museum's collection organized?

The collection is grouped by taxonomy, which is how plants and animals are organized on the tree of life. The zoology collection is separated into plants, birds, mammals, insects, reptiles/amphibians, invertebrates, and fish. The Museum also has a Geology collection with minerals, meteorites, and fossils. There is also an Anthropology collection full of artifacts from cultures around the world.