

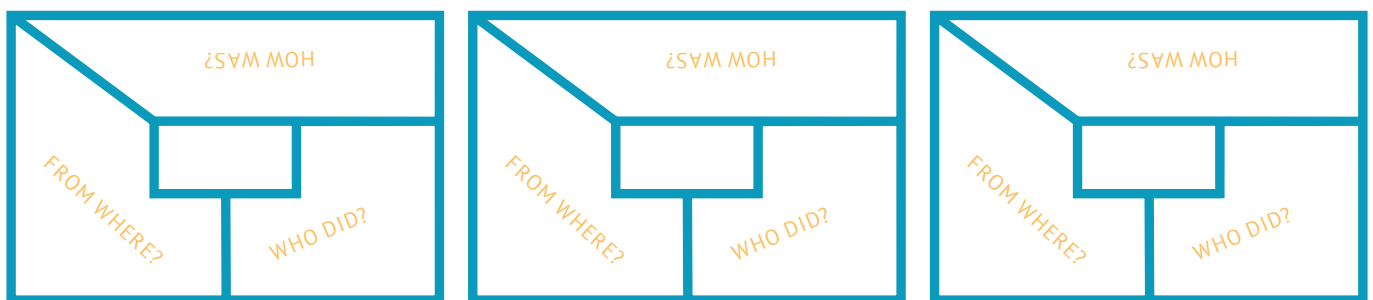
## Action sheet A

# What questions do you have for the object?



LOOK AT THE MSHATTA FACADE.  
WRITE DOWN EVERY QUESTION YOU CAN THINK OF!

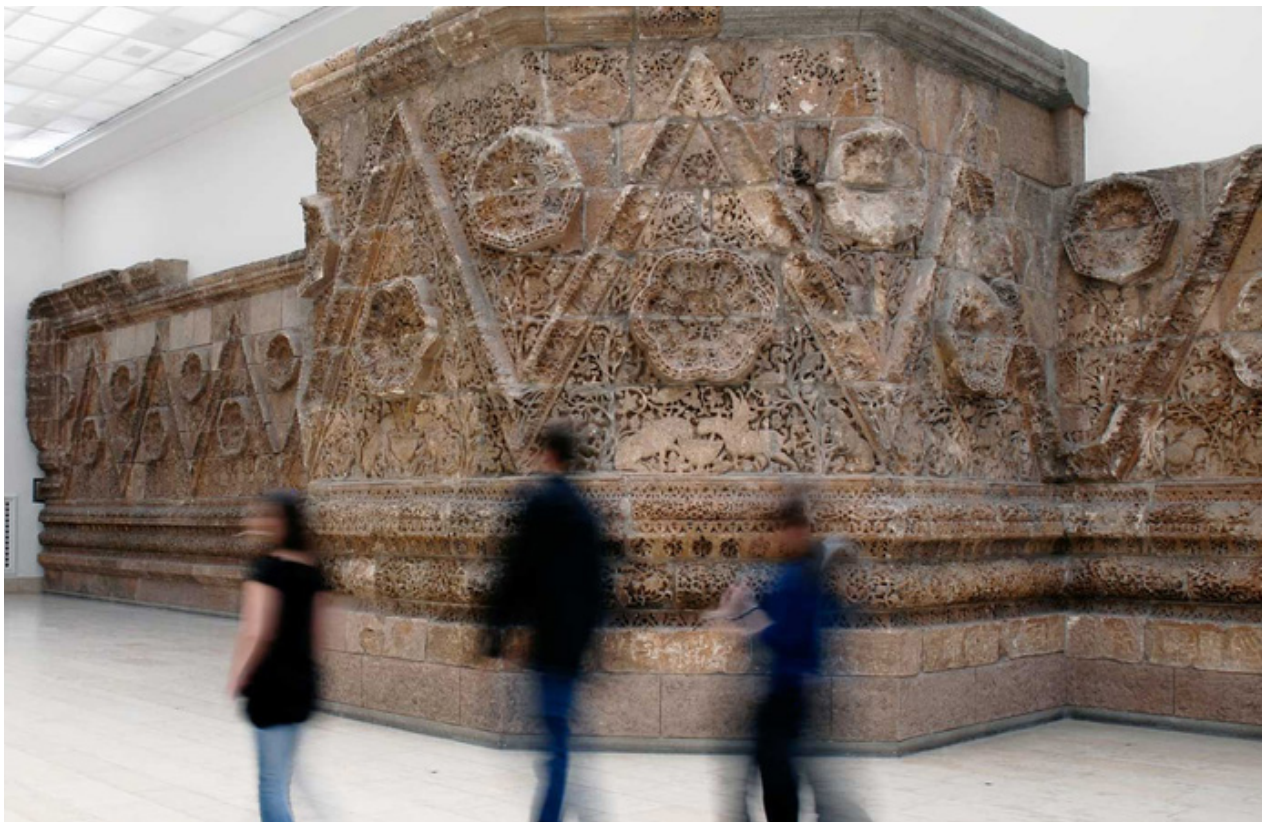
Draw a large rectangular frame on your sheet of paper. A smaller rectangle is drawn in the centre of the frame. Then draw lines from the inner rectangle to the edge of the large frame to get as many fields as the number of participants. This method is called “placemat”. Each participant takes a pen in a different colour so you can later see who wrote what. The paper is rotated until everyone has written at least one question into a field. Then you can continue rotating until your placemat is full! When you’re finished, think about which question is most important together and write it in the centre.



# Info sheet

## Mshatta Facade

Object **Mshatta Facade**  
Inventory no. I. 6163  
Period Early 2nd century AH/  
1. half of 8th century AD  
Place Mshatta, Jordan  
Material Limestone  
Size Height 5.07 m, length 33 m



Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Museum für Islamische Kunst, / Johannes Kramer, Bernd Weingart

## Action sheet B Part 1

# How did the facade get into the museum?

Try to find an answer to this question that satisfies you. Use the archival cards 1–5 for your research. Each card shows an image source with a brief text.

WHICH ANSWERS DO THE ARCHIVAL CARDS PROVIDE?  
WHAT ARE THE NEW QUESTIONS THAT EMERGE?

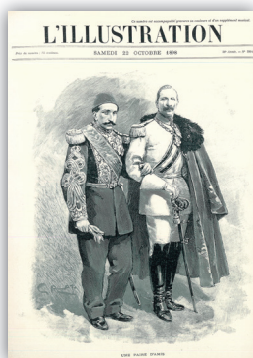
Mention both points in your presentation by showing what you have discovered and what remained open. Take notes on the most important facts and consider how to present your results to the others. Suggestions: Act out having a discussion as a panel of experts, just like on TV! If stones could talk: you interview the facade itself! Draw a mind map, meaning a map of your most important results...

### Archival card 1

Inventory no.	Object	Material	Site	Period	Location	
I. 6163	Mshatta Facade	Limestone	Mshatta, Present-day Jordan	Beginning of 2nd century AH/ 1. half of 8th century AD	Museum of Islamic Art	

### Detail

Inventory no.	Object	Material	Site	Period	Location	Artist
	Title page of L'illustration magazine			6/6/1316 AH 22/10/1898 AD		G. Amato



In the early 20th century, the German and Ottoman empires were close allies. Emperor Wilhelm II (1859–1941) travelled to Istanbul three times.

This image shows him with the Ottoman Sultan Abdul Hamid II (1842–1918) linking arms in a friendly pose.

This amicable connection was utilised to bring the facade from Mshatta to Berlin.

© L'illustration, 22. October 1898

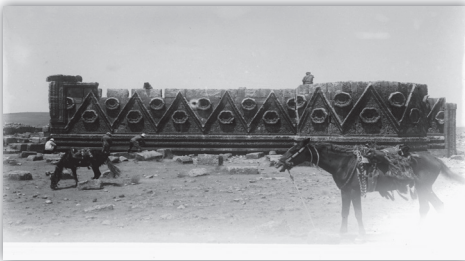
# Action sheet B Part 2

## Archival card 2

Inventory no.	Object	Material	Site	Period	Location	
I. 6163	Mshatta Facade	Limestone	Mshatta, Present-day Jordan	Beginning of 2nd century AH/ 1. half of 8th century AD	Museum of Islamic Art	

## Detail

Inventory no.	Object	Material	Site	Period	Location	
	Photo: Mshatta Facade at the site			around 1321 AH / 1903 AD	Brandenburg State Office for the Preservation of Monuments	



The remains of the palace of Mshatta stood near Amman, now the capital of Jordan.

In the early 20th century, German engineers helped with the construction of the Hejaz Railway to connect Damascus and Medina. This railway line passed close to the palace and the facade.

In Berlin, stories about Mshatta were received with with great interest.

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## Archival card 3

Inventory no.	Object	Material	Site	Period	Location	
I. 6163	Mshatta Facade	Limestone	Mshatta, Present-day Jordan	Beginning of 2nd century AH/ 1. half of 8th century AD	Museum of Islamic Art	

## Detail

Inventory no.	Object	Material	Site	Period	Location	Artist
I/IM 6	Site plan of Mshatta			around 1321 AH / 1903 AD	Central Archive, National Museums of Berlin	Gottfried Schumacher



In Istanbul, the German Empire made every effort to ensure that the palace's facade could be moved to Berlin. This was approved in 1902. The ornamental facade was chiselled off the blocks at the site. The facade panels were brought from Mshatta to Beirut and loaded on ships. Via Hamburg, the Elbe and Spree rivers, it finally arrived in Berlin in 1903.

© Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Zentralarchiv, I/IM 6 / Gottfried Schumacher



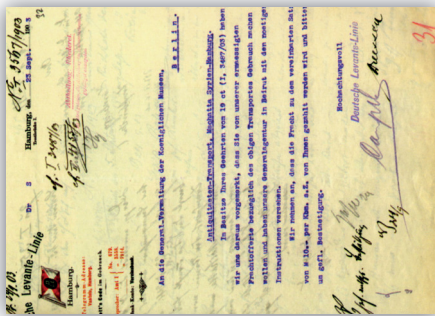
# Action sheet B Part 3

## Archival card 4

Inventory no.	Object	Material	Site	Period	Location	
I. 6163	Mshatta Facade	Limestone	Mshatta, Present-day Jordan	Beginning of 2nd century AH/ 1. half of 8th century AD	Museum of Islamic Art	

## Detail

Inventory no.	Object	Site	Period	Location	Artist
	Letter to the General Administration of the Royal Museums		1/7/1321 AH / 23/9/1903 AD	Central Archive, National Museums of Berlin	Deutsche Levante-Linie



To the General Administration of the Royal Museums, Berlin.  
Antiquities Transport, Mshatta Syria-Hamburg.  
In possession of your honoured from 19 ct (I, 3487/03), we have noted that you would like to utilise our discounted freight rates in respect to the above transport and have provided our general agency in Beirut with the necessary instructions.  
We assume that you will pay the freight at the agreed-on rate of M 10.- per cubic meter in due course and ask for your obliging confirmation.  
Sincerely, Deutsche Levante-Linie

© Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Zentralarchiv

## Archival card 5

Inventory no.	Object	Material	Site	Period	Location	
I. 6163	Mshatta Facade	Limestone	Mshatta, Present-day Jordan	Beginning of 2nd century AH/ 1. half of 8th century AD	Museum of Islamic Art	

## Detail

Inventory no.	Object	Site	Period	Location	Artist
	Photos of single facade blocks	Museum of Islamic Art	1350 AH / 1931 AD		



The Mshatta Facade was reassembled at the Kaiser-Friedrich-Museum, now the Bode Museum, in Berlin. It was the main reason why a Department of Islamic art was founded in Berlin.  
Together with other gifts, including those from the former museum director Wilhelm von Bode, it remains the centerpiece of the collection to this day.  
In 1931 it was disassembled again and transferred to the new Pergamon Museum, where it remains today. The archival image is from this second disassembly.

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## Action sheet C Part 1

# What can you see on the facade?

Try to find an answer to this question that satisfies you. Use the archival cards 1–4 for your research. Each card shows an image source with a brief text.

WHAT ANSWERS DO THE ARCHIVAL CARDS PROVIDE?  
WHAT ARE THE NEW QUESTIONS THAT EMERGE

Mention both points in your presentation by showing what you have discovered and what remained open. Take notes on the most important facts and consider how to present your results to the others.

Suggestions: Act out having a discussion as a panel of experts, just like on TV! If stones could talk: you interview the facade itself! Draw a mind map, meaning a map of your most important results...

### Archival card 1

Inventory no.	Object	Material	Site	Period	Location	
I. 6163	Mshatta Facade	Limestone	Mshatta, Present-day Jordan	Beginning of 2nd century AH/ 1. half of 8th century AD	Museum of Islamic Art	

### Detail

Inventory no.	Object	Material	Site	Period	Location	
	Photos of the diagonal view on site from the east		Museum of Islamic Art	Before 1321 AH/ 1903 AD		



There were lengthy discussions about which culture and period the Mshatta Facade were from.

It was proposed that the work was created in Late Antiquity, a pre-Islamic period or later. The different motifs on the facade caused this ambiguity.

After decades, there was general consensus that this is an early Islamic work of art. Because early Islamic art builds on pre-Islamic artworks.

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# Action sheet C Part 2

## Archival card 2

Inventory no.	Object	Material	Site	Period	Location	Detail
I. 6163	Mshatta Facade	Limestone	Mshatta, Present-day Jordan	Beginning of 2nd century AH/ 1. half of 8th centu- ry AD	Museum of Islamic Art	Motif: Birds inside rings of pearls on facade



© Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Museum für Islamische Kunst / Johannes Kramer

## Detail

Inventory no.	Object	Material	Site	Period	Location	
I. 2677	Stucco panel	Stucco	Ctesiphon, present-day Iraq	Late 6th - beginning of 7th century AD		



The facade bears many motifs from art by Sasanians (224-651 AD). Depictions of birds inside rings of pearls like those on the facade can be traced back to Sasanian sources. A stucco panel from the Sasanian capital Ctesiphon proves this connection. The bird on the stucco panel is much more rigid, however - the animals on the facade are much more lively.

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# Action sheet C Part 3

## Archival card 3

Inventory no.	Object	Material	Site	Period	Location	Detail
I. 6163	Mshatta Facade	Limestone	Mshatta, Present-day Jordan	Beginning of 2nd century AH/ 1. half of 8th century AD	Museum of Islamic Art	Motif: Mythical creature (gryphon) on facade



© Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Museum für Islamische Kunst

## Detail

Inventory no.	Object	Material	Site	Period	Location	
I. 18232882	Coin	Silver, stamped	Abdera (?), present-day Greece	540-515 B.C.	Münzkabinett	



In some places on the facade, animals and mythical creatures sit across from each other at a trough. One of these mythical creatures is the gryphon, with a lion's body, a bird's head with a large beak and wings, as on this coin. This mythical creature can't be traced back to a precise origin, since there were depictions of gryphons in ancient Greece and Persia as well as in other cultures in late Antiquity.

© Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Münzkabinett / Reinhard Saczewski



# Action sheet C Part 4

## Archival card 4

Inventory no.	Object	Material	Site	Period	Location	
I. 6163	Mshatta Facade	Limestone	Mshatta, Present-day Jordan	Beginning of 2nd century AH/ 1. half of 8th centu- ry AD	Museum of Islamic Art	

## Detail

Inventory no.	Object	Material	Site	Period	Location	
Ident. no. Mil. 1	Market gate	Marble	Miletus, present-day Turkey	Around 100 AD	Antique col- lection	



The overall architecture of the Mshatta Facade also developed motifs from late Antiquity. It shows a zigzag ribbon formed by a cornice. This Hellenistic-Roman construction style with cornices can also be seen on the market gate of Miletus, for example. The complicated shape with the various pediments (the roof structures) expresses this architectural style.

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