

## DESIGNING A GREAT WORKSHEET FOR FIELD TRIPS

Worksheets are a favorite technique to keep students engaged and on-task during field trips. But poorly-designed worksheets can become a distraction from your field trip goals, rather than a beneficial tool. Use the below tips and tricks to design a worksheet for your next field trip that will both hold students' interest AND support your learning goals.

### Tie everything back to the Learning Goals

Giving students specific Learning Goals to focus on or driving questions to answer during their field trip is a great way to focus their attention and reduce the “sensory overload” factor. Think about how students will demonstrate achievement of these Learning Goals, and what education standards they meet (if desired). List the Learning Goals at the very top of the worksheet. Be sure to clearly communicate these goals to both students and chaperones *before* their field trip.

*Examples of effective Field Trip Learning Goals based on:*

- **Specific topics:** “Students will explore modern inventions that keep our water clean”
- **Skills:** “Students will engage in collaboration and teamwork to analyze the issue”
- **Broad concepts:** “Students will identify examples of patterns in nature”

### Make clear connections to classroom curriculum

Field trips are much more memorable, impactful, and educational when deliberately connected to classroom curriculum. Consider what you've already been working on in class, or what you'd like students to learn in their next unit, and find ways to connect this to their field trip. Use the worksheet to recall and reinforce knowledge gained during pre-field trip activities, and to set students up for future investigations and Learning Goals.

*Example (Learning Goal: Build understanding of what life was like for early Oregon settlers)*

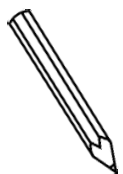


Read the pages from the settler's diary that you see on display. Then, imagine you are that settler in the year 1852. Thinking about what you've learned about life during that time, what might you write on the next page of your diary?

### Give students choice

A successful worksheet should allow students some freedom in what they take a closer look at, while also giving enough guidance to ensure that they're focusing on the areas, animals, or topics you want the field trip to support. Students who are given some level of voice and choice in their explorations will be more likely to stay on-task and on their best behavior.

*Example (Learning Goal: Identify tidepool animal adaptations)*



Choose an animal and look closely at its *adaptations* for survival in a tidepool. Does your animal (circle all that you can see)...

Stick to the rocks?

Have a hard shell?

Bend with the water?

Have a rounded body?

## Use open-ended questions

Questions that can be answered with a simple “Yes” or “No” do little to engage critical thinking. On your worksheets, use question prompts that require deeper thinking or discussion with others to answer completely. These types of questions can encourage students to pause and give a certain artifact or species longer consideration, foster creative or analytical thinking, and help them connect what they’re seeing to prior knowledge.

*Example (Learning Goal: Explore how the parts of a simple machine help it function)*



Study the model of the bicycle for 30 seconds. Then, turn away and draw it from memory. Finally, turn back and fill in the details you forgot. What would happen if you tried to ride a real bicycle that was missing the parts you forgot to draw?

## Include prompts for different learning styles

Some of your students might excel with analytical worksheet questions, while others might need more creative or expressive ways to communicate what they learned. Be sure to include a variety of questions and prompts on your worksheets, such as:

- Draw something
- Complete a diagram
- Write a story
- Circle an answer from several options
- Describe how something feels, smells, or sounds
- Record detailed observations about an animal, object, or place

## Don't forget your Chaperones!

Not only are chaperones responsible for the safety and behavior of your students, they can also have a huge impact on your students' learning. That's why it's important to prepare your chaperones for your field trip just as deliberately as you prepare your students. Create a Chaperones' version of the field trip worksheet that provides helpful hints about where to find answers to the questions. Be sure to check out our [Teachers' Guide to Field Trips](#) for additional Chaperone materials.

## Field Trip Worksheet Checklist

- Tie everything back to Learning Goals
- Make clear connections to classroom curriculum
- Give students choice
- Use open-ended questions
- Include prompts for different learning styles
- Don't forget your Chaperones

FOR MORE INFORMATION, SEE OUR [TEACHERS GUIDE TO FIELD TRIPS](#) OR CONTACT:  
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