

## ***Sleepover at the Museum*** **Curriculum Guide**

Written by Karen LeFrak and illustrated by David Bucs, *Sleepover at the Museum* tells the story of Mason and his friends as they engage in a birthday scavenger hunt through a natural history museum. If Mason and his friends solve all of the scavenger hunt clues, Mason receives the ultimate birthday present: he gets to choose where in the museum he and his friends will spend the night!

Described as “an imaginative introduction to visiting museums” by Booklist, *Sleepover at the Museum* holds charms for older children, too. Karen LeFrak composed a musical score (orchestrated by Bill Ross) to accompany her story, which premiered in February of 2019 with the Miami Symphony Orchestra. Scheduled to be performed at Festival Napa Valley in July of 2019 and by the New York Philharmonic in March of 2020, this lively score invites listeners to consider and explore the relationship between story and sound, as well as the composition process.

### **About This Curriculum Guide**

Divided into activities for children in lower elementary (pre-k through grade 2) and upper elementary (grades 3 through 5), this curriculum guide has been created for use in many different settings:

- For classrooms or groups of students who have the opportunity to visit a museum in their community
- For classrooms or groups of students who have the opportunity to attend a live orchestral production of *Sleepover at the Museum*
- For classrooms or groups of students who are curious about museums, are inspired to set stories to music, and are learning how music evokes feelings and emotions
- For parents and children who love to read stories together, are visiting museums in their community, and are interested in exploring the relationship between a story and a musical score

# Sleepover at the Museum Read-Aloud

Students participate in a read-aloud of *Sleepover at the Museum*, striving to solve the scavenger hunt clues alongside the characters. Engage students in this activity before the others suggested in this guide.



## MATERIALS

*Sleepover at the Museum*, written by Karen LeFrak and illustrated by David Bucs

(OPTIONAL) Drawing supplies (pencil, crayons, markers, etc) and one sheet of white paper per student



## TIME

20 minutes (longer if students draw a picture as part of the optional after reading activity)

## BEFORE READING

Help students connect with the story by discussing the following questions:

- Have you been to a museum before? Which museums have you visited?
- What interesting things did you see there?

(If students have not been to a museum before, explain that a museum is a building with a collection of objects for visitors to see and learn about. Some museums have objects that are found in nature, like animal skeletons, rocks, and minerals. Some museums have objects that people have created, like paintings and drawings. Then, ask students: What objects would you be interested in seeing if you visited a museum?)

Tell students that you will read a book called *Sleepover at the Museum* together. As you read, you will stop and talk about what the children in the book are learning and seeing at the natural history museum.

## DURING READING

Read *Sleepover at the Museum* aloud to students.

Pause after Mason and his friends receive each clue. Invite students to try to solve the clue before Mason and his friends do. (Do not tell students the answer if they are unsure; the answer will be revealed when you read the next page. After you have read the next page, support students' understanding by pointing to the aspects of the illustrations that connect to the clue.)



You may also wish to pause when you encounter concepts or vocabulary words that are new to students. Ask questions to make these concepts or words come to life for students and to connect them to students' experiences. For example:

- (p. 9) A scavenger hunt is a type of mystery game. A team of people is given clues; they must work together to figure them out. If the team solves all of the clues in the scavenger hunt, they win a prize. Think about what we have read so far. What is Mason's prize if he and his friends solve all of the clues?
- (p. 11) What is an astronaut? (Explain if students are unfamiliar with this term.) Take big steps. Pretend to be an astronaut walking on the moon!
- (p. 13) Zoe says that the Tyrannosaurus rex was a reptile. What is a reptile? (Explain if students are unfamiliar with this term.) Name some animals you know that are reptiles.

*(The book's pages are unnumbered. Count the map of the museum as pages 1 and 2, and count every page thereafter. The story's text begins on page 5.)*

### AFTER READING

Once you've finished the book, invite students to discuss its lessons and connect it to their own lives and interests:

- Ask students: How did Mason and his friends solve the scavenger hunt? (Hint: Who solved the first clue? The second clue? The third clue?) What message might the author be trying to send us about how we should work with our friends?
- Prompt students to think about all of the animals, skeletons, and minerals that Mason and his friends saw. If students were Mason, where would they most like to sleep in the museum with their friends? Why?
- If you wish, prompt students to draw a picture of the museum hall that they would choose for a sleepover with their friends. Students can write about their drawing: Where is the student? Who are they with? What are they doing and feeling?



# Setting a Story to Music: You Be the Composer!

In this activity, students “compose” music to accompany the children’s experience in one or more halls of the museum. Then, students compare their musical composition to Karen LeFrak’s, noticing how she uses instruments, volume, and tempo to reflect the setting and characters’ emotions. Students should read *Sleepover at the Museum* prior to engaging in this activity.



## MATERIALS

*Sleepover at the Museum*, written by Karen LeFrak and illustrated by David Bucs

Musical instruments/ noisemakers (These can be real instruments, toy instruments, or everyday objects that make noise: a windchime, a pot and spoon, and so on. If possible, gather instruments/ noisemakers that demonstrate a variety of pitches and sound qualities—loud and brassy, soft and delicate, etc.)

See “Resources” for additional artifacts you might include in this activity



## TIME

Break this activity into two parts:

20 minutes for [What is an Orchestra?](#) and [You Be the Composer!](#)

20-30 minutes for [Listen to Sleepover at the Museum for Orchestra](#)

## WHAT IS AN ORCHESTRA?

Explain that the writer of this book is not only a children’s book author: Karen LeFrak is a composer, too! This means that she creates music for musicians to play. In fact, she decided to write music for an orchestra to play as *Sleepover at the Museum* is read aloud.

As needed, use materials in the “Resources” section to help build students’ understanding of what an orchestra is. (For example, you might show students an image of an orchestra and ask them to name the different instruments they see, or you might have them listen to the sounds some orchestral instruments make.)

## YOU BE THE COMPOSER!

Explain that LeFrak has written music to go along with each room or hall of the museum that Mason and his friends visit. When a composer writes music to go along with a story, movie, or TV show, they must decide what the music should sound like.

Tell students they will now be composers and think about the music *they* would write as Mason and his friends visit different halls of the museum. Choose one or two museum halls to focus on with your students, based on the parts of the story that most interested them and the time you have available for this activity. If you focus on two museum halls, make sure they are distinct in their contents and the mood they evoke in the story, so that students are likely to generate different musical sounds for each.

Strong pairings include:

- Hall of Dinosaurs and Butterfly Pavilion
- Hall of African Mammals and Hall of Ocean Life

For each hall you have chosen:

Re-read the pages of *Sleepover at the Museum* where the children visit this hall. Then, discuss the following questions with students, introducing [key vocabulary words](#) as needed:

What happens when the children visit this room or hall?

- What does this room or hall of the museum look like? Describe the illustrations.
- How do the characters feel about this room of the museum and why?

What kind of music would best tell this part of the story?

- Are there animals in this part of the museum? What sounds do these animals make?
- Should the music make listeners feel calm and peaceful? Happy and excited? Nervous and even a little scared?
- Would the volume of the music be loud or soft for this part of the story? Would the tempo of the music be fast or slow?
- Which of the instruments/ noisemakers might help you make the best music for this part of the story?

Give students time to explore the noisemakers/ instruments (including their own voices!) and create "music" to accompany this room and part of the story.

Invite students to share their music with one another and explain *why* they have made this particular music (the instruments, the tempo, the volume, etc.) to accompany this hall of the museum and part of the story.

## VOCABULARY

**mood:** the feeling an author or composer creates through their words or music (writers create mood through setting and characters composers create mood through instruments, tempo, and volume)

**tempo:** the speed of a piece of music - fast, medium, or slow  
**volume:** the loudness or softness of a piece of music

**volume:** the loudness or softness of a piece of music

### LISTEN TO *SLEEPOVER AT THE MUSEUM FOR ORCHESTRA*

If your students have the opportunity to attend a live performance of *Sleepover at the Museum*, follow up with them after the performance. Reflect on LeFrak's composition for the rooms of the museum that your students *also* "wrote" music for. Discuss:

- What did LeFrak's music for this room/ part of the story sound like?
- What emotions did that music bring about to you as a listener? Did it make you feel calm and peaceful? Happy and excited? Nervous and even a little scared?
- How did LeFrak's music connect to what was happening in the story or what the characters were feeling?
- How was LeFrak's music similar to and different from the music *you* created for this room/ part of the story?

If your students do not have the chance to see a live performance, they can still listen to a recording (see "Resources" for more information)! Play the recording of LeFrak's composition for the rooms of the museum that students also "wrote" music for. Discuss the questions above after students listen to each segment.

# Extension Activities



## Visit a Museum

If your students have the opportunity to visit a museum in your community, connect *Sleepover at the Museum* to their visit:

- Point students to the map of the natural history museum at the beginning of the book. If available, print maps of your local museum for students. Have students mark the halls or sections of the museum they would most like to visit and explain in writing what they hope to see in each.
- If your local museum does not provide a map, have students create one during their visit so that they can record what they are seeing/ learning about in each space.
- During the museum visit, prompt students to notice the similarities between what the children in the story saw and learned and what *they* are seeing and learning.



## Read Additional Books Set in Museums

The characters in these popular picture books also have adventures in museums:

- *Library Mouse: A Museum Adventure* by Daniel Kirk
- *Franklin's Class Trip* by Paulette Bourgeois
- *Miss Malarkey's Field Trip* by Judy Finchler



## Learn About Orchestras and Composers

Continue students' learning by reading about (and listening to!) orchestras, instruments, and composers/ songwriters from long ago and today:

- *Jake the Philharmonic Dog* by Karen LeFrak
- *Zin! Zin! Zin! A Violin* by Lloyd Moss
- *Play, Mozart, Play!* by Peter Sís
- *Because* by Mo Willems
- *Duke Ellington: The Piano Prince and His Orchestra* by Andrea Davis Pinkney

## Setting a Story to Music: You Be the Composer!

In this activity, students read *Sleepover at the Museum* to determine the setting and mood of each museum hall; then, they work together to “compose” music to accompany the children’s experience in one hall. Students perform their compositions for one another and compare their music to Karen LeFrak’s, noticing how she uses instruments, volume, and tempo to reflect the setting and characters’ emotions. (As noted below, break this activity up into multiple parts across multiple days.)



### MATERIALS

*Sleepover at the Museum*, written by Karen LeFrak and illustrated by David Bucs

Musical instruments/ noisemakers (These can be real instruments, toy instruments, or everyday objects that make noise: a windchime, a pot and spoon, etc. If possible, gather instruments/ noisemakers that demonstrate a variety of sound qualities—loud and brassy, soft and delicate, etc.)

See “Resources” for additional artifacts you might include in this activity



### TIME

Break this activity into three or more parts:

- 30-40 minutes for [How Do Composers Write Music?](#) and [Composing, Part 1: Know the Story](#)
- 30-40 minutes for [Composing, Part 2: Set the Story to Music](#)
- 20-30 minutes for [Listen to Sleepover at the Museum for Orchestra](#)

### HOW DO COMPOSERS WRITE MUSIC?

Explain that students will read a story in which a group of children visit a natural history museum. The children participate in a scavenger hunt among the museum’s different rooms or halls. The story’s author, Karen LeFrak, is not just an author: she is also a composer. She has written a musical score for orchestra that accompanies the children’s experience as they explore the different halls of the museum.

As needed, use materials in the “Resources” box to help build students’ understanding of what an orchestra is. (For example, you might show students an image of an orchestra and ask them to name the different instruments they see, or you might let them use a computer to explore the sounds orchestral instruments make.)

Explain how composers work to set a film script or TV show to music: The composer reads the script or watches the video closely in order to tell the story in sound. The composer guides the story with sound by creating music that captures a feeling and connects to the story’s events.

### COMPOSING, PART 1: KNOW THE STORY

Have students read *Sleepover at the Museum*. You might choose to read the story together as a group. Or, you might divide students into small groups of five so that each group can read the story aloud, with each student in a group reading the lines of one character (narrator, Mason, Jesse, Zoe, Will).

Tell students that as they read, they should work together to think about the children’s experience in each hall of the museum. When composers set a story to music, they consider the setting, the characters, the events, and the overall mood or feeling of the scene. Since students will next be composers, they need to notice these things, too!

Students can take notes about each museum hall as they read (see “Resources” section for a printable chart):

- Describe what the hall looks like.
- What experience do the children have here?
- What mood or feeling does this part of the story create for the characters and readers?

After students have finished reading, discuss the following questions together:

- What are some of the different moods that the author communicates by describing the setting of and character emotions in different museum halls? What relationships do you notice between the setting, character emotions, and mood?
- Soon, you'll have a chance to compose music for this story. How might the mood in a particular museum hall affect the music you compose?

### COMPOSING, PART 2: SET THE STORY TO MUSIC

Now that students have carefully read and considered the story, they are going to have the chance to work as composers! Explain that when authors write books, they use their descriptions of the setting and characters to create a feeling or mood for the reader. Composers create a feeling or mood for listeners, too.

To illustrate this idea, you may wish to play two music clips that convey different moods. Choose two songs that students are familiar with or pull these from the musical arrangement of *Sleepover at the Museum* (see "Resources" for a link). If you choose to pull from *Sleepover at the Museum*,

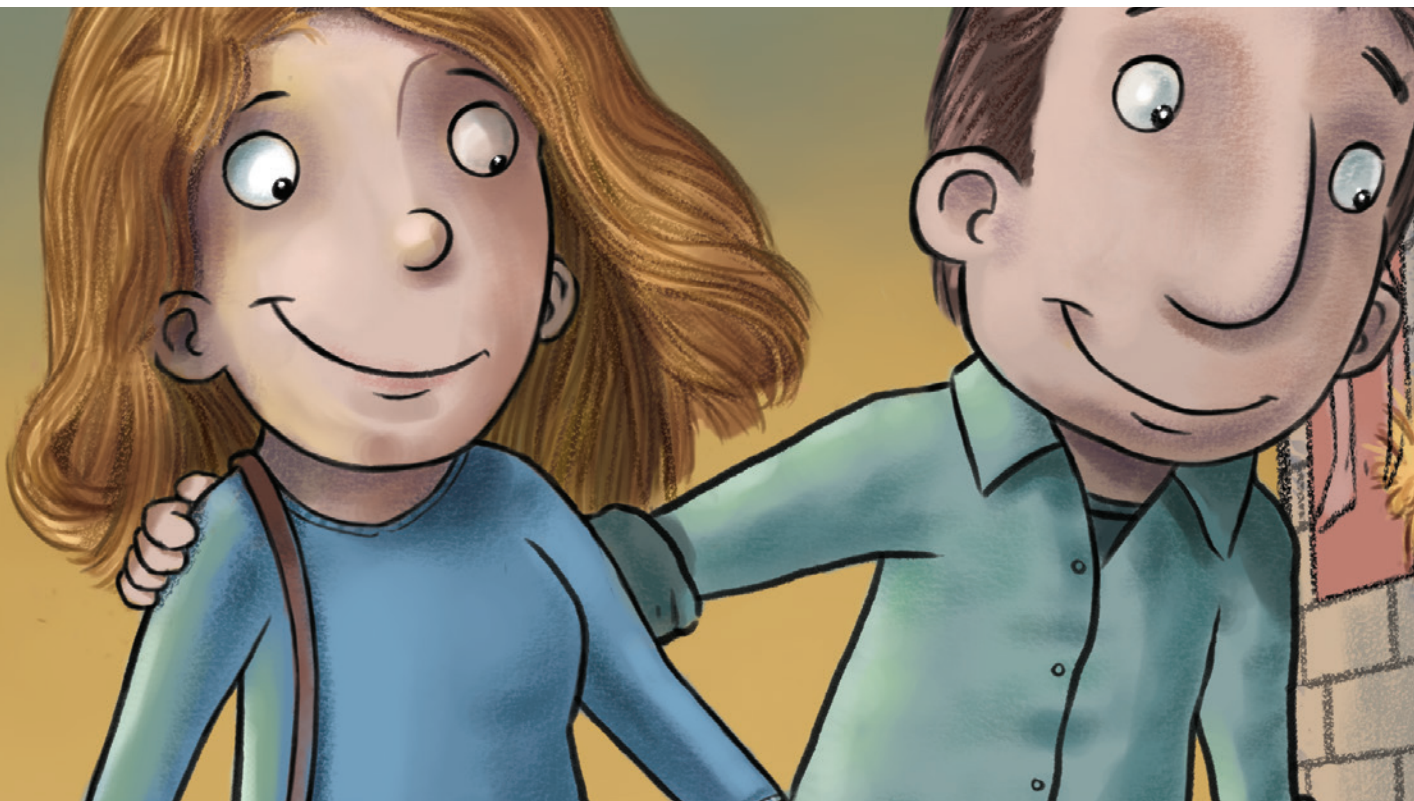
use 2:15-2:45 for the first clip and 11:50-12:20 for the second clip. After playing each clip, ask:

- What feeling or mood does this music stir in you?
- What choices did the composer make to bring about this feeling or mood?

As needed, you may wish to introduce some key musical vocabulary terms to support students' discussion of the above questions. Students will likely notice that the pitch, volume, tempo, and instruments create different experiences for listeners.

Break students into groups of two or three; assign each group one or two museum halls that the children visit during the story. (You can also write the museum hall names on slips of paper and have each group choose one or two slips from a hat. The number of museum halls you assign each group will depend upon the number of students and the time available for this activity.)

Have students use their ideas and notes from Composing, Part 1 and the available instruments/ noisemakers (including their own voices!) to create music to accompany the children's experience in the hall(s). Share these guiding questions with students:





- Are there animals in this part of the museum? What sounds do these animals make, and how can these sounds be reflected in the music?
- Given the children's emotions and experiences in this hall, how should the music make listeners feel? (Calm and peaceful? Happy and excited? Nervous and even a little scared?)
- What volume, tempo, and pitch will best connect to the setting of the hall and the mood within it?
- Which of the instruments/ noisemakers might help you make the best music for this part of the story?

If students have access to computers, they can explore their assigned hall at, for example, the American Museum of Natural History's website to build their understanding of this hall's look and feel (see "Resources" for links).

When students have finished their compositions, invite the groups to perform their musical creations for one another. Students in the audience can guess which museum hall is reflected by their peers' music; the student composers can explain their composition and how their musical choices connect to the setting and mood of this hall.

## VOCABULARY

**mood:** the feeling an author or composer creates through their words or music (writers create mood through setting and characters; composers create mood through instruments, tempo, volume, and pitch)

**tempo:** the speed of a piece of music - fast, medium, or slow

**volume:** the loudness or softness of a piece of music

**pitch:** the "highness" or "lowness" of a sound



# A Listening Journal for *Sleepover at the Museum* for Orchestra

If your students have the opportunity to attend a live performance of *Sleepover at the Museum*, and if the music hall allows, prompt students to journal about and draw their reactions as they listen. (See “Resources” section for a printable listening journal.)

After the performance, reflect on LeFrak’s composition:

- Which sections of *Sleepover at the Museum* for orchestra most stood out to you, and why?
- What emotions did the music create for you as a listener? How did LeFrak use instruments, tempo, and volume to stir these feelings in listeners?
- How did LeFrak’s music connect to what was happening in the story or what the characters were feeling?
- How was LeFrak’s music similar to and different from the music you or your classmates created for this room/ part of the story?
- What questions is this raising for you about composing music or orchestras?

If your students do not have the chance to see a live performance, they can still listen to a recording (see “Resources” for more information)! Discuss the questions above after students listen to all or selected sections of the piece.



# Extension Activities



## VISIT A MUSEUM

If your students have the opportunity to visit a museum in your community, connect *Sleepover at the Museum* to their visit:

- Point students to the map of the natural history museum at the beginning of the book. If available, print maps of your local museum for students. Have students mark the halls or sections of the museum they would most like to visit and explain in writing what they hope to see in each.
- If your local museum does not provide a map, have students create one during their visit so that they can record what they are seeing/ learning about in each space.
- During the museum visit, prompt students to notice the similarities between what the children in the story saw and learned and what *they* are seeing and learning. Students can also write scavenger hunt clues for the different parts of the museum they visit!
- After the museum visit, students can write and illustrate a story that takes place in the museum, share their scavenger hunt clues with one another, or compose music to accompany the exhibits or halls they visited.



## READ ADDITIONAL BOOKS SET IN MUSEUMS

The characters in these popular picture books also have adventures in museums:

- *From the Mixed-Up Files of Mrs. Basil E. Frankweiler* by E.L. Konigsburg
- *The Metropolitans* by Carol Goodman
- *Masterpiece* by Elise Broach
- *Case of the Missing Ankh* (Book 1 in the Kid Caramel series) by Dwayne J. Ferguson
- *2095* (Book 5 in the Time Warp Trio series) by Jon Scieszka



## LEARN ABOUT ORCHESTRAS AND COMPOSERS

Continue students' learning by reading about (and listening to!) orchestras, instruments, and composers/ songwriters from long ago and today:

- *The Story of the Orchestra: Listen While You Learn About the Instruments, the Music and the Composers Who Wrote the Music!* by Robert Levine
- *Lives of the Musicians: Good Times, Bad Times (and What the Neighbors Thought)* by Kathleen Krull
- *Duke Ellington: The Piano Prince and His Orchestra* by Andrea Davis Pinkney
- *When the Beat Was Born: DJ Kool Herc and the Creation of Hip Hop* by Laban Carrick Hill
- *Esquivel! Space-Age Sound Artist* by Susan Wood
- *Ada's Violin: The Story of the Recycled Orchestra of Paraguay* by Susan Hood

# Resources

<p><i>Sleepover at the Museum</i></p>	<p>Visit <a href="https://www.penguinrandomhouse.com">https://www.penguinrandomhouse.com</a>, your favorite bookseller, or your local library to purchase or borrow a copy of <i>Sleepover at the Museum</i>.</p> <p>Visit <a href="http://www.karenlefrakmusic.com/media.php">http://www.karenlefrakmusic.com/media.php</a> to locate a recording of <i>Sleepover at the Museum</i> (linked under symphonic works). In the recording, the text of <i>Sleepover at the Museum</i> is read aloud by a narrator; the orchestra plays music as the children visit each museum hall.</p>
<p>Instruments and Orchestras</p>	<p>Visit <a href="https://festivalnapavalley.org/blackburn-music-academy/">https://festivalnapavalley.org/blackburn-music-academy/</a> for photographs of an orchestra.</p> <p>Visit <a href="https://www.mydso.com/dso-kids/learn-and-listen/">https://www.mydso.com/dso-kids/learn-and-listen/</a> instruments to hear the sounds that different orchestral instruments make.</p>
<p>The American Museum of Natural History</p>	<p>Explore different halls and exhibits at the AMNH:</p> <p><b>Center for Earth and Space</b>  <a href="https://www.amnh.org/exhibitions/permanent/rose-center">https://www.amnh.org/exhibitions/permanent/rose-center</a></p> <p><b>Hall of Saurischian Dinosaurs</b>  <a href="https://www.amnh.org/exhibitions/permanent/saurischian-dinosaurs">https://www.amnh.org/exhibitions/permanent/saurischian-dinosaurs</a></p> <p><b>Hall of African Mammals</b>  <a href="https://www.amnh.org/exhibitions/permanent/african-mammals">https://www.amnh.org/exhibitions/permanent/african-mammals</a></p> <p><b>Hall of Minerals</b>  <a href="https://www.amnh.org/exhibitions/permanent/minerals">https://www.amnh.org/exhibitions/permanent/minerals</a></p> <p><b>Hall of Biodiversity</b>  <a href="https://www.amnh.org/exhibitions/permanent/biodiversity">https://www.amnh.org/exhibitions/permanent/biodiversity</a></p> <p><b>Butterfly Conservatory</b>  <a href="https://www.amnh.org/exhibitions/the-butterfly-conservatory">https://www.amnh.org/exhibitions/the-butterfly-conservatory</a></p> <p><b>Hall of Ocean Life</b>  <a href="https://www.amnh.org/exhibitions/permanent/ocean-life">https://www.amnh.org/exhibitions/permanent/ocean-life</a></p> <p>Find additional learning resources here: <a href="https://www.amnh.org/learn-teach">https://www.amnh.org/learn-teach</a></p>

# Know the Story: Note-Taking Tool for *Sleepover at the Museum*

UPPER ELEMENTARY (GRADES 3-5)

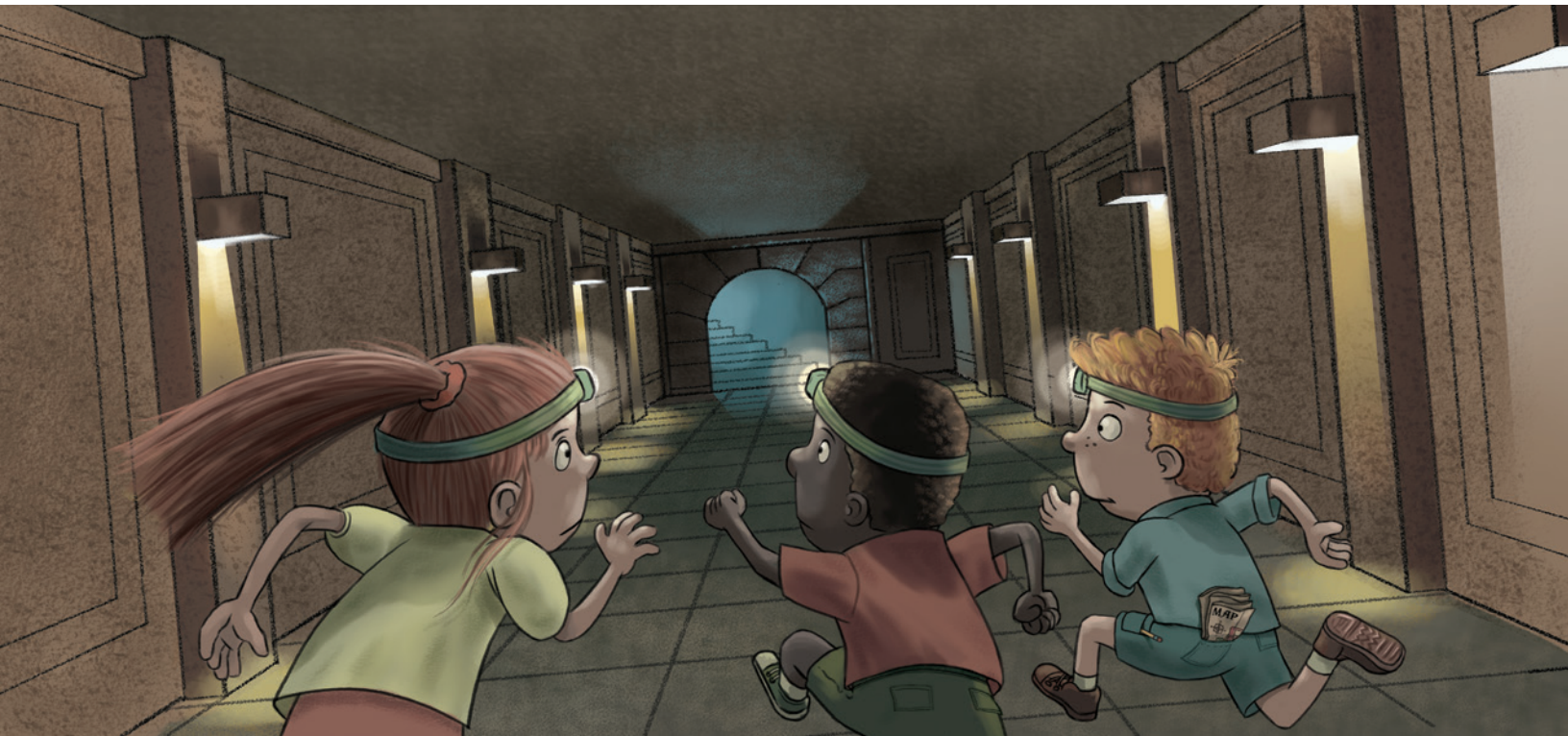
<b>Name of Museum Hall</b>	Describe what the hall looks like. What experience do the children have here? What mood or feeling does this part of the story create for the characters and readers?
Earth and Space Room	
Hall of Dinosaurs	
Hall of African Mammals	
Hall of Minerals	
Hall of Biodiversity	
Butterfly Pavilion	
Hall of Ocean Life	

# Listening Journal: *Sleepover at the Museum for Orchestra*

UPPER ELEMENTARY (GRADES 3-5)

<b>Name of Museum Hall</b>	Describe the music. How do the composer and musicians use tempo, volume, pitch, and instruments to create a mood for the listener?  Draw the images that come to your mind when you hear this music.
Earth and Space Room	
Hall of Dinosaurs	
Hall of African Mammals	
Hall of Minerals	

Hall of Biodiversity	
Butterfly Pavilion	
Hall of Ocean Life	





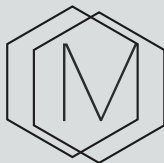
**Karen LeFrak** is an author, composer, and philanthropic New Yorker. She introduced children to the worlds of music and dance in her first two children's books, *Jake the Philharmonic Dog* and *Jake the Ballet Dog*. She has created musical works performed worldwide, including solo, orchestral, and chamber pieces and has been commissioned by organizations such as the Miami Symphony, Youth American Grand Prix, the Glorioso Trio, American Ballet Theatre, and New York Theatre Ballet. Her most recent book, *Sleepover at the Museum*, invites children to discover the treasures and mysteries inside a natural history museum. Her narrated children's score

*Sleepover at the Museum* premiered in 2019 with the Miami Symphony and will be performed in summer 2019 at Festival Napa Valley and in early 2020 with the New York Philharmonic. She was featured in *Good Housekeeping's* 10 Amazing Women In The Arts Over 50, is a Director of the New York Philharmonic where she serves on the Executive Committee, and is a recent appointee to the board of the Kennedy Center. Author of her third children's book, *Best in Show*, Karen is an avid dog lover and breeder of champion poodles. Learn more at [karenlefrak.com](http://karenlefrak.com) and [karenlefrakmusic.com](http://karenlefrakmusic.com)

Festival  
NAPA VALLEY

Guide produced by  
Festival Napa Valley Arts for All Program

Kendall Surfus,  
Curriculum Designer



MIEL DESIGN STUDIO

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