Field Trip Planning Guide

For the teacher:

While it seems obvious to choose a destination that aligns with your curriculum, articulate exactly how it does so. Your administrator will likely want to know and it helps you design the experience.

Personally visit the destination and check out their website in advance of your trip. Many have great materials for educators. Some places allow educators to attend at no charge to plan their trip. Find out about special exhibits or events that could change what’s on display during your visit. For theatrical and musical venues be sure you know what performances are available for your time frame and their suitability for your students.

Develop a written itinerary with items for students to locate and answer questions about. Have students sketch art work or artifacts of interest. Check with your destination to be sure writing tools are allowed and provide students with a clipboard or even a piece of cardboard so they don’t try to place worksheet on a wall to write.

Other questions to consider:

- What are provisions for lunch?
- What are gift shop rules?
- Where do you hang up cold weather clothing?
- Is photography allowed in all areas?
- Are reservations needed?
- Are docents available?
- Are any special activities available either free or for an extra fee?
- Where should the bus drop students off?
Prepare Chaperones:

Meet in advance with chaperones to review field trip guidelines and curriculum expectations (even if just for 15 minutes before the trip). Enlist their help to not only keep student behavior in line but to complete their tasks and encourage students to read labels on exhibits.

Many venues define the ratio of students per adult and some will even turn away groups without enough adults. Ensure in advance that you have enough chaperones for your class size. Encourage grandparents to take part for the wonderful perspective they can offer and great opportunity for intergenerational socializing. Create roster of all students and adults with cell phone numbers for group leaders. Remind leaders to leave their phones on.

Prepare Students:

**While on the bus:** Be safe and follow the driver’s rules at all times. No yelling or horseplay ever. If eating is allowed on bus, be sure to clean up after yourself.

Be sure to define what electronic devices are permissible:
- Hand held games?
- Headphones? Cameras?
- Cell phones? Don’t wait until you’re on the bus to define your policy.

Make the trip part of the experience. Point out interesting landmarks along the way.
While at a museum or other destination:

Remind students that voices and bodies must be under control at all times. Are you allowed to touch all exhibits or just some? How do you know? Please do not touch items unless signs or staff member says it is ok.

Are photos allowed?

Allow time at each exhibit for discussion, notes and/or sketches.

Don’t try to see it all. Make full use of museum staff and docents for a fuller experience. Do not cross barriers or climb on them, don’t lean on cases or get too close to art. Be respectful of staff and other visitors.

Follow chaperone instructions. Know who your chaperone is, and stay with them at all times. Do not run ahead or roam around without the chaperone. If separated from your group, know what to do.

At a theater or concert venue:

When do you clap? When must you be silent? Is whistling or yelling out appropriate? If students are allowed to have cellphones they must be turned off. Photography is generally not allowed during performances. If students are allowed to use their phones as cameras they should be instructed to turn ringers off and not make or accept calls or texts.
After your visit:

- Report out on worksheets or other activities completed during your visit.
- Create an art work, photo display, mural, diorama or podcast.
- Write an article for the school newspaper or parent newsletter.
- Provide a writing or drawing reflective activity that encourages students think about the field trip. Ask concrete questions. What did you see that you never saw before? What made you curious?
- Have students write a letter of thanks to venue staff or trip sponsors.

Teacher Post-Trip Reflection:

- What feedback did you get from students? from group leaders?
- Did you meet your curriculum goals?
- What changes would you make for your next visit?
- Did you thank your group leaders?
- How can you make connections between this trip and future learning?

This guide was prepared by **Michigan Youth Arts**.

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