

Once in a while a fabulous opportunity comes along, an opportunity to experience something excellent and unusual, a wonder of the world, perhaps. I had just this kind of opportunity in Seattle this month. The Pacific Science Center has the collection of items found in King Tutenkhamun's tomb. My son's class had planned on making(1) a special trip to this exhibition as a final field trip. All year long, the school had been raising money for this special event by having bake sales(2). Everyone had bought and eaten cakes and cookies all year, and helped to pay for the museum visit. My job was to drive. I was lucky to go; in fact, once I had heard about the Egyptian exhibit, I was determined to find a way to go. A teacher, a parent, and an extra student came in my car, as well as my son. Each driver was given an itinerary and a map of the museum. Our schedule was going to be busy and packed. In the space of(2) five hours, we were going to go to the planetarium, see a laser show, see an Imax movie, and finally see the tomb items of King Tut. Somewhere in the middle we were going to squeeze in (3)lunch. So, we had lots to chat about on the way there. The three hour journey went very quickly. We all gathered in the parking lot, and made our way into the Science Center. The place is huge. There are different floors, and different rooms filled with exhibits from dinosaurs to insects, and planets to robots. It's impossible to see everything in one day; you have to be selective. We made our way through the exhibits, lunch, and the movie, and finally it was time to see King Tut's gorgeous stuff. I was so excited. The whole area was elegantly painted black, with spotlights on each individual item. I was amazed by the amount of relics, statues, and jewelery found in his tomb. I was busy photographing a statue, when I realized that my son had disappeared. He had raced through each of the rooms, just glancing briefly at everything, and was near the exit. He wasn't interested in reading about anything; he's nine. It was fun enough for him to sneak through a series of dark rooms. When I caught up (4)with him, I asked him if he had seen the king's mask. "Yep," he said, "it's right over here." He took me to a glass case and pointed at a statue. Well, it looked like King Tut's face, but it wasn't the mask. I looked around quickly, wondering where it could be. A security guard was standing nearby(5), so I asked him where it was. "Oh, it's not here," he said. There was a pause. "It has stayed in Egypt since the late 70's." I felt completely deflated. How disappointing! Everything else was stunning, of course, but I had been expecting to see what was on the posters that advertised the exhibition: the mask. The icon of Egypt simply wasn't there. If I want to see it, I need to take a trip to the Cairo Museum, and, in order to do that, I'll have to do a few bake sales of my own.

1. 'To plan on doing something' is good, native sounding English which can have many variations:
 - a. We planned on driving all night.
 - b. They planned on meeting us half way.
 - c. She planned on freezing the cake after she made it, and keeping it for Christmas.
2. 'In the space of....' in this case refers to time. The word 'space' means an area or span of time.
 - a. In the space of two hours, I cleaned the house, taught a class, and paid the bills!
 - b. In the space of three days, they hiked over the mountain and across the border.
3. 'We were going to squeeze in lunch' means that you are trying to 'fit' lunch into a busy schedule.
 - a. If we hurry, we can squeeze in a nap after lunch, just before the meeting.
 - b. They didn't have much time, but they managed to squeeze in a museum visit before they caught their plane.
4. 'To catch up with someone' has 2 meanings: it is to physically follow and meet up with a person, or it is to find out what has been going on in the life of someone who you haven't been around for a while. In this paragraph, it is the former.
 - a. He ran ahead of me, but soon I caught up with him.
 - b. I hadn't seen them for years, so we spent some time catching up.