

PLEASE DON'T
TOUCH THE
ARTWORKS

ENGLISH

BABBLE

AFTER BABEL, this summer's exhibition at Moderna Museet, is about language. The title is from the old story about the Tower of Babel. That tale is about how people long ago tried to build a tower that would reach the sky. According to the Bible, God didn't want that, so God made sure everybody started speaking different languages. When they couldn't understand each other this caused misunderstandings and fighting, and the tower was never completed.

Let's pretend that all the world's languages are about to disappear. Your task is to save as many languages as you can. It's simple, you save the languages by using them!

Start by choosing one person to lead your team (teams can be 2-8 people). You can take turns being the team leader. Are you ready?

MODERNA MUSEET

ABOUT THE EXHIBITION *AFTER BABEL*, 13 June–30 August.
After Babel presents artists who build bridges between languages and continents. Artists: Georges Adéagbo, Etel Adnan, Kader Attia, Yael Bartana, Paul Chan, Simon Denny, Rivane Neuenschwander, Michelangelo Pistoletto and Haegue Yang.

1

Save the team leader's native language!

Team leader: Take your team to the work of art that first caught your attention! Describe the work to the others in the language you speak at home. It doesn't matter if the others can't understand. The main thing is that they listen to what it sounds like.

2

See if you can find a painting that is not too big and not too small!

Look at the painting quietly for a while. Just stand in front of the painting and study it a little longer than you would usually do.

In English, you can say "painting" or "picture". Do you know the word for "painting" in any other language? This is how it is written in six different languages: Can you guess what the languages are?

Answers: Japanese, Dutch, Spanish, Polish, Finnish, Icelandic

絵画
SCHILDERIJ
MAALAU
PINTURA
OBRAZ
MÁLVERK

3

Find a work with at least one animal in it!

Study the work for a while. What do you think the animal or animals in the work would say if it/they could speak? What language do pigs and other animals speak? In Sweden, pigs say *nöff*, in England they say *oink*, and in Japan they say *buu buu*.

4

Find a sculpture and notice what shape it is!

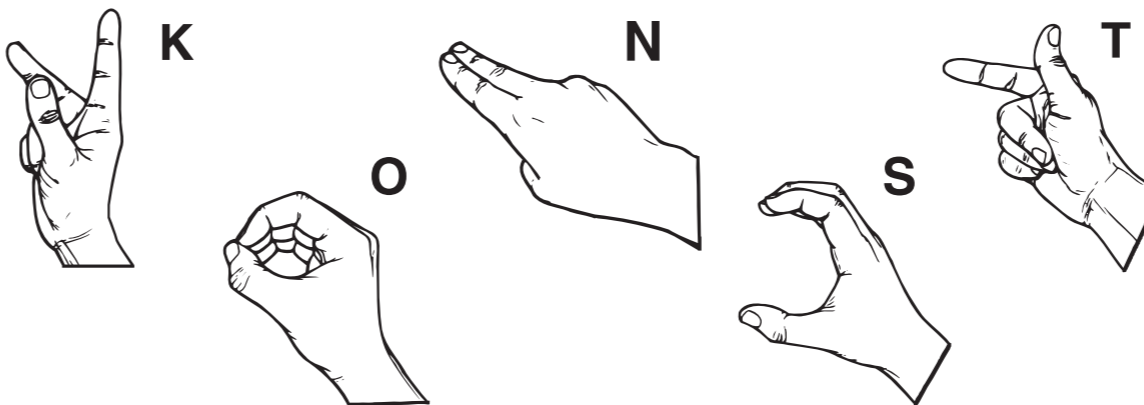
Try saying something about the sculpture in Double Dutch! This is how it works: Repeat each consonant in the word with an o in between. (Consonants are the letters you can't sing, and vowels are the ones you can sing. Try it! A, for example, is a vowel, P is a consonant.)

In Double Dutch, the word ART becomes A-ROR-TOT. The word HELLO becomes HOH-E-LOL-O. Team leader: make sure everybody takes turns so that they don't all talk at the same time. Otherwise it will just be one big muddle!

5

Try shaping the word KONST (that's ART in Swedish) with sign language!

There are different sign alphabets and this is the Swedish one:



6

Find a work with a lot of red in it!

Imagine that you're talking to someone who can't see. How would you describe the colour red? How would you describe the painting?

7

Listen carefully as you pass through the different rooms.

Perhaps a few of the visitors are speaking in languages you don't understand? If you see a baby who is awake, you might get to hear what baby talk sounds like.

8

Go up to the tower!

This tower was designed by Simon Denny, an artist from New Zealand, and Alessandro Bava, an architect from Italy. The tower is a sort of sculpture where you can read a poem, for example.

Make up your own poem! You can make one that rhymes, like "tower-power-flower". Or a poem with words that all begin with the same letter: "language-lullabye-lollipop".

Well done! Now you've helped to save the world's languages! Go to the front desk to pick up a small reward for your work!

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