



Rich Field Trips

HOW TO PLAN THE BEFORE, THE DURING, AND THE AFTER OF VALUABLE FIELD TRIP EXPERIENCES

Why do field trips matter?



- ▶ Field trips expand children's learning through active hands-on experience with the rich resources of the local community. Field trips increase student knowledge and understanding of a subject and add realism to the topic of study.
- ▶ Good planning must precede field trips. Careful attention should be given to trip selection, pre-visit preparation, the trip itself, and appropriate follow up.

The Before



- Determine the purpose of the field trip and how it relates to the current unit of study
- Make Field Books for recorded observation, questions, and notes
- Introduce visual observation skills. Let students describe in detail ordinary objects, like a paper clip, paintbrush, clothespin, or comb. This will assist them in making observations while on the field trip
- Introduce vocabulary words that will be used by docents or in exhibits during the trip
- To build excitement and relevancy, show photographs or posters of the field trip site or related to exhibits that will be viewed

The Before



- Assign students "specialists" roles in one aspect of the topic that they will be studying during the field trip. (e.g., history, art, religion, science, environment, etc.)
- Explore the website of the location you will be visiting (virtual tour)
- Discuss with students how to ask good questions and brainstorm a list of open-ended observation questions to gather information during the visit
- Record questions on chart paper or in student field trip journals
- Brainstorm a set of expectations for the trip and discuss suggested spending money, lunch plans, appropriate clothing to wear for the trip

The During



- ▶ Adventure game "Journey to the World of..."
- ▶ Mystery with clues provided
- ▶ Sketch pages with partial drawings of objects found in the exhibits for students to complete the drawings based on their observations
- ▶ Peepholes in construction paper - cut different sized round holes in construction paper and have students view a part of the exhibit through the peepholes. Ask them to describe what they see, what they notice now that they missed before, and how their perspective changes with each new view
- ▶ Field Books for recording answers to prepared questions based on clues
- ▶ Hand drawn postcards to write near the end of the tour that will summarize the field trip visit

The During



- ▶ Provide time for students to observe, ask questions, and record key words, ideas and phrases as journal entries in their Field Book after viewing each exhibit
- ▶ Schedule a particular segment of the field trip for a scavenger hunt where students look for particular objects and record them in their Field Book or on an observation sheet
- ▶ Provide time for students to work in their Field Book writing questions, describing favorite displays or making sketches of artifacts, structures, scenery, etc. If they cannot complete their sketches, encourage them to label them for future completion as to color, detail, etc
- ▶ Provide time for students to use a tape recorder, camcorder, or digital camera for recording important resources viewed/heard

The During



Questions/Ideas for tapping into critical thinking

- ▶ Pretend you are an archaeologist in the future who is observing this object. What would you be able to conclude about the culture of the past?
- ▶ Expand the title or name of this object into a detailed caption (sentence or paragraph) in your Field Book.
- ▶ Describe the setting in which you might have found this object.
- ▶ List the objects in the exhibit order of the story they tell or usefulness.
- ▶ Pretend you are a character in this exhibit. Tell us as much as you can about your life.
- ▶ How are these two objects different from one another?
- ▶ What clues does this artifact provide about...
- ▶ In what ways do these two objects relate to one another?
- ▶ If you could change one thing in this exhibit, what would it be?
- ▶ Which object will be of greatest value in a hundred years? Why?
- ▶ Which object took the most time and effort to produce?
- ▶ What might this object tell us about the person who made it?

The After



- ▶ Provide time for students to share general observations and reactions to field trip experiences
- ▶ Share specific assignments students completed while on the field trip (if in a group)
- ▶ Create an at-home bulletin board displaying materials developed or collected while on the field trip
- ▶ Develop an at-home classroom museum that replicates and extends displays observed on the field trip. For example, if the field trip involved an art museum, develop a classroom art museum containing student artwork.

The After



- ▶ Link field trip activities to multiple curricular areas. For example, students can develop vocabulary lists based on field trip observations; record field trip observations in a classroom journal; complete math problems related to actual field trip budget planning; etc.
- ▶ Share and evaluate student assignments/activities from the Field Book.
- ▶ Compose and send thank-you letters to the field trip site host, chaperones, and other people that supported the field trip. Include favorite objects or special information learned during the field trip.
- ▶ Create a short news report about what happened on the field trip. Publicize the trip via an article in your local newspaper, homeschool bulletin board, trip presentation for houseguests, or blog.

The After



Complete a “Parent Educator Reflection” regarding the field trip. This will provide a good reference for future field trips.

- ▶ What was of unique educational value in this field trip?
- ▶ Did the students meet the objectives/expectations?
- ▶ Was there adequate time?
- ▶ What might be done differently to make this an even better experience in the future?
- ▶ What special points should be emphasized next time?
- ▶ What special problems should be addressed in the future?
- ▶ What would improve a visit to this site in the future?

Field Trip Location Ideas



- ▶ [Aquarium of the Pacific](#)
- ▶ [The Getty Center](#)
- ▶ [LACMA](#)
- ▶ [Madrona Marsh](#)
- ▶ [Getty Villa](#)
- ▶ [Wishtoyo Chumash Village](#)
- ▶ [Wilderness Park](#)
- ▶ [Kidspace Museum](#)
- ▶ [Heritage Square](#)
- ▶ [Hyperion Water Treatment Plant](#)
- ▶ [Roundhouse Aquarium](#)
- ▶ [California Science Center](#)
- ▶ [Natural History Museum](#)
- ▶ [Museum of Tolerance](#)
- ▶ [Watts Towers](#)
- ▶ [Olvera Street](#)