



Motion 2: This House Would return all significant cultural artefacts to their country of origin

Some background information

Museums around the world contain many beautiful cultural artefacts that originated in other countries. For example, the Elgin Marbles were taken from the Parthenon in Greece and are now in the British Museum.

Many countries have asked for these artefacts to be returned to their country of origin, saying they have the closest attachment to the artefacts which may be important parts of their culture and history. They also want to attract tourists and visitors to their cities and museums.

However, those holding the artefact suggest they are important on a global scale and that as many people as possible should be allowed to see them. And major museums can show objects in the context of other treasures from throughout history. Sometimes objects are better protected in the museums where there are now, as in some cases there are unstable or unsuitable circumstances elsewhere.

Most museums and countries have refused requests for the return of artefacts. Do you think they should return them?

Key facts

- The British Museum holds more than 13 million objects, collected from all over the world. A tiny fraction of them are on display at any one time.
- More than 20 countries have made requests for artefacts to be returned, including from the British Museum, from German museums and from private collections.
- The British Museum is the most popular attraction in Britain, drawing over 6 million visitors each year.

Activities for the class or club

We are designing a museum of your local area. Individually or in groups students will need to decide what would go in it. Why would those objects be important?

Once students have some ideas about the contents of the museum they should plan how they would display them - what would be near to what? This be done as discussion, written work or art piece with supporting discussion/text

Next, design a home for a famous object. Choose a famous object, like one of the examples below. We are building a display for it. Again, what objects might you want to surround it with, and why?

Example objects -

Tutankhamun's mask



