

# Travel the USA

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Many students who study English hope some day to spend some time traveling in the United States. To do this, they are required to determine appropriate sites and make the necessary arrangements for a safe and comfortable trip.

The exercise below capitalizes on students' curiosity about and desire to travel in the United States. It has the added advantage of being an excellent vehicle for language study--especially as it is done in small groups as a classroom activity. Students are actively engaged in reading about the United States, discussing (in English) places to go, designing a travel tour, writing a brochure that outlines their tour, and competing with others to "sell" their tour at a "travel fair" to students and teachers in their school.

Students should have a reasonable grasp of English to do this project, though they do not have to be fluent. Ideally, they will have access to a computer, the Internet, a scanner and a photocopier, though the activities can be modified so that the use of these kinds of technology is not necessary. For example, in place of a brochure, which must be photocopied, students can create a poster. Travel guides, such as *The Lonely Planet*, can substitute for the Internet. If pictures cannot be scanned in, students can cut pictures out of magazines or even draw pictures of various "must see" places in the United States.

The following is a seven-day activity. This activity was done with both low/intermediate and intermediate/advanced students who were studying English as a Second Language at a university in the United States. The lesson plan is based on 50-minute class periods. Appendices are provided at the end of the lesson plan. These are samples of the handouts given to the students who actually did the project and, of course, would need to be modified for each class.

The lesson plan with descriptions is outlined below.

## Day 1

Introduce the idea of the project:

- a. Small groups -discuss places of interest in the US students would like to visit. Some prompting may be necessary, e.g. the East (including Washington D.C.; New York), New England, (Boston, Massachusetts; Maine; Vermont; New Hampshire), the Southwest (including Arizona and New Mexico) the South (including New Orleans,

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- Louisiana; Memphis, Tennessee; Florida), the Northwest (including Seattle, Washington; Portland, Oregon), the Midwest (including Chicago; Cincinnati, Ohio; Madison, Wisconsin; Minneapolis, Minnesota). (7 minutes)
- b. Large group -discuss the places suggested in the small groups. Write ideas on the blackboard. (10 -15 minutes)
  - c. Discuss the Internet workshop; distribute and go over the handout (See Appendix 1). (5 minutes).

## Day 2

Workshop on the Worldwide Web. (50 minutes)

(Teachers who present the workshop would undoubtedly want to browse the Internet before the workshop so that they know what kind of information is available.)

Students are shown (if they don't already know) how to get onto the Internet. One good source for travel information about the United States is yahoo.com. After getting into Yahoo, type *Travel USA* as a search. The Internet will send you to a page entitled *search results* dealing with information about traveling in the United States. On this page there are many good options. Two in particular work well. The first is a listing in *search results* under *directory category matches*: "United States Travel." Clicking on this option brings the students to another page. On this page, "Destination Guides" is a particularly fruitful site. The other notable--and perhaps preferable--site is "USA Travel," which is travel information about the United States listed by state. (It is number 4 on the list.) This is in the section under *web matches* on the *search results* page mentioned above.

Students are encouraged to browse the sites they find. The teacher helps as necessary.

## Day 3

- a. Review what students learned during the WWW workshop. (5 minutes)
- b. Review areas of interest to go to. What is there to see? (5 minutes) Add the ideas below if they haven't thought of them:

Northeast: Boston, Cape Cod, Bar Harbor, Acadia

Southeast: Miami, Everglades, Orlando, Savannah, Atlanta

Southwest: Las Vegas, Grand Canyon, Bryce Canyon

Northwest: Seattle, Olympic Peninsula, Portland, San Francisco

National Parks: Glacier, Yellowstone

Midwest: Chicago, Galena, IL, St Louis

- c. Describe the project, distribute and go over the handout (See Appendix 2). (5-10 minutes)

- d. Individuals choose the primary area they want to go to as well as two alternatives. (2 minutes)
- e. Form groups of 3-4 students based on their areas of interest. (10 minutes)
- f. Provide examples of brochures and go over them. These are readily available in any travel agency in the United States. (Barring access to these, a page from one of the Internet sites can be used as well.) Discuss what kinds of information the brochure contains. Discuss the visual aspects of the brochure. Have students brainstorm other ways of saying the same thing. (15 minutes)
- g. Groupwork (remaining time)  
 Discuss step 2 on the handout: Who will the tour appeal to? What kinds of activities do you want to do?  
 Discuss where you can go to find the necessary information and decide who will be responsible for obtaining it.
- h. Homework: Get information about your area according to the decisions made in your group. Bring the information to class the next day.

#### Day 4

- a. Large group -discuss what kinds of media are available for advertising: slides/videos/audiotapes/hawkers, etc. Suggest that they might want to use some of these for their booth at the "travel fair." (5 minutes)
- b. Small groups -share information and begin writing the text for the brochure. (This can be an individual, pair or group activity.)  
 (N.B. refer to step three of the handout [appendix 2]. They will need to address these issues in order to write a good brochure.)  
 Remind them to be sure to consider visuals.  
 Each student will be responsible for writing a section of the brochure. (Students, especially beginning students, may inadvertently plagiarize some of the text material. They should be reminded that they must use their own words. Teachers should require that the students provide the address or a copy of the pages of any website the students have visited. This is, after all, normal practice in any research endeavor. Teachers should also be aware of the likelihood of finding plagiarism. Normally this is easy to spot. Should they find it, teachers can help students paraphrase.)
- c. Homework: Finish writing your section of the text for the brochure.

#### Day 5

- a. Groups -peer review each others' text sections. Make changes and additions as necessary.
- b. Go to the computer lab and input text and graphics.
- c. Homework: As a group, finish the brochure. Make a copy of it for your teacher.

**Day 6**

- a. Individual conferences with groups about the brochure.
- b. Homework: Revise the brochure. Make one good copy for your teacher and another for distribution.
- c. Xerox copies to hand out at the travel fair.

**Day 7**

Travel Fair. Appendix 3 is the flier that was actually distributed for this project. It would, of course, be adapted to fit different situations.

In preparation for the fair, we photocopied US money (a \$1.00 bill on which we wrote denominations of \$100, \$50, etc.) and handed stacks of them out to people who came to the fair.

We also posted the flier (Appendix 3) on walls around the building. Besides capturing people who were strolling down the hall, we cajoled colleagues to come as well. Each time the project was undertaken, it was a great success!

## Appendix 1

### Tour of the Worldwide Web

We will have a special training session on how to search the Web using Netscape. You only need to know how to get on the Internet.

During this session, you will have both a demonstration of how to find materials and the chance to look for some materials. The topic that we will be using in the session on Monday, and in class thereafter, is "Travel in the United States."

In order to be prepared for the training, you need to start thinking about what part of the United States would be interesting to visit. You may have some idea of places, but if you do not, the list below will give you some ideas of a few of the popular tourist destinations in the United States:

Alaska

Hawaii

New England -e.g. Boston and Cape Cod

The Grand Canyon

Florida and its environs -e.g. Orlando and Disney World, Miami

California -e.g. Yosemite Park, Napa Valley, San Francisco

New Orleans

The Southwest -e.g. Phoenix and Sedona, Arizona

New York

Please think about what areas you might like to explore on the Web. For the training session, you will probably be working with another person (two people per computer); for the class work on travel you will be working in groups of 3-4. Talk a little with your classmates about areas you're interested in visiting and then come to class ready to SURF THE NET!!!

## Appendix 2

### Travel Project

In this writing assignment, you will be working in a small group to create a tour of one area of the United States, write and produce a travel brochure (or poster) of that area, and compete with other groups in your class to "sell" the tour. Your tour will be complete; that is, you will be responsible for providing all the necessary amenities typical of any tour package: travel arrangements, food, sightseeing, etc. Your tour package should be based on realistic prices, but it should also be competitive. Your audience will primarily be students and teachers. You will present your tour and brochure at a "travel fair," which

will take place on (specify date) from about 1:30 -3:00 p.m. The brochure will be done on a computer and will, ideally, be in the format of a typical brochure. You will be using scanner technology to insert photographs or other images into your brochure. You can, then, expect to spend some time in the library using the scanners. The brochure is required, but feel free to use any other kinds of advertising gimmicks, such as videos, slides, etc, that you feel will enhance your presentation. The visual aids are entirely up to your imagination. (If you need equipment that you don't have, talk to me and we'll see what we can work out.)

In preparation for the travel fair, you and your group will need to do the following things:

1. Determine which area of the United States you think people would be interested in visiting.
2. Determine who your tour will appeal to; that is, who your audience will be.  
Will you be creating a tour for people of your age? Will it be for older people? Families? Will it be for a mixture of people? Will they all be speakers of Spanish, or will your tour appeal to people who speak other languages?
3. Find out the important information about the area you choose. This will include everything you will need to tell people about the nature of the packaged tour:
  - a. What is there to see and do?
  - b. When, precisely, will your participants do it?
  - c. What kinds of transportation will you provide?
  - d. Where will the tour participants stay?
  - e. What meals will they eat? Will all the meals be provided with the tour package or will your participants be required to supply some of their own meals?
- f. Do you have any special accommodations for people on restricted diets or for people with disabilities? Do you want or need that?
- g. How much does it cost? What, exactly, does the cost cover? Do you include the flight to get to the destination, or do the participants all meet there?

Much of this work will be done in small groups outside the classroom. You may want to use other sources besides the Internet to find out information as well. Can travel agencies provide you with any extra information? Can you find some English travel guides about the United States? How about the United States Consulate for information about visas? You may even want to interview some Americans who have been to these places for additional information.

On the day of the "travel fair", you will set up a booth so that interested people can come around to see which plan they like best. As with any business, this will be a competition to see who can do the nicest, most appealing presentation and, at the same time offer the best value for the money. You may not want to discuss your plans with class members outside your group. The visitors to the fair will come with "money" in hand, ready to buy a tour. Your job will be to sell yours.

### Appendix 3

#### **Want to Take a Vacation but Don't Know Where to Go? We Can Give You Ideas!**

The first section of English 110 is hosting a "Travel Fair" this Wednesday from 1:30 to 3:00 p.m. in 583 Van Hise Hall.

We have developed travel brochures offering tours to the US. You can choose among a variety of exotic places. If you're interested in the Southeast, you may want to use *Moon Airlines* with Moon, Pete and Soon as crew. Or travel with JiHyun, KwangJae and Siba to the East Coast cities of Boston, New York, and Washington, D.C. If you would prefer to go west, you can travel with Armando, Clara, and Min on a trip to San Francisco. If your taste takes you farther afield, you can go with Lee, Manzura and Sergio to Hawaii.

Whatever your travel needs, we can meet them, so check us out this Wednesday, May 8 in 583 Van Hise Hall between 1:30 and 3:00.