

HOW TO PLAN A SITE VISIT

At INTACH we believe that one of the most exciting aspects of heritage education is experiencing our culture first hand by visiting a historical building, a national park, a museum or an artist. A site visit enhances the student's learning experience in the classroom, develops observational skills, enables an understanding of the interrelationships between disciplines and encourages a sense of appreciation for our diverse cultural legacy.

SOME TIPS ON HOW TO ORGANIZE A SITE VISIT

- Choose a subject that you would like to make more interesting for your students.
- Visit the historical building, national park, museum or any other site that is relevant to your chosen subject or discipline.
- Think about what you can do at the site with your students. If the site is too big then focus on a particular aspect of the site to maximize the interest of your students.
- Check for clearances needed and permission before the visit.
- Check for entrance fees.
- Check which days are best suited for school visits.
- Plan for travel time to and from the site.

- Plan for time spent at the site.
- Check if the site has parking space for the school bus.
- If needed check if the site is accessible to wheel chairs.
- Check if you can have lunch at the site.
- Check if the site has public services.
- Advise the students on what they should wear and bring with them to the site, such as a sunshade, water, refreshments etc. If you are planning to give your students worksheets ask them to bring clipboards and stationery.
- Advise them on what they should not bring to the site such as plastic bags and other non-biodegradable material.

WARM-UP ACTIVITIES BEFORE A SITE VISIT

Activities in the class room or school vicinity prior to a site visit are an interesting way to orient your students to a particular site and encourage a sense of curiosity and enthusiasm for the visit.

Given below are some suggestions for introductory activities for a visit to a natural site, a museum, a historical building and a craftsperson.

NATURAL ENCOUNTERS

Warm-up activity for a nature walk

- Ask your students to take a walk around their school and collect five natural objects like a leaf, a feather, a twig, a fruit and a piece of bark.
- Ask them to find out the name of the tree, flower or fruit or the bird the feather belongs to.
- Ask them to make a simple chain with the objects they find to show the interrelationships between objects found in nature.

DETECTIVE DETAILS

Warm-up activity for a museum visit

- Fill a suitcase with a variety of objects such as clothes, books, a diary, shoes, toiletries, and take the suitcase to class.
- Place the suitcase under a tree or any other location in your school.
- Ask your students to imagine coming across the suitcase at that spot.
- Ask your students to imagine the life of the person it belonged to on the basis of the place it was found and by studying the contents of the suitcase.

THE CITY SPECIAL

Warm-up activity for a visit to a historical building

- Ask your students to imagine that a friend from out of town has come to their city for a holiday.
- Ask your students to make a list of nine special places in their city they would take their friend to see.
- Have a discussion with your students on the places they have selected and reasons for their choices.

MAPPING CRAFTS

Warm-up activity for visiting a craftsperson

- Bring pictures of various craft objects to class such as a Madhubani painting, a Rajasthani puppet, an ikat textile.
- Hang a large-sized map of India in the classroom and ask your students to place the pictures of the craft objects on the respective regions the objects come from.

MAKING ACTIVITY SHEETS FOR THE SITE VISIT

It is a good idea to give students an activity sheet at the site. An activity sheet can have:

- Simple instructions on how to do the activity
- A basic introduction to the subject
- Photographs and illustrations
- Drawing activities to observe certain aspects of the site such as architectural features of a building, the flora and fauna in a park etc.
- A historical time line to provide a reference to context
- A relevant comparison with a familiar topic
- A connection with the site and everyday life
- Puzzles, detective games etc.
- Story writing and other activities to encourage creative and imaginative skills
- Cross-curriculum topics such as the connection between art and geography, history, mathematics, civics etc.

FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES

Following a site visit it is important to have classroom discussions with your students and activities to review their experience and determine the effectiveness of the trip. Follow-up activities can be in the form of:

- Creative workshops
- Games and quizzes
- Writing exercises
- Debates
- Theatre

We present ideas for activities for our natural heritage, museums, historical buildings and living traditions in the pages that follow.

EDUCATIONAL GOALS OF STUDENT ACTIVITIES

