

# Lead a Virtual Field Trip

## Description

A virtual field trip is a simulated field trip using the Internet. Google Earth and webcams can take us anywhere in the world and help us learn firsthand about topics connected to almost any subject area. Museum field trips give us access to some of the world's finest collections and can help us reach new levels of understanding about whatever we are researching. In planning a trip and serving as the trip guide, you can demonstrate what you have learned about a topic as you practice the important skill of communicating your ideas to a group.

## Planning

1. Using a search engine, find and evaluate virtual field trips that connect to your topic of research. Note the sites you visit and the URLs and/or links that specifically relate to your topic; note what you learned about your topic at each site.
2. You will be the tour guide for a small group of people. Answer these questions as you make your tour plan:
  - a. What will be the main points that you make as you lead the tour?  
Come up with a provocative question for your tour members to think about as they go on the tour; the question should be related to an important point you have learned in your research. (For example, "Where in the U.S. is the most unsafe place to live due to volcanic activity?" or "As we visit Ellis Island, what similarities and differences can we see between immigration issues of the 1850s and our current immigration issues?")
  - b. What questions might someone have about this topic?
  - c. What background information do they need to know to make sense of what they will see on the tour?
  - d. What is the most logical order to visit the different places on the tour?
  - e. What humorous, awe-inspiring, interesting details or highlights will keep your audience engaged?
3. Make an outline, list, or flowchart of particular things you will point out to tour members and places you will pause and really give some background information to help people better understand what they are seeing.
4. First practice by yourself what you will say throughout the tour; then practice with another person. Time the length of the tour and make sure it does not take an entire class period. Allow time for tour members to ask questions. When you feel confident that you are prepared, let your teacher know you are ready to schedule and lead the tour.

5. Here are some museum website options:

**Virtual Field Trips:** <http://www.Internet4classrooms.com/vft.htm>

**Utah Education Network, Build Your Own Field Trip:**

<http://www.uen.org/utahlink/tours>

**Walter McKenzie's Innovative Teaching:**

<http://surfaquarium.com/IT/vft.htm>

**Metropolitan Museum of Art:** <http://www.metmuseum.org>

**Museum of Science and Industry:** <http://www.msichicago.org>

**Rock and Roll Hall of Fame:** <http://www.rockhall.com>

**American Museum of Natural History:** <http://www.amnh.org>

**Sea World:** <http://www.seaworld.org>

**The Smithsonian Institute:** <http://www.si.edu>

**National Baseball Hall of Fame:** <http://baseballhall.org>

**George Washington's Mount Vernon:**

<http://www.mountvernon.org>

**Biodiversity Hot Spots:**

<http://www.biodiversityhotspots.org/Pages/default.aspx>

**Salem Witch Trials:** <http://www.salemweb.com/guide/witches.shtml>

**Chernobyl in Photos:** <http://www.kiddofspeed.com/default.htm>

**The Louvre:** <http://www.louvre.fr/llv/commun/home.jsp?bmLocale=en>

## Assessing

1. Ask your tour members to choose the type of reflection response they would like to make: some may write a journal reflection, a poem, or a short story; some may choose to make a mural (for example, show a panoramic view of Ellis Island with people entering the immigration office); some may choose to make an oral response (for example, one person is a newspaper reporter interviewing a family that just immigrated from another country in 1850; or someone could film another student taking on the role of an elderly person who immigrated as a child and then spent his/her life adjusting to life as an American).
2. Once the reflections are completed, study them to see what your tour members took away from their field trip. What changes would you make in leading your next field trip?