

Field Trip to Botanical Garden or Park

Materials:

- clipboard for each group
- copy of class-made scavenger hunt
- pencils
- bags and gloves for litter-collection
- map of the park with highlighted places for students to go on self-guided tour

Pre-trip preparation:

1. Before the field trip to the botanical garden or park, prepare for the trip by talking about expectations and obtaining permission and getting chaperones.
2. Have students work in groups of 3-5 to brainstorm a list of things they think they will see on their field trip. Combine their lists to create a scavenger hunt that they will use while they are there. Some items for the scavenger hunt may include trashbin, recycle bin, certain kinds of birds and wild animals, informational brochure, signs that label plants/trees, and certain kinds of flowers. With the students' help, create a final scavenger hunt page that is duplicated for all in an easy-to-read format.
3. Prepare a map of the park in advance and tell the students where they are to go while there, using the map for reference as their group takes a self-guided tour (with a chaperone, if needed).

On the day of the field trip:

1. Groups of students take a self-guided tour of the garden/park while they check off items on their scavenger-hunt list.
2. Students pick up trash and recyclables as they tour the grounds.
3. Students meet the teacher at a designated time and place to share their scavenger hunts and dispose of trash and recyclables. Discuss whether there is more or less litter here than in the urban environment.
4. Students each find a pleasant place to sit and write a reflection of their observations of the park and its comparison to the urban environment. They write descriptively of what they saw, heard, felt, and smelled.
5. Discuss facts learned about the garden/park. For example, the New York Botanical Garden covers 250 acres and houses 50 gardens. There are over 1 million plants in the garden. Its annual budget was \$64 million in 2008. Funding comes from public sources, including the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, The New York City Council, and the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, as well as private funding sources.



Post field-trip follow up:

1. Students each research a different plant, animal, or environmental issue observed on the field trip. They write a one-page report about their topic to share with classmates.
2. Research the natural resources priorities in the state. Have students find out the following information (one topic per group): 1) percentage of state budget allocated to parks, 2) percentage of state land set aside for natural purposes, 3) amount of state/national money designated for land and wildlife conservation each year, and 4) what percentage of parks/natural areas are private, state-owned, and nationally owned and maintained.

