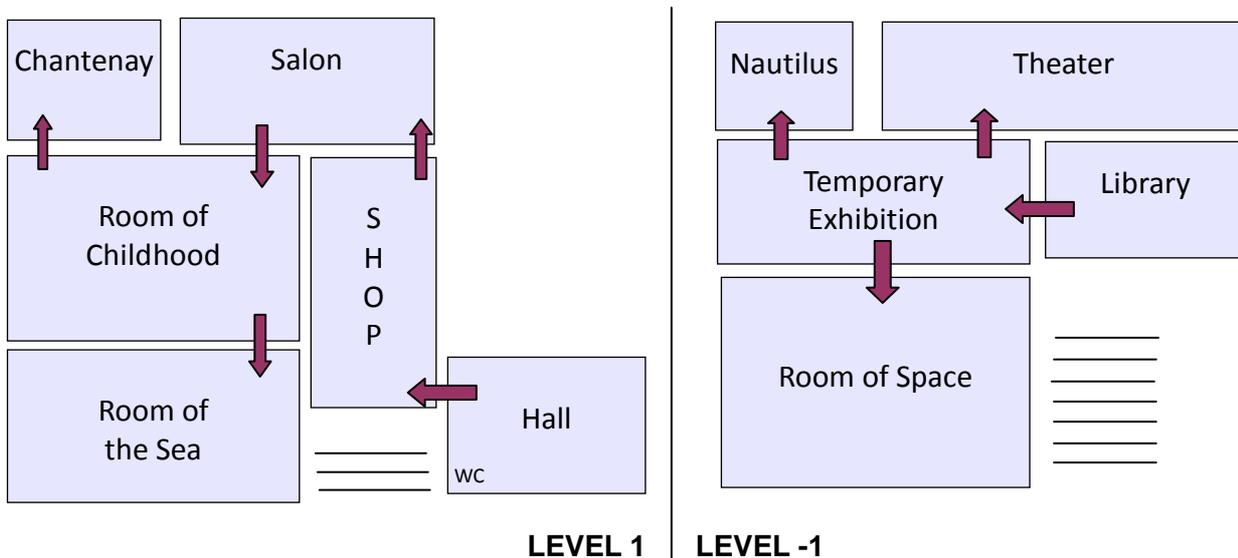


English visit outline – Teachers



Welcome to the Jules Verne's museum.



LEVEL 1

Introduction

1978: inauguration of the museum for 150th birth anniversary → important because he was a native from Nantes. It never was the house of Jules Verne but its construction is contemporary (1870)

In the first room: The famous novelist

The Salon of Amiens' house shows "JV as you must know him", a successful author → this is where he received international journalists, novelists, explorers. China + clock + Portrait of Honorine by De Conninck (60 yo) → wealthy way of life thanks to worldwide success.

1848: arrives in Paris for law school → to take over his father's study. Goes to literary salons, where he meets Alexandre Dumas son who is triumphing in the theatres. He supports JV to become a playwright ("Broken Straw" 1850, music by Hignard), but it is not a real success.

1852: dedicates himself to literature, starting point of his career

1857: marriage to Honorine de Viane, moves to Amiens. Honorine is a 26 years old widow, with 2 daughters.

1861: Birth of his son, Michel but he misses because he travels in Norway (1861) with Hignard → JV was an absent father and husband

1862-1863: Works a lot on his manuscript "Voyage in the air", to become his first best-selling novel.

1905: Death of JV at Amiens

Jules Verne was a boulimic man so he wanted to have his mouth table-high so he could eat more and faster → gluttony caused him diabetes but he died quite old

→ This bourgeois way of life would not have been possible without the strong influence Jules Verne's childhood had on his own creativity. So we have to go back to the beginning, to the sources of the dream ...

In the room "at the sources of the dream"

Birth = February 8th 1828, in the grandmother's house on the Feydeau Island in Nantes. The family moves in 1829 to Quai Jean Bart, where JV's little brother Paul is born + vacation house in 1836 at Chantenay.

5 ingredients to understand the imagination of JV:

EDUCATION

His parents: Pierre Verne settles as a lawyer but likes sciences and literature + Sophie Allotte de la Fuye was very creative as a pianist → they got married in 1827

The school: Jules Verne followed a religious scholar education in several schools of Nantes, he had good results especially in geography (he got an award) → left Nantes to graduate and then study law.

NANTES HARBOUR

Active commercial harbour of Nantes → involved into the Triangular Trade, there were 2 or 3 rows of boats that JV called a "forest of mast". Ships came from America, West Indies or Africa to bring spices and exotic goods (cocoa, cotton, sugar, seeds ...)

Verne boys' playground was the harbour = Paul and Jules would play on the Loire sand islands to embody Robinson Crusoe + went to docks to talk to the sailors → this is where JV learns the technical sailing vocabulary he uses in his novels.

On the Harbour of Nantes mural > steamboats with a waterwheel (new model, same on the Mississippi) = JV even got on board with his father → fascinated by progress

On the Harbour of Nantes mural > Railway at the feet of the museum = JV took the train to come back from Paris to visit his parents → creation of the Paris-Nantes line in 1851.

SCIENCE & PROGRESS

Electricity = major invention and powerful weapon to conquer the world and help the search for progress dear to JV

Industrial Revolution in the 1850's in France = JV is a witness of this change → new concept of telecommunication and new modes of transportation.

Naturalism movement studies new knowledge that resulted from explorations and colonization of the time = great influence

READING

At 6 years old, Verne's favorite story is "The Swiss family Robinson" → typical Robinsonade = characters leave their homeland by boat and a storm strikes. The ship wrecks and the survivors are beached on an island. Then, they try to survive in this wilderness and live as a society.

JV's own version of Robinson: *Mysterious Island* (1874) → on Lincoln island, the American survivors reproduce their own current society by building a small electric telegraph

WRITING

Importance of literature = produces writings himself since his youth (cf. Letter to his aunt, with spelling mistakes)

Even wrote a love poem to Herminie when 17 years old → he was very inspired by Victor Hugo and influenced by Romanticism

In the room of the Sea

TRAVELS

JV saw the sea for the first time when he was 12 years old in St Nazaire, with his father and brother.

Dedicated a good part of his life to discovering many seas and oceans → crossed the Atlantic in 1867 on the Great Eastern steamship, he called the "iron monster" (he went to Boston, Chicago, Niagara falls). The Great Eastern was great inspiration for his novel *A floating city* (1871) that takes place on its board – quotation of the beginning of the novel: "The Great Eastern was more than a vessel, it was a floating city, it was piece of county detached from the British soil, which – after crossing the ocean – would stick to the American continent"

BOATS

After this experience, JV wanted his own naval mean of transportation:

- St Michel I in 1867 = a small fishing boat with a library, he worked a lot on its board
- St Michel II in 1876 = a small sailboat with one mast
- St Michel III in 1877 = a steam-yacht he "fell in love" with → he went to Scotland (inspiration for *The Black Indies*), the Baltic sea (from Rotterdam to Copenhagen), the Mediterranean sea (received as a prince in Algeria, Tunisia, even received by the pope in Italy)

20,000 LEAGUES UNDER THE SEA

JV's masterpiece about the sea = *20 000 Leagues under the Sea* - quotation: "The sea is everything (...) It is an immense desert place where man is never lonely (...) The ocean is the vast reservoir of Nature" → this novel is an encyclopedia of underwater fauna and flora.

Nemo is a founding character in JV's work and an allegory of the sea: full of life and yet lonely – quotation: "Ah, sir, to live in the bosom of the sea! (...) There I am free!" → Professor Aronnax is the figure of JV, he is fascinated by Nemo and his biological researches.

LEVEL -1

In the library

COLLABORATION

JV got in touch with publisher Pierre-Jules Hetzel (thanks to Alexandre Dumas son) in 1862, presenting his manuscript "Voyage in the air" that would become the first of the "Extraordinary Voyages" *Five weeks in a Balloon* (1863)

Hetzel was already the publisher of Balzac, Victor Hugo ... → he was planning to launch a high-quality family magazine where entertaining fiction would combine with scientific education

The two men signed a long-term contract = two volumes of text per year + participation to "Magasin d'Éducation et de Récréation" (Magazine of Education and Recreation). Most of his novels would be published as serials in Hetzel's Magazine before their appearance in book form with beautiful covers → Verne and Hetzel signed no less than 6 contracts during their collaboration, that lasted until their death.

Most of his wealth came from the stage adaptations of *Around the world in 80 days* (1874) and *Michael Strogoff* (1876), which he wrote with Adolphe d'Ennery and were very successful.

MARKETING

Hetzel was a genius in marketing techniques, he used advertising very early > Posters during the Christmas period to promote his collections (like the one of 1889 in the museum), they were exposed in bookstores or given as free extra in newspapers. Therefore, the beautiful and expensive books would become new year's gift called "étrennes" + use of illustrations made the books very attractive to the children.

TRANSLATIONS

Translation of Verne into English began quite early in 1852, for short story "Voyage in a balloon" before the Extraordinary Journeys. The first novel to be translated was *Five weeks in a Balloon* in 1869. The British and American publishers of Verne chose to market his books almost exclusively to young audiences → that created a long lasting children's author reputation.

The Voyages in the theater

In his lifetime Jules Verne produced over 40 plays, often comic sometimes personal and serious. He also liked the Vaudeville genre he revisited several times.

In 1850, "Broken Straws" is his first production to be played in Paris. The key for success resided in the collaboration with the stage director Adolphe d'Ennery, with whom Verne brought to life some Extraordinary Journeys: "Around the world in 80 days" in 1874, "Captain Grant's children" in 1878 and "Michel Strogoff" in 1880.

This allowed Jules Verne to earn a fortune and buy his beloved steam-yacht St Michel III.

In the room of Space

JV was called "the father of science fiction" = it is partly wrong → his work was not always fiction, JV wanted to be realistic. His talent served one main cause during his life = scientific popularization but not actual scientific production. Of course, participated to some technical advances = anticipated the strategical use of submarines before they were developed → Nautilus is in fact a battleship

From the earth to the moon in 1865, first of a trilogy about space *All around the moon* (1870) and *Topsy Turvy* (1889) = a trip bringing humans to the moon in a spacerocket → a hundred years before the first man walked on the moon. Actual NASA base is only a few kilometers away from where JV fictively launched his rocket in "From the earth to the moon", in Florida. JV's idea to create an aluminium shuttle for his shell rocket will be taken over by plane builders. JV was also right about the speed and the weight of the rocket, that were the same as Apollo + the fact that it would land on the sea = puzzling how accurate his estimations are. JV was "only" staging the inventions of his time with great genius, he put life into those machines which only existed in the scientist's minds and plans = Albatros and Nautilus are now like heros → quotation - "I'm not an engineer, I'm just an old storyteller"

End

Verne's work has been and still is a source of inspiration to many artists like the filmmaker Georges Méliès (the first cinema movie "Voyage in the moon" made in 1902 is inspired by "From the earth to the moon"), the engineer François de la Rosière - who has created The mechanical Elephant inspired from JV's *Steam House* novel and the Carousel of Undersea Creatures also inspired by JV (You can visit the "Machines de l'Île" on the Island of Nantes across the Loire river) – and many others ...

Enjoy your group visit and ask for the quiz made for foreign pupils !