

## Want to Facilitate a Field Trip in *Your* Class?

A Field Trip is an exciting way to engage students in course material. It allows them to explore and discover new information.

### Why should you facilitate a Field Trip in your class?

Possible learning goals: Have students learn in a more relaxed or more professional setting outside of the classroom. Have students see relevant course resources with their own eyes. Have students participate in field research. Encourage student's interest in the subject material.

### How-To Guide

<b>Prep</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Plan the specifics</li><li>• Set ground rules</li><li>• Set goals for the field trip</li></ul>
<b>During</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Allow students to familiarize themselves with the new environment</li><li>• Lead an activity: Guided tour, scavenger hunt, field research, interviews</li><li>• Bring the class back together for a closing discussion</li></ul>
<b>After</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Final report/project</li></ul>

#### Prep

Plan the specifics

- Make sure to have all physical arrangements made beforehand. Where are students going? How will students be transported to/from the location? When should students arrive?
- Secure any required funding. There are many grants offered through universities and external programs for which you may be eligible to apply. You (or your students!) may also consider holding various fundraisers.

Set ground rules

- Before arriving at the off-site location, have a discussion with students about how they should and should not behave. Emphasize that they are ambassadors of the university and they should act accordingly.
- Have an emergency plan in place. Make sure students know where to go and who to contact in case of an emergency.

Set goals for the field trip

- Help students realize why they are going on this field trip. Many students may see field-trip as a 'day-off', so help them re-focus by explaining the value of being here in a fun way.
- Share your excitement about the trip! Students will be more involved if they catch your enthusiasm.

#### During

Allow students to familiarize themselves with the new environment

- Students should be excited when they first get to the new site. If your timeline allows, give them a few minutes to explore their new setting on their own. This can help them develop their own curiosities and questions for later in the day.
- Giving students time to explore may also help them get out some energy and help students focus later during the activity.

Lead an activity

- There are many reasons to have a field trip and each is usually associated with a specific activity. Here are just a few examples:
  - Guided tour
  - Scavenger hunt
  - Field research
  - Interview/Panel

Bring the class back together for a closing discussion

- After the activity, refocus your students and have a reflective discussion. What did students enjoy most? What was most unexpected? If students had different activities, you could compare and contrast their experiences.

**After**

Final report/project

- There are wide varieties of ways for students to reflect on their field trip experience. If they did field research, they may write up a research report. If they took a guided tour, they might prepare a ten-minute group presentation on what they learned. Design a report/reflection assignment and have students share them.

Written by Catherine Weiner  
Doctoral Candidate, Molecular and Cellular Biology  
Harvard Graduate School of Arts and Sciences