

The Snake's Tale Trail



Museum of
Natural
History

Adult notes

This trail is aimed at EYFS and Year 1 children and is intended to provide a fun and active way of exploring the Museum displays.

Using Sydney the Snake

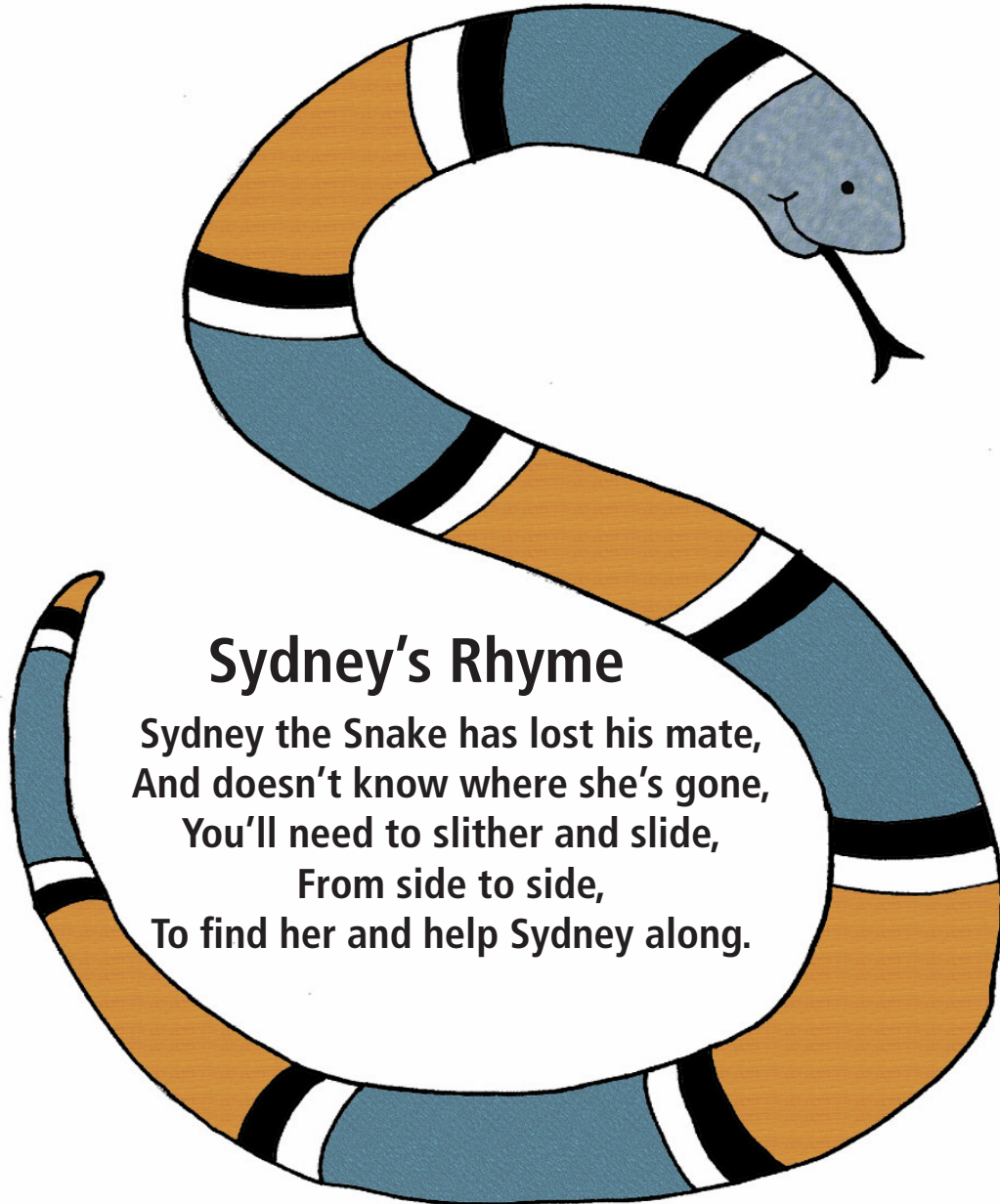
- Each of our 6 *Sydney the snakes* has hand holds for 6 children and an adult at the head who decides the route.
- Our snakes are intended to help keep your group together and provide a shared purpose to exploring the museum.
- If you wish to keep children sitting still and focusing on the objects in front of a particular case, *Sydney* also doubles up as a comfy cushion children can sit on. Please return *Sydney* to the front desk after you have finished with him.

The point of the trail

- You are on the hunt for *Sydney's* mate, a female rock python brooding her eggs. Her location is marked on the map by a **red star**, so aim to end here when you finish the trail.
- Introduce the point of the trail to the children by reading *Sydney's* rhyme at on the left of this page.
- To avoid all being in the same place at the same time, start at different points and wriggle round in any route that avoids a tangle of snakes and children!
- At each star point on the map get the children to look carefully for *Sydney's* mate. At each point there are several suggested questions to ask about what they see and a suggested activity. Do as many or few of these as you'd like or just do your own thing.
- When you want to move children on to the next place try repeating the phrase 'His mate's not here. Oh, dear!'

Sydney's Rhyme

Sydney the Snake has lost his mate,
And doesn't know where she's gone,
You'll need to slither and slide,
From side to side,
To find her and help Sydney along.





Birds case

- What do birds have on the outside of their bodies? (feathers-so not scaly reptiles like Sydney!)
- How many different coloured feathers can the children see? What is their favourite bird?
- Do you know any nursery rhymes about birds (two little Dickey Birds), why not sing it together?
- Many snakes eat birds, better slither away before Sydney gobbles one up, but avoid the Secretary bird in the case opposite and the Eagle on the side because these birds sometimes gobble up snakes!



Mammals of Eurasia case

- How many animals can the children name? If they're not covered in scales, what is covering their bodies? (fur -they're 'Mammals'!)
- Can you see a mouse or rat in here? Do you know any nursery rhymes about mice? (Hickory-dickory-dock). Why not sing it together?
- Many snakes eat small mammals, better slither away quickly before Sydney gobbles one up!



British Minerals case

- Lots of twinkly, sparkly minerals dug up from caves underground. How many different colours can the children see?
- Snakes are good at wriggling into underground holes to find food or shelter and many hibernate underground through the winter in places full of minerals.
- What are minerals? They are what rocks are made from and we use them for all sorts of things, slither down the aisle and see what things children have at home that are made of minerals. You can touch some as you go and discuss what they look and feel like.



Fish case

- What do fish have on the outside of their bodies? (Scales! Just like snakes!)
- How many legs do they have? (None, just like snakes!) What do they use to move around? (Fins!-not like snakes!)
- There are lots of different types of fish in the world. Can you find a spotty one, a spiky one, a blue one, a red one, a stripy one?
- Can you find one that can use its fins to jump out of the water and glide with like wings?
- Some snakes called 'Sea-snakes' live in the sea all their lives and eat little fish. Do you think Sydney is a sea-snake?



Snakes, Lizards and Tuatara case

- Can you see Sydney's mate here? 'Hooray! Here she is with lots of other scaly reptiles like Sydney!'
- But what is she sitting on? (Eggs! Only Python snakes do this!)
- How many can you count? (How many babies will there be?)
- Most reptiles lay eggs like Sydney's mate but some give birth to live young
- Do the eggs look hard like a hen's egg or a bit rubbery? (Most reptile eggs have a much more rubbery shell).
- Can any on wriggle along the floor like a snake?



The Mosasaurs case

- There is a snake here but it's so old it's turned to stone and become a fossil. This is the oldest known fossil snake and comes from the time of the dinosaurs.
- The dinosaurs were scaly reptiles like snakes.
- Wriggle down the aisle. How many dinosaurs can you see? What is the biggest one you can find called?
- How many times longer is it than Sydney? He doesn't mind being stretched out on the ground like a tape-measure?!