



The City of U.S.: A Virtual Field Trip to Washington, D.C. Afterschool Companion Guide

Overview

The City of U.S.: A Virtual Field Trip to Washington, D.C., was created to guide upper elementary and middle school students through a discovery, exploration, and celebration of the U.S. Capital city. Students will learn about the history, culture, artifacts, and significance of Washington, D.C. as they get an inside look at several important places, including:

- The White House
- The U.S. Capitol Building
- The Supreme Court
- The Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial
- Arlington National Cemetery and the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier
- The Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum

Within this Afterschool Companion Guide, you will find activities designed to engage students before, during, and after the Virtual Field Trip as they connect the experience to their own lives. These print-and-go activities will guide students in exploring the significance of places in their community and country, as well as the places—both past and present—that play an important role in their own stories.

Key Objectives

Students will:

- Understand how and why places have meaning.
- Make connections to historical locations in Washington, D.C.
- Identify places that are a significant part of their own story and develop a presentation that explains why.

Materials

- My Place Capture Sheet (or scrap paper), one per student.
- The City of U.S.: A Virtual Field Trip to Washington, D.C. Capture Sheet, one per student.
- Our Stories Capture Sheet, one per student.
- Optional: Devices with Internet access and/or recording abilities, as many as are available.



VIRTUAL FIELD TRIP

Before the Virtual Field Trip

Encourage students to think back as far as their memories can go and picture their earliest positive memory of a place.

Once students have a place in their mind, encourage them to close their eyes and walk around this place as they focus on what they see, hear, smell, and feel.

Pass out one My Place Capture Sheet (or a piece of scrap paper) to each student. Ask students to describe the place in their minds in a form of their choice—a picture, story, poem, word cloud, etc. using as many details as possible.

Then, guide students in forming small groups. Encourage them to share their places with each other, being sure to use details to describe the places they selected and the memories associated with them.

Wrap up by summarizing that we each have places that have shaped us into who we are today. Just like these places will always be an important part of our own stories, there are also places in each nation that form an important part of that nation's collective story. As students participate in The City of U.S.: A Virtual Field Trip to Washington, D.C., they will investigate examples of some of these places, too!



During the Virtual Field Trip

Distribute one The City of U.S.: A Virtual Field Trip to Washington, D.C. Capture Sheet to each student.

Review the directions provided. Be sure students understand that they will be visiting several places during the Virtual Field Trip. As they learn about each place, they should try to connect the place to their own lives and experiences, and jot down why the place is meaningful and/or significant to them.

After the Virtual Field Trip

Activity #1

Debrief on the Virtual Field Trip by reviewing at least a few of the places that were visited and encouraging students to share what they recorded.

Then, lead students in a discussion about what they shared. Ask:

- What were some of the most interesting places to you? Why?
- Why do you think places might have a different meaning for different people?

Activity #2

Distribute one copy of the Our Stories Capture Sheet to each student.

To prepare students for the activity:

- Explain that each student (or pairs/groups, if you would like students to work together) will select one place in their community that is an important part of their current story. Much like the stops in the Virtual Field Trip, students will create a brief presentation about this place.
- Review the directions provided on the handout.
- If students have devices available, encourage them to perform research to learn more about the place they select. If not, students can rely on their own experiences and background knowledge.
- Also explain *how* students will be presenting their place. If students have access to recording devices, they can record short video clips to share. If not, students can present directly to their peers.

When students are ready, encourage them to share their stories with each other as a sequel to The City of U.S.: A Virtual Field Trip to Washington, D.C.



My Place Capture Sheet

A large, empty rectangular area defined by a blue dotted line. This area is intended for a virtual field trip capture, where users can place a virtual marker or capture a scene from their environment.



The City of U.S.: A Virtual Field Trip to Washington, D.C. Capture Sheet

Directions

During the Virtual Field Trip, you will visit each of the places below. As you learn about the story behind each one, think about how or why each place is important or meaningful to *you* and write it in the chart below.

Places	Why is this important or meaningful to me?
The White House 	
The U.S. Capitol Building 	
The Supreme Court 	



The Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial



Arlington National Cemetery and the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier



The Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum





VIRTUAL FIELD TRIP

Our Stories Capture Sheet

Directions

Select a place in your community that is an important part of your life today.

Use the space below to prepare for a short (1-2 minute) presentation about this place, similar to each of the stops during the Virtual Field Trip. Your presentation should include:

- A description of this place, including where it is, what it is used for, and what you can see, hear, and/or smell when you are there.
- Historical and/or other important facts about this place.
- Why this place is an important part of your story.
- Any other supporting details or visuals that will help your audience better understand your place.

Practice your presentation and be ready to share it with your peers!