



WANDERING IN WASHINGTON

Grade: Seventh - Eighth

Subjects:   

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OVERVIEW

This lesson provides a holistic approach to learning about rail safety in an urban setting. Skills of map reading, organization, planning, problem-solving and descriptive writing are incorporated, as students plan a sightseeing and shopping trip around the nation's capital. Students work both individually and in groups to plot out their trip and write in their journals an account of what they experience. All students' planning must take into consideration the safety messages outlined by the teacher at the start of the lesson.

SAFETY MESSAGE:

- Stay alert and pay attention around train tracks.

SUGGESTED TIME ALLOWANCE

Three 40-50 minute class periods

OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to:

- Identify names and locations of well-known Washington sights.
- Read a map of Washington and extrapolate these skills in other situations.

- Organize a daily itinerary.
- Realize that tourists need to follow safety precautions as suggested in safety messages.

National Academic Content Standards addressed by this lesson.

MATERIALS

- Description of assignment
- Map of Washington, D.C. metro system
- Books or other media resources showing Washington, D.C. sights
- Internet-connected computer(s)

VOCABULARY

Site-seeing, itinerary, urban

PROCEDURES

TEACHER PREPARATION:

Check on specific safety messages that are relevant to your city or town's rail system(s) and include them with the list of safety messages provided with this lesson. Look at the websites included with this lesson and be sure they are still operational. If desired, research additional websites students may use during this lesson. Check to see whether your school library has books and videotapes that show the sights in Washington, D.C. If not, arrange to check some resources out of the public library or send students searching for them. Look at the general background information provided with this lesson.

MOTIVATION:

Begin with a discussion: *How many of you have ever traveled to a big city? How many have been to Washington, D.C.? What means of transportation are available to tourists in a city? Have any of you ever ridden on the subway (Metro)? Those of you who have ridden the Metro, can you provide a description for others about your experience?* Tell students that they will all get a chance to travel to Washington, D.C. and take a ride on a Metro "virtually" through

this lesson.

ACTIVITY:

1. Show pictures or video clips of buildings and monuments in D.C. Ask students which of these places they might like to visit? Tell them they will need to be thinking about this in order to complete their assignment over the next couple of days. They should also pay attention to the different sights as they are expected to know them at the end of the lesson.
2. Go over the students' assignment: Each student (or pair of students) will plan a 2-3 day sightseeing/shopping tour of Washington, D.C. using a map of the D.C. metro system and background information provided on travel and tourism websites. They will make an itinerary for themselves and explain their experiences through a journal of their trip.
3. Review the "rules of the road" below.
 - Each itinerary must include at least three sights each day.
 - The minimum number of days for shopping and sightseeing is two; the maximum is three.
 - The students must include information about getting themselves and their luggage to and from Reagan National Airport or Union Station and their hotel.
 - They must include at least five safety messages in their itinerary and/or journal.
4. Lead students in a discussion comparing the Metro system to the railroad. Pass out the list of safety messages. Give them safety messages and discuss, so that they understand how these messages might be used in their itinerary or journal.

CONCLUSION:

Have students present their itineraries to the class, one at a time. If possible, have students come up with a scoring rubric that provides

them a checklist and helps them to score their own and their classmates' travel plans. Discuss safety messages that need to be heeded for each of the travel itineraries presented.

HIGHER ORDER THINKING

To assure students are using critical thinking skills, present this challenge at an appropriate place within the lesson: *Imagine that your town council determined a need for a metro system (or a new metro system, if you already have one). Design a metro system for your town that helps get people around to important sites. Select and name each of the metro stops. Draw the map, indicating the locations of stations. Write an article for the town's newspaper that tells about the new metro system and helps to encourage riders.*

ASSESSMENT

- Class discussion and inclusion of sights in individual itineraries (Identify names and locations of well-known Washington sights.)
- Completion of logical itinerary and journal (Read a map of Washington, D.C.; organize a daily itinerary.)
- Class discussion and journal entries (Realize that tourists need to follow safety precautions as suggested in safety messages.)

EXTENSIONS

Arts: Draw a pictorial (rebus) version of your itinerary to post on the classroom wall.

Social Studies/Language Arts: Complete the activity described under Higher Level Thinking Skills.

TEACHER RESOURCES

[Rail Safety Background Information](#)

Websites Listed on Student [Assignment Sheet](#)

- [Washington, D.C. Metro information and map](http://www.wmata.com)
<<http://www.wmata.com>>

- Fodor's Travel Guides; make your own miniguide
<<http://www.fodors.com>>
- Frommer's Travel Guides
<<http://www.frommers.com/destinations/washingtondc/>>
- TripBuilder Travel Guides
<<http://www.tripbuilder.com>>
- Searchable database of images; search for Washington, DC
<<http://www.ditto.com>>

NATIONAL ACADEMIC CONTENT STANDARDS

These standards are provided by the Mid-continent Regional Educational Laboratory (McREL) online publication, Content Knowledge: A Compendium of Standards and Benchmarks for K-12 Education.

The following standards are addressed by the activities of this lesson:

Geography

Level II: Upper Elementary (Gr. 3-5)

Standard 1: Understands the characteristics and uses of maps, globes and other geographic tools and technologies

Benchmark: Uses map grids (e.g., latitude and longitude or alphanumeric system) to plot absolute location

Level III: Middle School (Gr. 6-8)

Standard 2: Knows the location of places, geographic features and patterns of the environment

Benchmark: Knows the relative location of, size of and distances between places (e.g., major urban centers in the United States)

Health

Level III: Middle School (Gr. 6-8)

Standard 5: Knows essential concepts and practices concerning injury prevention and safety

Benchmark: Knows injury prevention strategies for family health

Language Arts

Level III: Middle School (Gr. 6-8)

Standard 1: Demonstrates competence in the general skills and strategies of the writing process

Benchmarks:

- Uses style and structure appropriate for specific audiences (e.g., public, private) and purposes (e.g., to entertain, to influence, to inform)
- Writes expository compositions (e.g., presents information that reflects knowledge about the topic of the report; organizes and presents information in a logical manner)
- Writes narrative accounts (e.g., engages the reader by establishing a context and otherwise developing reader interest; creates an organizational structure that balances and unifies all narrative aspects of, etc.)

Standard 2: Demonstrates competence in the stylistic and rhetorical aspects of writing

Benchmark: Uses descriptive language that clarifies and enhances ideas (e.g., establishes tone and mood, uses figurative language)

Standard 4: Gathers and uses information for research purposes

Benchmark: Uses a variety of resource materials to gather information for research topics (e.g., magazines, newspapers, dictionaries, schedules, journals, phone directories, globes, atlases, almanacs)

Standard 7: Demonstrates competence in the general skills and strategies for reading a variety of informational texts

Benchmarks:

- Identifies information-organizing strategies that are personally most useful
- Uses new information to adjust and extend personal knowledge base

Standard 8: Demonstrates competence in speaking and listening as tools for learning

Benchmark: Conveys a clear main point when speaking to others and stays on the topic being discussed

Life Skills: Self Regulation

Level IV: (Gr. K-12)

Standard: Considers risks

Benchmarks:

- Weighs risks in making decisions and solving problems
- Uses common knowledge to avoid hazard or injury
- Applies preventative measures prior to a task to minimize security or safety problems

Life Skills: Thinking and Reasoning

Level III: Middle School (Gr. 6-8)

Standard 6: Applies decision-making techniques

Benchmark: Analyzes personal decisions in terms of the options that were considered

Life Skills: Life Work

Level IV: High School (Gr. 9-12)

Standard 3: Manages money effectively

Benchmarks:

- Prepares and follows a budget
- Uses sound buying principles for purchasing goods and services

Technology

Level III: Middle School (Gr. 6-8)

Standard 2: Knows the characteristics and uses of computer software programs

Benchmark: Knows the common features and uses of desktop publishing software (e.g., documents are created, designed and formatted for publication; data, graphics and scanned images can be imported into a document using desktop software)

To see related standards for your state, search [Achieve's Clearinghouse](http://www.achievetest.org/achievetest/achievestart.nsf/Search?OpenForm):
< <http://www.achievetest.org/achievetest/achievestart.nsf/Search?OpenForm> >

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