

NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM THE FILMS

Battle of the Smithsonian is the second *Night at the Museum* film. The first film was about the Museum of Natural History in New York. But where did the idea for the films come from? And why are they so popular?

A big hit

The first film, *Night at the Museum*, came out in 2006 and was a big hit. A lot of people liked the film because it was a clever idea and very funny. The special effects were fantastic. But it wasn't just funny. It taught people a lot about the past, too. After the film, 20% more people visited the Museum of Natural History.



A clever idea

The idea first appeared in a picture story book in 1993. A Croatian writer, Milan Trenc, wrote it after a visit to the Museum of Natural History. Film maker Chris Columbus bought the book for his children and then decided to make the film.



DID YOU KNOW?



- Some of the exhibits in the films are special effects. It was difficult for Ben Stiller to act with something that wasn't there! So the director, Shawn Levy, played these exhibits for him – including the T-Rex!
- For the second film, Ben Stiller gave the writers just one instruction: 'It has to be even funnier than the first film!'

★ ★ THE STARS ★ ★

There are a lot of famous actors in both films. Some of the famous actors only have small parts! The stars of *Night at the Museum: Battle of the Smithsonian* are Ben Stiller and Amy Adams ...



Ben Stiller

Plays: Larry Daley in both films.

Born: 30th November, 1965 in New York

Early years: His parents are actors and Ben grew up in Hollywood.

Other films: Ben is one of the most popular comedy actors in the USA. He has starred in hit films such as *Starsky and Hutch* and *Dodgeball*. He is also the voice of Alex, the lion, in the *Madagascar* films.

Ben on Amy: 'She's very funny and very real, and she has great teeth!'



Amy Adams

Plays: Amelia Earhart

Born: 20th August, 1974 in Italy.

Early years: Amy lived with her family in Colorado in the USA. She has four brothers and two sisters. When she was growing up, she wanted to be a dancer.

Other films: *Junebug* (2005), *Enchanted* (2007), *Sunshine Cleaning* (2009)

Amy on Ben: 'Our characters have a lot of fun together.'

Imagine you are the director of the next *Night in the Museum* film. Which museum would you like the film to be in? Why? What stars would you like in the film?

What do these words mean? You can use a dictionary.
special effects act / actor
director grow up (past grew up)
comedy character

THE SMITHSONIAN

The Smithsonian Museum is in Washington in the USA. It's one of the most famous museums in the world. But who started the museum? And what can you see there?

In the beginning

The man who started the Smithsonian wasn't American. James Smithson was English. When he died in 1829, he gave his money to the USA. He wanted them to build a museum. Nobody knows why Smithson did this, but it was the start of the largest museum in the world!



The National Air and Space Museum

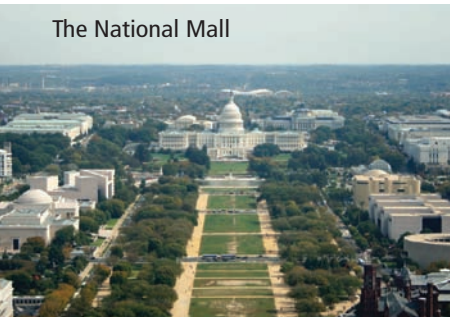


For a lot of people, the most fantastic part of the Smithsonian is the Air and Space Museum. Here you can see planes and spaceships, and learn about man in space. You can even see what the first man on the moon was wearing.

You can also see the bodies of two spiders – Arabella and Anita. They were the first spiders in space!

In 2008, there were over 25 million visitors to the Smithsonian. And around 172 million people visited the website!

The National Mall



The Smithsonian today

Today the Smithsonian is not just one museum. There are 19 museums! Many of them are in the National Mall – a large park. These include the National Air and Space Museum and the National Gallery of Art. The National Zoo is also part of the Smithsonian group of museums. But this is in a different part of Washington.

Something for everyone

There are over 136 million things in the Smithsonian! You certainly can't see them all in a day ... or a week! Here are some more popular exhibits.

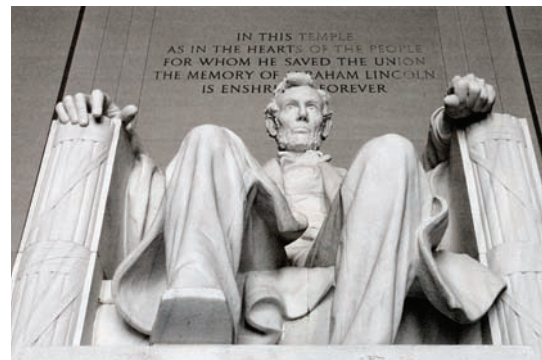


The Hope diamond

The Hope Diamond is the biggest deep blue diamond in the world. A lot of people have owned it. In 1958, the last owner of the diamond sent it to the museum in the post! Many people believe that there is a curse on the Hope Diamond – and anyone who touches it will die!

The Butterfly Pavilion

Visitors to the Smithsonian Museum of Natural History can see real butterflies in the Butterfly Pavilion. There are more than 400 butterflies from all over the world. The Pavilion has to be very warm – it's 80°F all year!



The Abraham Lincoln statue

In *Night at the Museum: Battle of the Smithsonian* the statue of Abraham Lincoln comes to life. The statue by Daniel Chester French is nearly 6 metres high and stands at the west end of the National Mall.

You can only see some of the exhibits from the Smithsonian on the museum website. These exhibits include John Lennon's stamp album from when he was a child.

Do you have a favourite museum? Why do you like it? Which museum would you most like to visit?

What do these words mean? You can use a dictionary.
 space moon spider
 diamond butterfly / butterflies
 curse stamp album

WHY ARE THEY FAMOUS?

In *Night at the Museum: Battle of the Smithsonian* some famous people from the past come to life. Do you know why they are famous?



AMELIA EARHART (1897 – 1937?)

- In 1921, the young Amelia Earhart saved all her money and bought her first flying lesson. In 1928, she was the first woman to fly as a passenger over the Atlantic Ocean.
- In 1932, she became the first woman to fly alone across the Atlantic. Amelia was now famous. She wrote two books about flying and women around the world followed her story.
- In 1937, she wanted to be the first woman to fly around the world. Sadly, she disappeared over the Pacific Ocean. Did she die in the sea? Or did she land somewhere? Nobody knows.



AL CAPONE (1899 – 1947)

- Al Capone was a violent gangster during the Prohibition in 1920s America. During the Prohibition, alcohol wasn't allowed in the USA.
- In Chicago, he and his men ran bars and clubs. He soon became the head of Chicago's Mafia.
- Capone was popular with the people of Chicago because he gave clothes and food to the poor. However, this changed in 1929. Al Capone's men killed seven people in one of the worst gang killings ever in the USA.
- In 1932, Capone went to prison for ten years. He was ill when he came out and died in 1947.



IVAN THE TERRIBLE (1530 – 1584)

- Ivan the Terrible was leader of Russia from 1544 until he died in 1584. During his rule, he made many changes in Russia and it became a very strong country.
- In his later years, Ivan was a violent leader and the Russian people were very frightened of him.
- In 1581, he got very angry with his son and hit him very hard. His son later died.

NAPOLEON BONAPARTE (1769 – 1821)

- Napoleon was a great leader. Under Napoleon, France became a very strong country and ruled most of Western Europe.
- Napoleon also invaded Russia, but the Russian winter was too hard for his men. There are many books about this, including *War and Peace* by Tolstoy.
- Napoleon's rule ended in 1814. He went to prison on the island of St. Helena in the South Atlantic Ocean. He died there in 1821.
- People say Napoleon was a very short man. In fact, he was 1.7 metres tall – this was usual for men at that time!



Which famous people from history would you like to meet? Why?

What do these words mean? You can use your dictionary.
 violent gang / gangster killing
 prison rule invade island