

VR /Google Expedition Teacher Prep

Adapted from Google Expeditions

Pre-Expedition Prep

The first step is to preview the experience yourself. Just like you might scout a museum or field trip location before taking your class there, going on the expedition before presenting it to your class will help you establish talking points and prepare supporting activities. Below are some tips for previewing the trip:

Explore both from your teacher tablet and student viewfinders. The teacher view on the tablet provides extra information and tools, but the student experience truly transports you to the location. Experiencing both will help you see the location from both perspectives.

Take your time while you explore - don't rush it! Think like a detective - what details and talking points do you see at each point of interest?

Ask yourself:

What points of interest pop out to me?

What surprises me about this Expedition?

How is this view different from a 2D picture?

- What new information do I gain by being immersed in a 360 experience?

- What challenges arise from a 360 experience as compared to a 2D experience?

What points of interests do I want to draw my students to?

- What information do I want to give them about these points of interest?

- What information do I want them to infer about these points of interest?

Do I want to guide their exploration from the beginning, or allow them to freely explore?

What questions do I want to ask them?

Read the annotations on the panorama cards on the bottom of the screen to familiarize yourself with details, points of interest, and sample questions related to the Expedition

Determine when in the learning cycle you want this to occur:

At the beginning of study - to ignite interest (i.e., visiting Romeo and Juliet's Verona as an activator before reading the play)

In the middle of study - to provide clarification / deeper understanding (i.e., visiting Verona mid-reading to provide context, deepen understanding)

At the end of study - to apply/extend learning (i.e., visiting Verona after reading so students can find and point out features on their own.)

To get the most of an Expedition, it should be preceded and followed with connected learning activities. The Expedition itself is one powerful piece of the instructional puzzle. So as you're planning for the experience consider the following learning activities for before, during and after the Expedition."

Before the Expedition

Engage students in activities to provide some prior knowledge and context for the Expedition. It's usually helpful for students to list what they will look for as they explore. Some examples:

Objective: Establishing empathy and understanding for various cultures

Expeditions: The Teepee, Out of Syria: Back into school, Buckingham Palace

Pre-Expedition Activity: Explore your own living environment. Make a list of what features of your home are needed to survive. Make another list of special or unique features about your home. Hypothesize what items or features you might find in each of the three locations you are visiting.

Objective: Selecting your college of choice

Expeditions: Various College Campuses

Pre-Expedition Activity: Create a list of wants and needs for a college of choice. Consider how your daily life and academic life could be impacted by the college's location and campus.

During the Expedition

Consider what points of interest on each Expedition you'll point out to students. Look for the points on the panorama cards on the bottom of the screen but also those that stuck out to you as you did the Expedition yourself. Script out the questions you'll ask and map out times for students to put down the viewfinders and discuss what they are seeing with one another. During the Expedition, here are some ideas for activities to keep students focused on the lesson objectives while also allowing them the freedom to explore and find their own new learning:

Give them a list of guiding questions in a Google Doc to collaboratively investigate during the Expedition. As a group, they can find and discuss answers to these questions. Try to mix your questions with lower order "easy to answer" factual questions and higher order discussion questions to vary the type of thinking your students are engaging in.

Ask students to come up with new questions and wonders inspired by what they are seeing. For example, while on the Sharks Expedition, perhaps your students may wonder why the sharks aren't attacking or eating the school of fish around them. Or they may want to know how sturdy that diving cage is. They could list these question in the same shared Google Doc that their guiding questions came in. Pro Tip: Use Google Classroom to disseminate and collect this doc!

Have students reference other resources to build meaning during the Expedition. As they explore, encourage them to look for YouTube videos, articles or other reference materials that can help them aid their understanding of what they are seeing. For example, they may see a Rhinoceros beetle in the Borneo Rainforest expedition and observe the leaf behind it filled with holes. They could utilize other resources to investigate whether the beetle did this and then return to the expedition to find other evidence of the beetle's eating habits.

After the Expedition

Once the Expedition is over and the virtual reality viewers have been put away or sent

on to another classroom, the learning shouldn't end! It's now time to synthesize and apply the new knowledge. Some ideas:

Have students follow up on the new questions and wonders they listed during the Expedition. For example, students climbing Mount Everest might have wondered how to stay warm in the snowy heights of the mountain while still keeping your pack light. They may now engage in an interdisciplinary inquiry project to learn about body heat insulation and different types of materials (science) and the cost of outfitting a climb (math). They could even learn about how native cultures brave the elements and how their methods differ from those they researched (social studies).

Return to the original unit of study and see how your students' perspective or understanding has shifted based on the expedition. They could write reflections, blog posts or create video testimonials about their experience. Ask your class to share their reflections and discuss how their experiences differed from one another. Did every student see the same things? Did they ask the same questions? Did they have the same takeaways? Most likely the answer is no - so allow them time to share these differences with one another!