



High School Road Trip

Social Studies: Geography

Overview

This lesson helps to expand students' knowledge of passenger rail systems around the world. Students research and create a virtual field trip of a city that has a commuter or long-distance passenger rail service. They put on their "tour guide" hats and use PowerPoint to present their research to the class via an "interactive travel brochure." (PowerPoint slideshow production is expected prior knowledge for this lesson.)

Time Allotment

Four 90-minute periods (including research)

Learning Objectives

On completion of this lesson students will be able to:

- Implement their knowledge of safe surfing, Internet searching, and PowerPoint production in the creation of a research-based "virtual field trip."
- Describe the geographical location and unique features of a U.S. or foreign city, where passenger train travel is widely used.
- Define rail safety tips necessary in a particular city.

Media Components

- Internet connected computer for each student or student group (Computer Lab, classroom stations, mobile laptop lab, etc.)
- PowerPoint software
- Websites as listed in Assignment sheet

Materials and Student Handouts

- Assignment sheet with copyright rules, one per student (attached)
- List of foreign and U.S. cities with commuter/light rail service, cut apart and put into

- a bucket (see end of lesson for suggestions)
- Introductory PowerPoint with student template (sample slides attached as starting point)

Teacher Preparations

- Create a network file for access by all students with acceptable starting points for Internet research (i.e., links document or web page. Note: *Portaportal* is a good option for teacher links.)
- Obtain a list of copyright rules for Internet image and video use, provided by your local school district's central media center. Add to Assignment sheet.
- Make 1-2 copies of list of U.S. and foreign cities with commuter/light rail service, cut apart one copy and place folded pieces into bucket or hat for students to draw during Introductory Activity.
- If necessary, predetermine student groups.

Introductory Activity

Focus: Start with a discussion and writing prompt engaging students with tales of their own experience: How many of you like to travel? What cities and countries have you visited? Have any of you used the train systems in different cities or countries?

Activity: Students take 20 minutes to write about an experience they have had on a train in the city of

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their choice. If they have not had such an experience, they may create a story based on something they have seen in movies or on television.

Follow-up: Have students turn in their brief reflections for a grade.

Learning Activities

1. Focus: Pass out the assignment sheet for the interactive travel brochure project and review it using a brief slideshow. (Sample template is provided with this lesson. Note that each slideshow must include a safety message.) Answer questions. Once students have a good overview, assign or allow them to choose groups of 4-5 students to work together. Each group may choose a city/country out of the bucket. Provide expectations for Internet use (bookmarks, links page as launching point, etc.) and take them to the Computer Lab or provide access to computers in the classroom.

Activity: Students use focused time for research.

Follow-up: Check in with students at the end of a specified (brief) period of time. They should have the first 3-4 items completed by the end of the first 90-minute class period (time will vary, depending on the length of the class).

2. Focus: (Second day) Go over the copyright rules with students at the start of the next class period. Students should focus their efforts on obtaining images and sounds for their slideshow. These may be pictures, drawings, incidental clipart to add to the presentation (e.g., a traveler, a family, etc.), music, sound effects, etc.

Activity: Students work collaboratively to collect the resources for their slideshow. By the end of the class, they are expected to have a collection of images and sounds for incorporation into their slideshow, with proper information for crediting each source. If necessary, they should have composed and sent email messages requesting permission for use of media in a class project. (The Community Connections section of this lesson notes possible need for extended rights clearance, as well.)

Follow-up: Check in with students at the end of the class period, using the day's assignment as an assessment point.

If possible/necessary, allow one more in-class day for collaborative research time.

3. Focus: The last 1-2 days may be spent in production and development of the PowerPoint show.

Activity: Check in with students on their progress, and assist as needed.

Follow-up: Bring the class together to explain how the travel brochure presentations will work in class.

Culminating Activities

Focus: Provide a review sheet for the slideshow travel brochure for each student to use as they view peer presentations.

Activity: Students present their slideshows.

Follow-up: Discuss the attributes of each slideshow with the class, encouraging critical thinking and constructive analysis. Have students vote on which city or country they would most wish to visit based on the slideshow presentations.

Assessment

- Assess students individually and as a group at each check-in point.
- Use a rubric for assessing slideshow presentation. Examples of rubrics for similar projects on the Web at: <http://rubistar.4teachers.org/index.php> (rubric ID numbers 1369902, 1149019, 1266850, 1416165)

Community Connections

- Plan a virtual field trip evening for parents to share the slideshow presentations. If the school sponsors an international day, use slideshows at a booth for display.
- Combine all slideshows into one continuous track presentation and record onto DVD. Obtain clearance for showing at a local train station kiosk or in-house monitor for passengers awaiting their trains at the station. (When requesting copyright permission from copyright holders, be sure to include a request for "limited public display/no entry fee" in the parameters of the request.)

Cross-Curricular Extensions

- **Social Studies:** Students study development and history of trains in the country of choice
- **Reading/Social Studies:** Students read newspapers from their selected U.S. or international city to gain a better understanding and appreciation of its culture.
- **Math:** Students working with international cities work with metric and monetary conversions as a comparison to U.S. units of measure and money.

National Standards

This lesson addresses National Standards
(Level IV - grades 9-12)

Geography

Standard 4. Understands the physical and human characteristics of place

1. Knows how social, cultural, and economic processes shape the features of places.

Language Arts

Standard 4. Gathers and uses information for research purposes.

1. Uses a variety of print and electronic sources to gather information for research topics.

Standard 8. Uses listening and speaking strategies for different purposes.

6. Makes multimedia presentations using text, images, and sound.

Standard 9. Uses viewing skills and strategies to understand and interpret visual media.

1. Uses a range of strategies to interpret visual media.

Source: mcrel.org

List of Countries, Cities:

Note: *Be sure students are focusing on commuter rail—longer distance travel, much of it above the ground and thus visible to and often crossing paths with cars and pedestrian crosswalks—rather than subways or entirely elevated train systems.*

Possible countries to research long-distance train travel include: U.S. (Amtrak is the only long-distance train service), Canada, Mexico, France, Germany, United Kingdom, Italy, Spain, Japan, China and India

Possible U.S. cities to research for information about commuter travel: Seattle, Portland (OR), San Francisco, San Diego, St. Louis, Salt Lake City, Charlotte, Baltimore, Austin, Dallas, Houston, Minneapolis and Pittsburgh

Alternate suggestions: Washington D.C., Boston, New York and Los Angeles

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Travel Brochure Slideshow Assignment

Due _____

Group # _____

We're going on a road trip! A virtual road trip, and we have to decide where to go. Your group will be publishing an electronic travel brochure to tell us about a city location somewhere in the U.S. or overseas. Follow the slideshow specifications and research the city carefully, including all necessary components.

Slideshow requirements:

- Use the slideshow template as a guide. You may redesign it but the basic information in the slideshow must be included in your group's presentation.
- Every slideshow must contain information about the method of transportation around the city/region. For this assignment, which highlights commuter or light rail systems, you must include the name of the train, how to get around on the train and safety tips for riding on and traveling near the train.
- Each slideshow must include at least six images and one sound (music is acceptable).
- Credits and bibliography for the slideshow are required. Every image should have a source cited next to the image. Facts and statistics should also be cited. At the end of the slideshow, include a bibliography of sources used and credit the producers of the slideshow. Use proper MLA format for source citations, just as you would in a research paper.
- Your slideshow should have a minimum of 14 slides and no more than 20 slides, following the basic outline below.

- 1) Title Slide
 - a. Travel in CITY
 - b. Phrase encouraging us to visit, e.g., "Where good times happen"
- 2) Welcome to CITY
 - a. City location
 - b. Map image
 - c. Population
- 3) Language
 - a. Spoken (Welcome in this language)
 - b. Written
- 4) Cultural Contributions (city is known for...)
 - a. Cultural contribution 1
 - b. Cultural contribution 2, etc.
- 5) Overview of tour of the city
 - a. Preview tour
 - b. Preview method of transportation (train)
- 6) All Aboard!
 - a. Getting around the city/country by commuter rail
 - b. System name
 - c. Brief history
 - d. Station(s') location(s)
 - e. Buying tickets
 - f. Time tables – finding your way
- 7) Safety Around Railroad Tracks
 - a. Key safety points
 - b. Ways that safety is communicated to passengers, pedestrians and drivers

Note that one requirement of the slideshow is to incorporate two slides about railway safety. Use headings on slides as recommended. Research the safety elements of the train tracks with regard to cars and pedestrians. For instance, in the system your group researches, are the trains right in the middle of the street? If so, what will people need to do to be careful? If they aren't in the street but on their own separated tracks, what do people who live around those rail lines have to be careful about? A map (static or Google map) should show where major roads cross either type of tracks. What do people walking or driving across the tracks need to consider? If you come across any examples of pedestrians or cars in train related crashes, use that as an example so that the audience realizes the importance of your safety messages.

- i. Signs you might see (note differences from the local city)
 - ii. Recorded messages you might hear
 - iii. Warning signals you might see or hear
- 8) Safety on the Train
 - a. Standing or sitting safely
 - b. What the conductor says and what it means (particularly in another language)
 - c. Getting on and off the train (steps, stairways, entrance and egress expectations)
 - d. Behavioral expectations
- 9) First Stop

Cultural experience #1

 - a. Description
 - b. Image
 - c. What you do here
 - d. Why go here
- 10) Next Stop (duplicate slide as needed)

Cultural experience #__

 - a. Description
 - b. Image
 - c. What you do here
 - d. Why go here
- 11) Scrapbook
 - a. Summary of the trip
 - b. What else you might need to know
- 12) “Clincher” (a way to end that audience will remember)
- 13) Credits
 - a. Image credits included next to each image
 - b. Source citations in MLA format at end of slideshow
 - c. Names of producers of slide show
 - d. Year/location of this publication

Each member of the group must be involved in both the research and the production process. Focus efforts on gathering research first, then making group decisions on the design and presentation style for the slideshow. Try to balance the workload equally.

Research and Citation Requirements:

- Start by examining the culture’s languages, traditional greetings, travel methods, hotels, entertainment, tourist attractions. Use any and all resources available to you.
- You may use books, interviews, magazines, and the Internet. Be sure your sources are credible. Here are some suggested websites to get you started:
 - www.lonelyplanet.com
 - www.americanexpress.com/travel
 - www.culturalsavvy.com/culture.htm
 - www.frommers.com
 - www.augsburg.edu/education/edc210/norms-values.html
 - www.travelsource.com/index.html
 - www.thetrip.com
 - www.odci.gov/cia/publications/factbook/index.html
 - www.travel.state.gov
 - www.oli.org
- It is important to obtain copyright clearance for use of images and music. An email to the copyright holder should be sent early in the project development period so that clearance for classroom use (or later public display) may be obtained. See the teacher for assistance in this requirement.
- Credits for the slideshow are required. Every image should have a source cited next to the image. Facts and statistics should also be cited. At the end of the slideshow, credit must be given for sources used and for the producers of the slideshow. Use proper MLA format for source citations, just as you would in a research paper.

High School Road Trip Slideshow Template

Travel in CITY

(phrase encouraging visitors)

Welcome to CITY

- City location
- Map image
- Population

Language

- Spoken (Welcome in this language)
- Written

Cultural Contributions

- Known for (cultural contributions)
- Overview of tour of the city

All Aboard!

- Getting around the city/country by commuter rail
- System name
- Brief history
- Station(s) location(s)
- Buying tickets
- Time tables – finding your way

Safety Around Railroad Tracks

- Key safety points
- Ways that safety is communicated to passengers, pedestrians and drivers
 - Signs you might see (note differences from the local city)
 - Recorded messages you might hear
 - Warning signals you might see or hear

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Safety on the Train

- Standing or sitting safely
- What the conductor says and what it means (particularly in another language)
- Getting on and off the train (steps, stairways, entrance and egress expectations)
- Behavioral expectations

First Stop

- Cultural experience #1
 - Description
 - Image
 - What you do here
 - Why go here

Next Stop

- Cultural experience #__
 - Description
 - Image
 - What you do here
 - Why go here
- (duplicate slide as needed)

Scrapbook

- Summary of the trip
- What else you might need to know
- "Clincher"

Credits

- Image credits included next to each image
- Source citations in MLA format at end of slideshow
- Names of producers of slide show
- Year/location of this publication