

Guidelines for FOM Asian Study Group members

A Study Group consists of 12 to 16 participants who meet in a home to learn together about a specific topic or area related to Asia. The group provides the opportunity to become acquainted with others interested in the same subject and to research and report on a specific topic of interest to you.

Commitment to the group is for the complete series of talks. The length of the weekly meeting is generally two to two and a half hours. Field trips may take more time. As a consideration to the members of the group (and those on the waiting list), if you already know that you will miss two or more sessions, kindly postpone your registration and join a later Study Group.

If this is your first experience with a Study Group, remember that you are not the only first-timer.

Each member of a Study Group is to prepare a talk that should last 40-60 minutes (including questions and discussion), using visual aids such as PowerPoint or (upon agreement with the Study Group leader) some other type of presentation.

RESEARCHING THE TOPIC

Read resource materials from the general to the more specific, best starting with one general reference to acquaint you with the subject.

Choose your reference sources carefully! Excellent talks can be prepared using just a few well-chosen books. Only use reliable websites from museums or universities, and be careful when using Wikipedia – it can be a useful starting point, but double-check information found there against other information sources.

Useful sources of information can be found on our FOM website (on recommended reading lists, archived PASSAGE articles, etc.), at the National Library (especially the electronic collection JSTOR) and in such journals as Asian Art News, Arts of Asia and Orientations, and on the websites of the National Archives (www.nas.gov.sg > Archives on-line) and the National Heritage Board (www.nhb.gov.sg > Collections).

Too much information becomes indigestible. Limit the scope of your talk so that your audience can cope. You may find that the topic you originally chose is too vast to be covered in 45 minutes, so feel free to narrow it down during your research.

A good frame would be to answer the basics: Who? Why? What? Where? When? How?

Stop collecting information about three weeks before your talk date.

As you research your subject, keep in mind that it is easier to note things as you go, rather than trying to unearth a specific citation after days of browsing. You will need to:

- Ensure all quotes are properly marked and attributed
- Note the source (e.g., website URL, or book title and page) of all images

PUTTING THE TALK TOGETHER

- The total length of the talk should be 40-60 minutes.
- Think about spending less time presenting to leave more time for questions and discussion (always at the end).
- Keep the text simple and straightforward.
- The PowerPoint or other visuals should be relevant to what you are saying, and what you are saying should be relevant to your visual.
- Do not forget that there are other ways to illustrate a talk; e.g., bringing along artifacts.
- Use your own words so that you will feel at ease and sound natural during your talk.

- Quotes or extract from other writers can enhance a talk but keep them short and acknowledge the original author. Avoid reading aloud long passages, whether they are from books or simply your own notes.
- Please remember that all the members of the group are not native English speakers, so speak clearly when presenting.

PREPARING FOR PRESENTATION

We recommend that you assure that you will be able to begin your talk on time by doing at least TWO of the following:

- 1) 24 hours before your talk, send your presentation to the hostess (e.g., by email, DropBox, or on Google Drive), so that she can open it on her computer if necessary.
- 2) Bring your presentation on a thumb drive.
- 3) Bring your presentation on your own laptop.

Please remember that your Study Group leaders are there to help you and direct you towards reference and photographic material should you need them, and as a helpful ear if you feel you need one to listen to the talk before presentation.

Enjoy your Study Group presentation!

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