

Go Blogging with Social Studies Field Trips

For more than a decade, teachers have been developing classroom Web sites to post information for students and parents. To integrate the Internet into social studies learning, we have planned scavenger hunts and virtual field trips to teach basic Internet research. Today we can add blogs to our Internet connection to the elementary curriculum. With traditional Web sites, teachers share information with parents and document units of study as well as provide an avenue for student publishing. Blogs, unlike traditional Web sites, provide teachers and students with the capability to type directly into a Web page using the browser. With the click of a button, ideas, classroom news, and social studies content can be published on the Internet in the form of a blog.


Blogs are often described as online journals that can be easily updated to reflect the thoughts and ideas of the user. With blogs, students are actively engaged in writing and reading. A blog is interactive—that is, readers can respond to an author by adding a comment. Blogging is a useful way for teachers to enhance social studies units. For example, when teachers use a blog to plan, organize, and document a social studies field trip, the project-oriented approach to using Web resources becomes highly interactive and meaningful for the students.

Field trip blogs begin with a unit of study. Like any instructional activity, planning is essential to successful learning. Field trip blogs can be used for real and virtual field trips.

Teachers can use blogs to introduce a planned field trip. Tim Gels, a pre-service student at Athens State University in Alabama developed a blog to engage fourth graders in a field trip

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A cabin at the museum



This is a cabin at the Burritt Museum. It was built almost 150 years ago!

Look closely at the cabin.

We can see that it is made of wood.

It is not painted.

It has a large chimney.

It is sitting on stones.

How is your house different?

posted by tg @ 11:45 AM

Previous Posts

- ◆ A fireplace in one of the ca
- ◆ The Springhouse
- ◆ Sheep on the farm
- ◆ A fence on the farm



A screenshot from Tim Gels social studies blog.

to the Burritt Museum in Huntsville, Alabama. Gels included digital photographs of the log cabins to prepare students for the field trip. In the blog, students learned how to respond to blogging text to compare life today with life 150 years ago. Tim's blog can be found at <http://triptoburritt.blogspot.com/>.

Students can also blog to document learning from a field trip as well. Expository writing is encouraged in blogs when students learn to summarize details in descriptive paragraphs. For example, if a class visits Washington, D.C., teachers can assign sites such as the Lincoln Memorial or the Washington Monument to small groups to organize reflections from the field trip. Free access to a blog is available at <http://www.bloglines.com/>.

Finally, blogs provide potential teachers and students with links to Internet resources for virtual tours to unachievable destinations. Student blog projects document learning about places such as museums, historical sites, and natural environments. By using blogs to announce and organize classroom events, teachers link the Internet to the curriculum. Field trips will never be the same again.

Standards: NETS•S 3, 4 (<http://www.iste.org/nets/>). NCSS Curriculum Standard III (<http://www.ncss.org/standards/>).

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