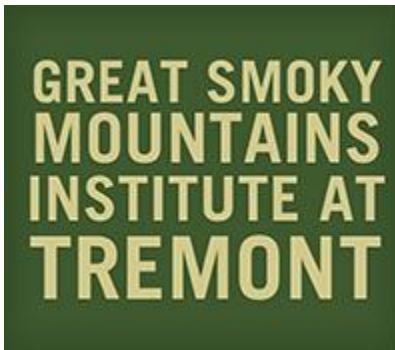


Tremont Schoolyard Adventures

Facilitation Guide for Teachers



March 2021

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***If you find you are pressed for time and need to use these resources soon, I would suggest going to the table on pg 5, [Overview and Quick Links](#) - that should get you started!*

Welcome to Tremont Schoolyard Adventure

Dear Tremont Teacher,

CONNECTION

Nestled in the heart of every Tremont experience over the years is a rich shared and individual experience in the national park. While many students and teachers find themselves out of their comfort zones, the warm environment created by Tremont staff and school teachers working together cooperatively enables us to lean on each other, deepening our relationships with one another, and with the natural world around us.

This connection enriches learning through the remainder of the school year. And when teachers are able to pepper their school-based experiences with Tremont-style indoor and outdoor investigations, that connection brings a new sense of wonder home. Teachers and students alike *begin to see their own school yards and backyards with new eyes*, as they notice the lichens growing on the playground, the birds singing in the hedge, and the amazing unfolding of seasons outside the window.

Students come to school curious about what they'll notice, teachers find new joy in teaching, schools themselves become places to explore, and schoolyards become lands to discover.

Sounds magical? We've seen it happen.

The pandemic has resulted in thousands of kids and hundreds of teachers missing out on national park experiences with Tremont. To us, this is like a lost generation of kids who feel left out, deprived of yet another fun experience which is, at many schools, a rite of passage.

INVITATION

We created **Tremont Schoolyard Adventures** to address this loss, or fill this gap, both for teachers and students. While we may not see you this school year, we have learned ways to bring student-centered learning to life through online engagement.

But as always, we need your help.

We invite you to work with us in this guide to create your own Tremont experience this year. Whether you are teaching virtually, in-person, or some mixture of the two, we

have ideas and lessons that can be fitted together to recapture some of the magic and wonder inherent in a Tremont overnight. But we also know that part of what makes it successful is seeing it, not as a series of activities or lessons, but an experience that students take an active role in, and give shape to as it unfolds. It also requires teachers to take part, experience and show vulnerability, and leave room for the unexpected.

Of course all of this takes planning and time. We have tried to make this as user-friendly and flexible as possible. We specifically included lessons and activities with pre-recorded videos and lesson plans that could be accessed online and that could work either in a schoolyard or home environment.

We know this might not work for 100% of teachers, so **we are eager for feedback and suggestions for the next version**. We see this as a way to provide some framework for your unique Tremont experience this year, but we also recognize that this resource will be useful in future years, either for use before or after a Tremont school trip, but also for all of the schools that, for whatever reasons, aren't able to come to Tremont. *Thank you for taking time to try this out!*

Research Opportunity

Tremont Schoolyard Adventures is partially funded by the National Park Foundation (NPF). As a result, you and your students have an opportunity to contribute to research on the effectiveness of virtual learning experiences like this one. It is being conducted by a Ph.D. student in the Virginia Tech Department of Forest Resources and Environmental Conservation. It consists of an introductory video, a short teacher survey (15 min), and a student survey (10 min). Please consider taking part in this - it will inform our virtual work going forward. Access the surveys and video [HERE](#).

How to use this guide

We suggest you frame it as a 'Tremont trip' and schedule it out over a few days or a week to set it apart from the typical school days. There are two different platforms with much of the same material. We made them to offer maximum flexibility, and honestly, since we hadn't done this before, we weren't sure which would be best for engagement and ease of use...So let us know what you think!

- Pick dates (and backup dates for outdoor sessions in case of inclement weather) - anticipation can get student buy-in even before you start! Plan as many class periods as possible out in the schoolyard.

- Read through this guide and make note of which activities you'd like your students to do - make a schedule for your allotted days.
- Note that there are two versions of the same basic trip: **Google Slide** presentation or **Arc-GIS Story Map**. Take a tour through each to see which makes more sense for your setting. This guide describes all of the activities and suggests an order for them. You will see there are parts that students can explore on their own, but we recommend that you do the **core routines** and **activities** together.
- Check the LINKS - make sure you and your students can access the links - if you are able to get your web administrator to grant blanket access to the [Tremont Youtube page](#), that will be helpful, especially for the Arc-GIS Story Map.
- Share any video or photos of things you did, journal pages, etc. with us so we can share with other schools.
- **Tremont swag!** Consider contacting us about a bulk order of Tremont merchandise for your students. We will be offering discounted prices on items from our store in hopes that students can still feel a part of the Tremont tradition. To place an order, make a copy of the [order form](#), fill it in, and scan, fax, or mail it back to us. Our store manager Bridget will be happy to work with you on this.

Extras...

- Let us know what you are planning and when - we may be available to join your group live if we have staff available.
- Connect with other teachers - share this with your team...it could become a multi-grade level adventure!
- Make sure parents are aware that we're working together on a Tremont experience in lieu of a trip this spring.

Overview and Quick Links

Session	Lessons	Resources
Welcome and Orientation	<p>Welcome!</p> <p><u>Territorial awareness</u>...Whose land is your school on? Find out and think of ways you might recognize that in the classroom.</p> <p>History of GSMNP with focus on Walker Valley</p>	<p>Welcome video</p> <p>Native lands in US website</p> <p>Territorial awareness lesson</p> <p>History of GSMNP - video</p> <p>National Park Website</p>
Core Practices and Learning Routines	<p>Using a journal</p>	<p>Getting started video JM Laws</p> <p>BEEETLES handout: Field Journaling with Students</p> <p>Co-Teaching mini pocket guides</p>
	<p><u>Observation routine</u>:</p> <p>I notice, I wonder, It Reminds me of...</p>	<p>Video lesson - use this yourself as a model for what you can do with your students.</p> <p>Lesson plan from Smokieees at Home</p>
	<p><u>Solo</u> time or Sit Spot</p>	<p>Sit spot lesson plan</p>
Main Activities	<p><u>Invitation to wonder</u>:</p> <p>Weekly Wonder: Curiosity Quest: A new way of looking at the world and an invitation to wonder and curiosity</p>	<p>Weekly Wonder- Curiosity Quest</p> <p>Observe and Conquer - lesson plan</p>
	<p><u>Exploration</u>:</p> <p>Weekly Wonder: Pocket Worlds. Exploring your world through multiple lenses</p>	<p>Weekly Wonder: Pocket Worlds!</p> <p>Teacher lesson plan</p>
	<p><u>Asking questions based on observation</u> -</p> <p>Weekly Wonder: Question Quest</p>	<p>Weekly Wonder: Question Quest -</p>
	<p><u>Mapping</u> the landscape:</p> <p>Weekly Wonder: Sound Mapping</p> <p>Taking time to sense the world around us is good for mental, physical, and emotional health.</p>	<p>Weekly Wonder: Sound Mapping</p> <p>Mapping lesson plan</p> <p>Schoolyard mapping lesson - A Change of Perspective</p>
	<p><u>Investigation</u>:</p> <p>Weekly Wonder: Making a Field Guide</p> <p>Focused observation - we used spider webs, but you can use this for any group of similar things, or just anything you can find!</p>	<p>Weekly Wonder: Make a Field Guide</p> <p>BioBlitz lesson</p>

Overview and Quick Links, continued...

Music Videos	<i>We Are Bears</i> : American Black Bears are icons of the Smokies. Gamble Montessori students take the bear perspective to share issues of bear conservation over the years.	We are Bears video Video Summary , Lyrics, and link to video. Links to standards grades 5-8
	<i>All the Salamanders</i> : Great Smoky Mountains National Park is known as the Salamander Capital of the World. Follow these middle school students as they explore these diverse and amazing creatures.	Music video Video summary , lyrics, and link to video. Links to standards for grades 5-8
Songs of Tremont	Live music is always a part of the Tremont experience. We included these recordings of songs you may be familiar with.	Scat Rap - studio recording Birthday song The river is Salamander song
360 views	Clingmans Dome Spruce Flats Falls Cades Cove Chimney Tops Alum Cave Bluffs	
Reflection & Sharing	Wrap up activity	Tremont River & Reflection lesson Nature Art lesson
Closing	Closing Circle	Lesson write up - HERE Research survey w links - HERE

Guide to Facilitation

Overview

The Tremont experience frames learning as discovery. No matter the subject, this happens through observation, discussion, listening, and asking questions. Learning happens when we encounter something new and figure out how it fits into our understanding of the world. Often this new information comes to us as something we read or hear. But we can also learn through individual and shared experiences, where we encounter something new in the world and use our senses and collective brain to learn directly from it. **This is the type of learning we will be using primarily during this trip.** See the Tremont Learning Cycle overview below.

There are a number of lesson plans included in this field trip. Don't expect to use them all, unless you have unlimited time. But, I recommend using the Cooperative Teaching pocket guides we created for co-teachers. It includes basic outlines for facilitation of our core routines.

Resources:

Tremont Learning Cycle [description](#) - How we frame learning experiences...

[Cooperative Teaching](#) - Pocket Guide to facilitating core routines.

Welcome and Orientation

On the day you plan to begin, make sure to spend some time just explaining your ground rules for this experience. If possible, take the class out for a short walk out in the school yard just to get a sense that this is going to be something different than they are used to. You could also give students time to decorate their journals and make sure they have time to write down their expectations. You could use a prompt like:

"Tremont staff and I have been working together to plan a way for us to explore and investigate our schoolyard over the course of a few class periods. This means we will be going outside and using our senses and our brains to see the world around us in new ways...What do you hope we can do together? How do you feel about becoming the explorer who has to figure things out?"

If you want to enhance the Smokies aspect of the program, you can let students explore the Great Smoky Mountains National Park Website. I would especially recommend sections on Nature.

Resources:

National Park [website](#)

History of the park - [video](#)

Territorial Acknowledgement

Every Tremont trip begins with an acknowledgement that the land we will enjoy together has been occupied by many groups of people over many years. This can be one of your first

sessions, or you can just spend half a class exploring the Native Lands website and other resources.

We pay particular attention to the Cherokee, in part because they have lived on this land longer than any other group, and in part because of the way they were forcibly removed from this land. This is an invitation to each of us to be present, be aware, and agree to honor the Cherokee by respecting the land, each other, and ourselves. We think this practice, if repeated widely, will begin to address some of the hurts caused over the years by the displacement of cultures, and the repeated mistreatment of those cultures. It may also open students' eyes to the wonder of the experience of this land as they recognize that they are the caretakers of it for a time. We have made use of the [Native Lands](#) website. You can find your location on this map to get a sense of the people who lived there before. You will want to explore this site before letting students go on it - there is a lot of information!

Resources:

Native lands [website](#)

Territorial Acknowledgement [lesson](#)

Core Practices and Learning Routines

- Keeping a **field journal**
- **Observation routine:** I notice, I wonder, It reminds me of...
- **Solo Time** - Sit spot variation

These three routines are essential to nearly all of the Tremont programs. It is worth reading through and practicing facilitating these practices so they become second nature to your students. Each one helps students practice thinking and processing for themselves. You will find that all three can be easily integrated and become the basis for much of what we do together. You will notice the open-ended nature of these routines. They lend themselves to divergent thinking, which means there won't be one right answer. Instead, students will find that thinking and learning is a process they can get better and better at, and that success is defined by the number and accuracy of representations and descriptions, depth of questions, and appropriate application of logic and prior knowledge.

We recommend that you conduct each of the core routine activities before getting started with the rest of the activities in the field trip. These are skills that your students will use again and again during the Tremont experience.

Journaling: Seeing your mind at work

Every student should have a field notebook to make their own. This is where they keep observations, questions, insights, and sketches. We try to get people to notice first, then begin to describe using sketches, words, and numbers. As they write and draw, their minds will naturally come across puzzles/unexplained phenomena, and these should be written in the form of questions. *It is not about pretty pictures, but accurate representation of what they observe.*

Consistent structure helps. Make sure every journal entry is located in Time, Place, and Condition. That is, note the date/time (including the year), location(as specific as you can be), and general environmental setting, i.e. weather(e.g. sunny, partly cloudy, overcast, rainy, etc.), temperature - here you can practice estimating temperature, and using qualifiers like warm, cool, hot).

Journaling 1-2-3

Make sure each student has a notebook/journal and pen or pencil to write with. We use [Bare Books](#) because they are sturdy and have a hard cover- if you are able to procure colored pencils or other art supplies, all the better!

1. Decorate and personalize your journal - use favorite quotes, picture cut outs, stickers. Make sure student names are clearly marked on the cover of the journal.
2. Bring the outside IN - if your students aren't used to journaling outside, start by bring interesting nature items (rocks, leaves, twigs, seeds, pieces of bark, nuts,...) from around the school yard into class and allow students to pick an object that catches their imagination. Try leading 'I notice, I wonder, It reminds me of' and then challenge students to fill up a minimum two-page spread with drawings, observations, questions, and labels of their object.
3. Get OUT - finally, take kids out into the schoolyard to make their first journal entry outside, using the same basic routine, only this time, they find their own object of interest.

Resources:

Getting started with a nature journal [\[Video\]](#)

Observation: I notice, I wonder, It reminds me of

This basic focussing exercise can be a starting point of almost any activity or lesson. Practice facilitating this, using the BEETLEs guide. The more you do it, the better you will get at noticing details, patterns, and generating questions from this direct observation. While it is a simple routine, the resulting observations, insights, and questions may be profound. This is our most commonly used technique to kick off any student-centered learning. It can become an automatic response when confronted by something new.

Resources:

[Video lesson](#) - use this yourself as a model for what you can do with your students.

[Lesson plan](#) from Smokieees at Home website

Sit Spot or Solo time Introduction

Solo experiences allow our brains to quiet down and our senses to sharpen. These experiences can take place while sitting still by yourself, or when walking a path or trail by yourself. The keyword is Solo. You do it by yourself. Sit spot is a solo experience that brings us back to the same spot over time to reflect on an experience, practice observation, write in a journal, sit quietly, or even fall asleep! This practice sharpens observation, deepens our thinking, and gives students a chance to quiet their minds. It can also bring out emotions and other underlying feelings. It allows time for our brains to process, analyse, pick apart ideas, and

sometimes allow us to synthesize new ideas. It can also allow us to unwind. We recommend using the sit spot repeatedly for the rest of the trip and the rest of the school year.

Sit Spot time can be a time students will look forward to - but don't expect it to be perfect the first time. Start with a short length of time, maybe 7-8 minutes and work up to 15 min. or longer if you have it. Make sure students see you in your sit spot and you take part in the reflective sharing afterwards.

Resources

Sit Spot [lesson plan PDF](#)

Main Activities

Weekly Wonder episodes

We have included several of our popular [Weekly Wonder episodes](#) in this field trip. These are 5-10 minute videos with outdoor activities embedded in them. You will want to watch these and probably do them yourself before planning this as a classroom or virtual lesson. They are meant to be done by individuals and could happen in a schoolyard or a student's backyard. We are creating new ones each month, so check [Weekly Wonder](#) for more episodes.

SUGGESTED STRUCTURE for using Weekly Wonder:

1. Watch the weekly wonder episode together, pausing where applicable. Then take a few minutes to clarify and answer logistics questions.
2. Go. Then all head out to complete the outdoors component. Depending on your class size and the Weekly Wonder Episode, you may want to have students work in teams of 2 or 3.
3. Regroup (outside if possible - you will keep their attention better)
 - a. Students share what they did in small groups.
 - b. Large group sharing - describe (or share something you heard from another student)...
 - i. Something you saw for the first time
 - ii. Something that surprised you
 - iii. Something you want to go back and look at with more time
 - c. What questions do you still have, what are you curious about?
4. Final reflection - chance to go to sit spots and reflect with journals.

Warning - there are way more resources and possibilities with each of these for you do it all... we did this to give you options, not to stress anyone out :~)

Weekly Wonder - Question Quest

SOLO or Group: This makes a good introduction to Weekly Wonder and reinforces using the learning routine for observation. The challenge Tyler poses here is to keep seeing more and more details that enable you to ask a lot of questions. Asking good questions is a key skill in learning, and one we don't get a lot of practice or guidance with. If students get stuck, have them [use the Question Generator](#) - that is, write the prompts Who, What, Where, When, How, and Why down the page and use them to generate new questions. Who and What involve what they see, When and Where force students to infer time and space relations, How and Why encourage deeper analysis

Students may ask, "How many questions do I have to write to be done?". Gently let them know that the goal is to write as many as possible.

Weekly Wonder - Sound Mapping

SOLO - This can work well from a sit spot. It opens up the senses to the sounds around us, and forces us to translate those sounds into markings on a page. There is also a follow up episode in Season 2 called Attention Mapping, which expands the activity beyond sounds - check it out at our website! There is a mental well being theme to this episode that really applies to the whole Weekly Wonder series.

Resources:

Sound mapping lesson plan [PFD](#)

Another sound mapping [video](#) from Smokieees @ Home

Weekly Wonder - Curiosity Quest

SOLO or Group: This short video teaches a few important observation skills, and then presents a challenge to students to go outside and find something entirely new, that they haven't seen before. Once they find it, they are to make observations, ask questions, and make connections (Could use the **I Notice, I wonder, It reminds me of** routine) in their journals.

Resources:

Observe and Conquer [lesson plan](#)

Weekly Wonder - Pocket Worlds

SOLO or Group: Pocket worlds are really microhabitats that exist all around us. This open-ended exercise invites students to explore a habitat and it's diversity, then document it in a format that makes sense to them. While we use mapping, stories, and comic strips as formats, feel free to branch out to include other 'products', like writing a letter, making a table, drawing a food web...the possibilities are endless.

Resources:

Pocket Worlds [lesson plan](#)

Weekly Wonder - Make a Field Guide, BioBlitz!

SOLO or Group: In general, field guides are books that help us start to identify or categorize the natural world around us. This episode explores spider webs, but you can use this to launch an investigation into any aspect of the natural world you have access to, e.g. you could make a field guide to trees, flowers, insects, rocks...Then it becomes a BioBlitz, as you try to inventory as much of the nature in the schoolyard as you can.

Resources:

BioBlitz [lesson plan](#) with links and other resources

Final Activity

To wrap up this field trip, some sort of Tremont-y reflective activity is in order. This is time to reflect, remember, and express what you might do individually or as a class, as a result of sharing this experience. If you have a natural area nearby, creating some nature art in small groups is always a hit. The prompt for their artwork should bring their minds back to the experiences, e.g. what was your favorite part? Other variations - small groups of students could work together on large pieces of paper/butcher paper with markers to draw a representation of their favorite parts of the activities.

We also suggest some solo time either with or without a prompt, for students to describe what was significant to them, what it felt like, and why it felt significant.

Resources:

Tremont River & Reflection [lesson](#)

Nature Art [lesson](#)

Closing Circle

Every Tremont program ends with some version of a Closing Circle.

Resources:

Lesson write up - [HERE](#)

Extras!

360 Degree Views - student-friendly

For a fun break, explore these 360 views from the Smokies...This is a great chance to practice Observation routines virtually. Students can make journal entries based on what they see, and use the nps.gov website [<https://www.nps.gov/grsm/index.htm>] to answer questions they might have. Included in this trip are: Clingmans Dome - highest point in the Smokies, Cades Cove meadow - most visited area of the park, Spruce Flats Falls - Tremont's closest waterfall, Chimney Tops - iconic view of the park's mid-elevations, Alum Cave Bluffs - strange formation on the trail up Mt LeConte.

Songs of Tremont

No Tremont experience is complete without some music...sometimes during a meal, or at a campfire. We included a few Tremont favorites for you to listen to and have fun with. Salamander Song, Birthday Song, the River Is, and of course, the Scat Rap.

Music Videos

We have a library of student-generated music videos that highlight ecological concepts relevant to the Smokies. We recommend watching the videos together, then looking through the Summary and lyrics and facilitate a discussion

This field trip includes two videos: We are Bears, and All the Salamanders. In the Google Slide version, [the link takes you to a PDF of the lyrics to the song, with a link to the video directly beneath the Tremont logo.](#) *If you like these, you can find more music videos at our [Tremont YouTube page](#).*

- *We are Bears:* Gamble Montessori HS students share what life is like from the perspective of an American Black bear in the Smokies. This video could be the starting point for follow up projects on wildlife, ecology, conservation, or a number of other topics. We include the lyrics and other resources to get started. They're also just fun to watch on their own, and see what things seem most relevant to your students.
- *All the Salamanders:* Tremont staff and students from Maplewood Richmond Heights in St Louis, MO, created this video which is a broad overview of salamander ecology, including concepts such as speciation, habitat, predation, threats to salamanders, including human stresses, and conservation.