



AN URBAN FIELD WALK

Field Trip Idea

PURPOSE:

1. To gain knowledge of historical and geographic influences on a city.
 - Sample TEKS Alignment Grade 7
 - 113.19.b.12 - student understands the factors that caused Texas to change from an agrarian to an urban society;
2. To compare and contrast different sections or "regions" of a city.
 - Sample TEKS Alignment Grade 7
 - 113.19.b.9 - understands the location and characteristics of places and regions of Texas.
3. To determine the factors that influenced the growth and/or decline of the city.
 - Sample TEKS Alignment Grade 7
 - 113.19.b.13 - understands the interdependence of the Texas economy with the United States and the world.
4. To make inferences about how the physical geography of the land affected the progress of the city.
 - Sample TEKS Alignment Grade 7
 - 113.19.b.10 - understands the effects of the interaction between humans and the environment in Texas during the 19th, 20th, and 21st centuries.

*Excerpted from:

Texas Alliance for Geographic Education. *Young Geographers Alliance: Program Guide*. (San Marcos, Texas: Southwest Texas State University, 1991), 25-31.

PREPARATIONS:

If a whole grade level is participating, the following arrangements should be made:

1. Organize groups of 8 -10 with a parent volunteer for each group. Use high school or college geography students as volunteers if parents are a scarce resource.
2. Provide each student with a map of the area to be investigated. The map should have a beginning point (A) and an ending point (B) labelled on it.
3. Designate a time for reaching the end point (B).
4. Three or four different routes from point A to point B should be outlined, so that groups will not overlap.
5. In addition to the map, each student should have a notebook, pencil and the list of items that will be under observation.
6. Designate one member of each group as Recorder, but emphasize that each student will make notes and help complete the exercises due at the end of the walk.
7. Do the walk yourself. For each item you want students to observe, identify the specific site so you or your volunteers will stop the students. Ask yourself: What do I expect them to see? What will I point out? What terms and concepts will I use to help them make sense out of what they are seeing? Be sure to encourage students to speculate on the causes and implications of the patterns you are observing. Look beyond the physical forms to the underlying historic, economic, social (i.e., geographic influences) that have shaped and are currently shaping the urban landscape.

Activities:

Elementary: On the Urban Field Walk, look for the following:

- a. Observe both sides of each block and make comparisons of design, size, condition, etc. of the buildings.
- b. Watch for vast differences in any of the categories mentioned above. What's causing the differences?
- c. Look for signs of cultural changes or patterns of any type. Different styles of houses? Colors? Churches? Restaurants?
- d. Look for different types of activities that exist in a given area. Are different parts of the city used for different purposes? Is there a pattern or is it random?

Secondary: Do #1 and any three of #2 through #7.

1. Classify examples of landscape change and dynamics, including:
 - a. contrast of old and new downtown retail activities
 - b. old buildings with new functions
 - c. decay, neglect or abandonment
 - d. large-scale redevelopment
2. Identify functional areas where activities in different buildings are related (e.g. hospital with pharmacies, medical labs, uniform stores, etc.). Are they adjacent?
3. Cite examples of gradual transitions between different landscapes.
4. Find examples of sharp breaks between different landscapes.
5. Note any symbolism in the architecture of governmental and other buildings.

6. Recognize landmarks that help give identity and structure to areas of the city (e.g. River Walk, San Antonio, a school, or well-known store, water tower, etc.).
7. Note expressions of ethnic identity and social diversity in the landscape.

Sample Itineraries

These are two sample itineraries for a proposed field trip.

- Sample A focuses on early morning functions, and
- Sample B focuses on a day long field trip.

Sample A:

6:15a.m.	Meet in school parking lot
6:30-7:15 a.m.	Hospital or Police Department
7:30-8:15 a.m.	Newspaper
8:30-9:15 a.m.	Radio Station or T.V. Station
9:30-10:45 a.m.	Fast Food Restaurant/Supermarket
11:00 a.m.	Arrive at school parking lot

Sample B:

7:45a.m.	Meet in school parking lot
8:00-8:45 a.m.	Hospital or Police Department
9:00-9:45 a.m.	T.V. or Radio Station
10:00-10:45 a.m.	Airport
11:00-11:45 a.m.	Power Plant
12:00-1:30 p.m.	Lunch
1:45-2:30 p.m.	Newspaper
2:45p.m.	Arrive at school parking lot

WHAT STUDENTS SHOULD OBSERVE ON AN URBAN FIELD TRIP

In each case the students should be encouraged to investigate the geographical factors involved in the activities and functions of a city.

FEATURES TO OBSERVE AT PLACES VISITED

WASTEWATER TREATMENT: Students should observe how sewage for a large city is handled. How is the water moved around the city? Where does the treated water go? Are there any geographic factors that are important to waste and wastewater treatment and disposal?

TV, RADIO, AND NEWSPAPER: Students should observe the major forms of information distributed on local, national, and international levels. Is communication a type of movement? How is communication important to a place or region? Can new information change a region's characteristics?

DISTRIBUTOR: Students should observe how products are distributed to the population. What geographical factors are considered in transporting products to consumers? Where did the products originally come from?

POWER PLANT: Students should observe how electrical power is provided to an urban population. How is power transported? How is the power generated? What physical features are important to the generation of power? What environmental concerns does the power company have to solve in order to operate?

POLICE/FIRE DEPARTMENTS: Students should observe how and what types of service are provided to the public. Do fires or crimes tend to occur in certain areas or regions of the city or county? Where are the best locations for a fire or police station in the city? What geographical factors should be considered in locating a police or fire station?

AIRPORT: Students should observe how the airport serves the city and the surrounding area. Where do most of the airplanes come from and go to? Other than people, what goods are transported by air? How does the airport affect the surrounding area? What physical and other features should be considered in locating an airport?

MILITARY: Students should observe how military bases came to be located at this site. Where do people who live on or near the base live and shop?

SUPERMARKETS AND FAST FOOD: Students should observe how and who is served. Where do fruits and vegetables sold there come from? What factors are considered in finding a good location for a supermarket or restaurant?

CITY OFFICES: Students should observe how city government functions. What factors are considered in urban planning for the future? What physical, cultural, and economic geographic qualities of the city draw people to this area?

HOSPITAL: Students should observe what services are provided and how. Where is the best location for a hospital? What other types of economic activities are located near the hospital?

AUSTIN FIELD TRIP SITES

The following locations are possible stops for an urban field trip. The addresses and phone numbers are starting points for contacting an appropriate person at each location.

Waste Treatment
Industrial Waste
7113 E. MLK Blvd.
926-0316

Water and Wastewater Treatment
Water and Wastewater Dept.
1524 S. IH-35 Suite 200
445-3000

Newspaper
Austin-American Statesmen
445-3500

Distributor
Coca-Cola and Dr. Pepper Bottling Co.
9600 Burnet Rd.
836-7272

Police Department
Austin P D
715 E. 8th Street
480-5000

Power Plant
L.C.R.A.
3700 Lake Austin Blvd.
473-3200

Fire Department
Austin Fire Dept.
Public Education
1621 Festival Beach Rd.
477-9984

City Offices
City Hall
City Planning Office
124 W. 8th
499-2000

Radio Station
K-98
1219 W. 6th
474-9233

T.V. Station
KTBC- TV
119 E. 10th
476-7777

Airport
Austin Municipal Airport
472-5439

Military
Bergstrom A.F.B.
479-4100

Fast Food

McDonald's Restaurant
Central Office
704 E. Wonsley
837-2551

Supermarket

Tom Thumb
Page Division Office
1612 Ohlen Rd.
836-6212

Supermarket

HEB General Office
1825 E. 38 1/2 Street
477-6552

Hospital

Brackenridge Hospital

