

ELECTRONIC FIELD TRIPS **AN INTERACTIVE DISTANCE-LEARNING EXPERIENCE**

Have you ever wished that you could take your class to some of the United States' most interesting and educational locations, but you knew you could not afford the cost, time, or hassle? Now you can have a free and incredible field trip experience without ever leaving your school. Ball State University's Electronic Field Trips combine live interactive broadcasts with fun and imaginative Web content.

Ball State University Electronic Field Trips
www.bsu.edu/eft

THE REGISTRATION PROCESS

You can sign up for one or all of the broadcasts that take place in national parks, museums, historic sites, and other educational locations. Once you are registered, you will receive a series of instructional emails about how to use the content provided, as well as how to prepare for the live broadcast.

Participation in the Electronic Field Trips is free due to the generosity of the Best Buy Children's Foundation. When filling out your registration form, check the "Best Buy Children's Foundation Scholarship" to ensure free access. Registration is fast and easy at the site.

www.bsu.edu/eft/home/41register.php

THE WEB SITE

A Web site is launched one month prior to the live show to accompany each field trip. Each site has a teacher and a student section. Both sections are based on national standards. The student section is made up of fun and interactive lessons that tie into the teacher lesson plans, as well as the broadcast. The teacher's section includes at least ten standards-based lesson plans in a variety of disciplines, such as science, math, language arts, music, and more. The downloadable lessons include photos, worksheets, and Web links to make teaching easy. The lesson plans have been written by teachers who have visited the field trip site and tested the activities in their own classrooms.

THE BROADCAST

The broadcast is the culminating component of each electronic field trip experience. After having spent time with the curriculum in the classroom and learning about the content on the Web, students watch a live 60-minute broadcast from the site of each field trip. The hosts for the show are kids who learn and interact with experts in the field. Humorous skits, interesting graphics, and other exciting elements make the broadcast both entertaining and educational.

Your students will do much more than just watch the show. They can interact with the broadcast in several ways:

- Phone a toll-free number to ask an on-air question.
- Post a question for the panel of experts on the discussion forum.
- Participate in lessons right along with the show hosts.

THE RESEARCH

Ball State University has proven through research with each field trip experience that students retain more material if it is presented in a variety of ways. To accommodate all kinds of learners, the material is offered to students using interactive online games and activities, hands-on classroom lesson plans, and the culminating live show.

SCHEDULE FOR 2006-2007 SCHOOL YEAR

Upcoming Electronic Field Trips include Independence National Historical Park in Pennsylvania, Volcanoes National Park in Hawaii, Manzanar National Historic Site in California, and Indianapolis Motor Speedway in Indiana.

WATCHING THE ELECTRONIC FIELD TRIPS

Electronic Field Trips can be viewed via satellite, local PBS/cable network, or through the Internet at the Apple Learning Interchange. Don't panic if your school does not have its own satellite dish. Access with a local PBS/cable network is much easier than you think and local companies will be happy to assist your school. Depending on your technology access and needs, using the Internet is the easiest way to view the field trips. Connect the Internet to an LCD projector and project one signal to the entire class to prevent bandwidth degradation problems. Satellite and cable broadcasts will allow transmissions through your in-house broadcasting system via television or LCD projector.

TREE-MENDOUS TECHNOLOGY

Readers are invited by the Ball State University field trip staff to take a peek at a recent Web site that was designed to accompany the Tree-Mendous Technology broadcast in Carson, Washington. Students enjoyed using the site to learn about old-growth forests and the technology used to study them. Teachers raved about the downloadable lesson plans, complete with accompanying worksheets and photos. Use the following login name and password to access the Web site.

www.bsu.edu/eft/treetops

Login Name: *forest*

Password: *canopy*

AN ENGAGING LEARNING EXPERIENCE

With summer vacation on the agenda for most readers, take the time to register for one or more field trips. Your students will become part of an engaging learning experience that they will never forget as they become immersed in a multidisciplinary educational adventure using every facet of technology.

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