

## Preview

- 1 Work in groups and discuss these questions.
  - a When was the last time you visited a museum?
  - b What did you see there?
  - c How was it displayed?
  - d Why do we keep things from the past in museums?
  - e What is the role of a museum in society today?

## Reading

- 2 Read the introduction from a guidebook to the Louvre and answer these questions.
  - a What was the aim of the Grand Louvre project?
  - b What was it that made people very angry?
  - c What is the purpose of a museum according to Ieoh Ming Pei?

**T**HE DECISION TO turn the Louvre into the world's biggest museum was taken in the autumn of 1981 by the French President François Mitterand. The challenge lay in turning what was basically a nineteenth-century museum into a modern museum equipped to handle the ever-growing number of people anxious to see and learn about art. The first step towards creating the "Grand Louvre" was to create more exhibition space and to reorganise the collections, so that works could be presented both more logically and with more breathing space.

According to a number of experts the most rational way to reorganise the museum was to use the area beneath the courtyard itself. This is just what the Chinese-American architect Ieoh Ming Pei decided to do. He had been named to design the project, without a prior competition being held, in March 1983.

The architect's choice of a 71-foot high pyramid, albeit of glass, created a storm of protest. Many believed that this historic site was already "saturated with architectural styles..." I.M. Pei, who designed the striking East Wing at Washington's National Gallery, wanted to turn this historic palace into a modern museum. He wanted to create something alive and welcoming, without destroying the history of the place, and he succeeded in persuading the authorities to accept his transparent, reflecting prism.

## Listening 2

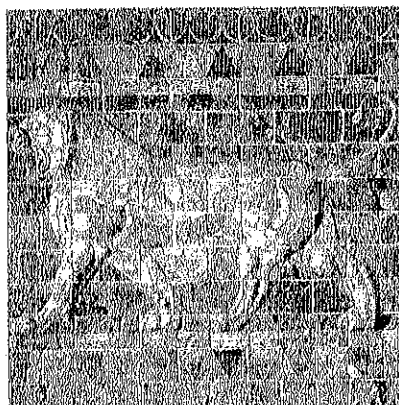
- 9 Listen to the guide describing artefacts in the Pergamon Museum. As you listen find Athena, Zeus and Alkyoneus in the pictures on the right.
  - a Pergamon was the name of a man.
  - b The monument was built 2,000 years ago.
  - c It has always been considered one of the wonders of the world.
  - d The Gauls had come from Europe.

## Speechwork

### Pausing and stress

- 11 Why is the speaker in Listening 2 easy to understand?
  - a Listen to another part of his tour and mark where he pauses. Mark a short pause with / and a long pause with //.

*Now let's follow the path of the gods and walk up the processional avenue towards the great gate ahead of you. Remember as you go past these lions that they were not only admired as wild, noble and free animals but that they also represented Ishtar, the goddess of love, the sky and of war. Ishtar was the patron goddess of the Babylonian army and the enormous gateway that you are now approaching was named after her. The original decorations revealed much about the*



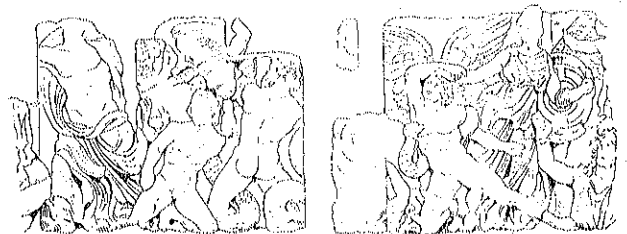
*religious life of the city. They showed that the avenue was decorated during the time of King Nebuchadnezzar II to mark the path of the annual new year procession when statues of the gods were carried with great ceremony from a special banqueting house to the main temple of the city. As the gods were believed actually to inhabit these statues it was very important that whatever they saw should please them and so a great deal of effort was lavished on this processional avenue.*

Pei is convinced that museums should play a role in educating the public. With competition from so many other forms of recreation, museums must be inviting enough for people to want to spend the day there. At the same time, the architecture must be functional, so that museums can offer better service in more comfortable surroundings. Even more important, museums should not only be a place to see art but, thanks to their architectural quality, should be an aesthetic experience in themselves.

## Listening 1

- 3 Listen to an expert talking about the reconstruction of the Neues Museum in Berlin and answer these questions.
  - a What are the choices facing the architects?
  - b How do the expert's views on the design of a museum compare with Ieoh Ming Pei's?
- 4 Work with a partner and discuss how a museum can encourage visitors to keep coming back. Then listen to how the Neues museum intends to deal with tourists, and answer these questions.
  - a How does the museum intend to encourage the frequent visitor?
  - b What will the museum do for the groups on a thirty-minute tour?
  - c How will this help the individual visitor?
  - d According to the speaker what are the disadvantages of museums like the Louvre?

Do you agree with the speaker's view of how a museum should be organised? Give your reasons.



- e The frieze symbolises two victories.
- f The giant attacks Athena with his serpent.
- g The whole frieze is painted in bright colours.
- h You will see another monument.