Overview

Many students are familiar with the memorials of the National Mall. Some may not know that these are administered by the National Park Service, the same agency in charge of national parks like Yellowstone, Yosemite and the Everglades. Many students may also not know that there are a wealth of national historic sites in and around the Greater Washington. In this lesson, students will research some of these places and develop classroom presentations. In an extension activity, students can also visit one of the historic sites or any “favorite place” and construct a digital storytelling project.

Learning Objectives

Students will do the following:

■ Become aware of the large number of different historic sites in the Greater Washington, D.C. area.
■ Develop and make a presentation on one of the historic sites.
■ Understand the history of the site and people associated with it.
■ Develop an appreciation for the historical significance of the site.

Materials

■ Research materials (library, Internet, etc.)
■ Large sheets of construction paper or butcher paper or poster board
■ Digital presentation software (PowerPoint, html, Publisher, etc.)
■ Pens, pencils, rulers, etc.
■ Student handouts
  ● Student Handout: Presentation on a National Historic Park
  ● List of National Parks in the Washington, D.C. Area
  ● Directions for Recording a Google Earth Narrated Tour
Procedures

Before conducting this activity consider how you want to present the numerous national historic parks featured in the WETA Extra mini-documentary “National Parks Passport” (http://www.weta.org/local/parks).

- Use Google Earth to have students take a tour of several well-known Washington, D.C. area historic sites. If you are familiar with Google Earth, you could create a “fly-by tour” of several sites from the list below and project this on a computer overhead. A more extensive list of historic sites can be found at http://www.nps.gov. Search each park under the “Find a Park” link. If you aren’t familiar with Google Earth, refer to the “Directions for Recording a Google Earth Narrated Tour” handout; you can also find a tutorial with detailed instructions on the Google Earth website at http://earth.google.com/outreach/tutorial_kmltours.html.

- Introduce students to these historic sites on Google Maps or another online map tool like MapQuest or Yahoo Maps. If your students aren’t familiar with these online tools, explain how they use satellite imagery and standard maps to allow viewers to “travel” to different parts of the planet. If they are familiar with these tools and you have several computers in your classroom or access to a computer lab, you can have students take their own tour of the sites listed below.

Opening Activity

Ask students to describe a national park. Then ask students to identify the national parks in Greater Washington. Tell students the National Park Service administers more than just natural, scenic parks like Yellowstone Park or the Everglades. The memorials in Independence Mall and many of the historic sites in the D.C. area are also national parks.

Take students on a tour of the national historic parks listed below using one of the online map tools mentioned above. Show them their locations and access any additional links that provide further information on the site.

List of parks and national historic sites in the D.C. area featured in the WETA Extra “National Parks Passport”:

- Frederick Douglass National Historic Site
- Mary McLeod Bethune Council House
- Clara Barton House National Historic Site
- Kenilworth Aquatic Gardens
- Greenbelt Park
- Fort Washington
- Manassas Battlefield Park
Main Activity

Tell students they are going to develop a presentation on one of the National Historic Parks in the Washington D.C. area. First, they will view a video that highlights some of these parks and explains their importance.

Show the WETA Extra “National Parks Passport.” After viewing the video, ask the students the following questions:

- Are you familiar with any of the national parks presented in the video? Which ones?
- What do you know about them?
- Have you been to any of these parks? If so, what was your experience there? What did you do and see?
- If you have not been to any of these parks, which ones do you think you’d like to visit? Why?
- What local parks are you familiar with? What do you think is the difference between a local and a national park?

Distribute and review the Presentation on a National Park handout. Have students select one of the national memorials, historic sites or local parks or assign them one from the List of National Parks in the Washington, D.C. Area handout.

Provide ample time for students to construct their presentations. When they are finished, have them present to the class.

Assessment

Students can be assessed in the following areas:

- Cooperative group work during the development of the presentations in areas of time-management, contributing to the group, attitude, focus on the task, preparedness, etc.
- Coverage of the content in their presentation (from student handout)
- Use and incorporation of technology (if applicable)
- Writing mechanics
- Understanding the importance of the featured national historic park

Extension Activities

Have students create a digital storytelling project for publication. The National Parks Digital Storytelling Initiative is an innovative new media outreach activity designed to engage members of the community in telling their story and sharing their experience with national and historic parks in their local area and throughout the nation. Information on how to create a digital story can be found at www.pbs.org/nationalparks.
Standards

This lesson addresses national content standards established by the Mid-Continent Research for Education and Learning (McREL) (http://www.mcrel.org/standards-benchmarks)

**HISTORICAL UNDERSTANDING**

**Standard 2.**
Understands the historical perspective

**GEOGRAPHY**

**Standard 1.**
Understands the characteristics and uses of maps, globes, and other geographic tools and technologies

**Standard 2.**
Knows the location of places, geographic features, and patterns of the environment

**Standard 17.**
Understands how geography is used to interpret the past

**LANGUAGE ARTS**

**Writing**

**Standard 1.**
Uses the general skills and strategies of the writing process

**Standard 3.**
Uses grammatical and mechanical conventions in written compositions

**Standard 4.**
Gathers and uses information for research purposes

**Listening and Speaking**

- Uses the general skills and strategies of the writing process

**Viewing**

- Uses viewing skills and strategies to understand and interpret visual media

**About the author**

Greg Timmons is a freelance curriculum writer, and educational consultant of web-based and broadcast media materials. After a 30 year career as a social studies teacher in the public schools, he has written and consulted for several national news and educational organizations including FRONTLINE, the NewsHour, History Channel, Colonial Williamsburg, and other projects for WETA.
National Parks Passport
Presentation on a National Historic Park

Overview
In this activity, you and your group will develop a presentation on one of the national parks in the Washington, D.C. area. Your presentation can be a display on large sheets of butcher paper or poster board, a digital slide presentation, or a combination of both.

Directions
1. Assign specific tasks to each member of your group, playing to their strengths. Remember, all members are responsible for completing the presentation and providing help wherever they can.
2. Go to the webpage http://www.nps.gov and find the national park you chose or were assigned. Also, check out resources in your school or local library.
3. Conduct research on your park. Include the following:
   - A map of the general location of the park showing the surrounding area and familiar landmarks (nearby cities, physical land features—mountains, waterways, etc.), and a second, detailed map of the park itself
   - A general description of the park’s physical characteristics and areas of interest
   - A brief history of the park, its development, and anyone connected with the park
   - Photos, illustrations or other images
   - Your assessment of the historical importance of the park to visitors
National Parks Passport

List of National Parks, Historic Sites and Memorials in Greater Washington

Antietam National Battlefield, MD
Catoctin Mountain Park, MD
Chesapeake & Ohio Canal National Historical Park; MD, D.C. and WV
Ford's Theatre National Historic Site, D.C.
George Washington Memorial Parkway; VA, MD, and D.C.
  • Arlington House: The Robert E. Lee Memorial
  • Clara Barton National Historic Site, MD
  • Claude Moore Colonial Farm
  • Daingerfield Island
  • Dyke Marsh Wildlife Preserve
  • Fort Hunt Park
  • Fort Marcy
  • Glen Echo Park, MD
  • Great Falls Park, VA and MD
  • Lady Bird Johnson Park
  • Lyndon Baines Johnson Memorial Grove-on-the-Potomac
  • Roaches Run Waterfowl Sanctuary
  • Theodore Roosevelt Island, D.C.
  • Turkey Run Park
  • U.S. Marine Corps War Memorial
  • Women in Military Service For America Memorial
Harpers Ferry National Historical Park, WV
Manassas National Battlefield Park, VA
Monocacy National Battlefield, MD
National Capital Parks-East; D.C. and MD
  • Anacostia Park
  • Baltimore-Washington Parkway
  • Capitol Hill Parks
  • Carter G. Woodson Home National Historic Site
  • Fort Dupont Park
  • Fort Washington Park, MD
  • Frederick Douglass National Historic Site
- Greenbelt Park, MD
- Kenilworth Park & Aquatic Gardens
- Mary McLeod Bethune Council House National Historic Site
- Oxon Cove Park/Oxon Hill Farm, MD
- Piscataway Park, MD
- Sewall Belmont House and Museum
- Suitland Parkway

National Mall & Memorial Parks, D.C.
- National Mall
- Washington Monument
- Thomas Jefferson Memorial
- Lincoln Memorial
- Franklin Delano Roosevelt Memorial
- World War II Memorial
- Korean War Veterans Memorial
- Vietnam Veterans Memorial
- Old Post Office Tower
- Pennsylvania Avenue National Historic Site
- Freedom Plaza

Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail; D.C., MD, VA

President’s Park, D.C.
- White House Visitor Center
- Lafayette Park
- The Ellipse

Prince William Forest Park, VA

Rock Creek Park, D.C.
- Rock Creek & Potomac Parkway

Wolf Trap National Park for the Performing Arts, VA
National Parks Passport

Directions for Recording a Google Earth Narrated Tour

1. On Google Earth’s home page, key the name of a park into the box labeled “Fly to.” Begin the search. Note the dates the images were taken, latitude and longitude, and elevation.

2. Mouse over the upper right side of the map. Use the sliding bar to focus more closely—or pull further away from—the park’s geographic boundaries and features. Use the directional wheels to “fly” over terrain or to rotate or vary your physical point of view.

3. Zero in on a feature of the park that you’ve learned about in your research. (You can mouse over the map to highlight specific sites where other Google Earth visitors have posted photos. These previously visited sites will appear when you check the Geographic Web box in the Layers menu.) Focus on the site.

4. Now, use the “Add Placemark” button (the pushpin-shaped button on the toolbar above the map) and place the pushpin where you want it. Title your placemark and describe what you see. Click “OK.” Your placemark will be displayed in the 3D viewer and at the top of the MyPlaces folder in the Places panel. Continue to “fly” over the park and add placemarks in places you want to include on your national park tour.

5. Now that you have mapped out your tour, you can use Google Earth’s touring feature. Select the check box next to the items in your MyPlaces folder that you want to tour. Click on the “Play Tour” button at the bottom of the Places panel. The tour will begin playing in the 3D viewer, which will fly to each location and stop for a period of time before flying to the next place on the list. To stop the tour, click the “Stop Tour” button beneath the Places listing.

6. If you want to record a tour narration, use the “Record a Tour” button (the video camera-shaped button on the toolbar above the map). Click on the microphone to start your description of a specific site. You should include information that you’ve gathered from the National Park Service Web site. Click on the red button to stop the recording. Complete this process for each of your “placemarked” sites in the park.

7. You can share your tour with others by playing it back. You can also e-mail your tour by using the tool bar.