

History on the Go

Grades 3-5

Visiting the historical places that children read about in their history books reinforces for them that history is about real people, places and events.

What You Need

Your child's history book

Maps, guidebooks

What to Do

* Find out what historical events your child is studying in school. Then check to see if a place related to those events is nearby and arrange to visit it with your child. If such a place isn't nearby, arrange for a "virtual" visit by looking for age-appropriate Web sites.

—Whether your visit is real or virtual, work with your child to prepare for it together. You might, for example, ask your local librarian to help you and your child find books, DVDs and videotapes about the history of the place you plan to visit or about the historical figures who lived there.

—Call the visitor information centers for the area and ask to be sent maps and specially prepared guidebooks (you can usually find such centers through Internet searches or by consulting travel books in your local library).

—Study maps or the area with your child. Talk with her about the best way to get from your home to the site. As you travel, have her follow the route on the map.

—Help your child make a list of questions to ask on your trip.

—Talk with her about the place you're visiting.

—After the visit, have your child make up a quiz for you, or a game, that is based on what she learned during the trip.

—Encourage your child to read more about the place you visited and the people who were part of its history. Especially encourage your older child to find historical documents that are associated with the site. For example, if you visit the site of the Ohio Women's Rights Convention in 1851, which is in Akron, Ohio, you might have him read—or read to him—Sojourner Truth's address, known also as "And ain't I a Woman?"

* Ask your child to identify any geographical features of the site you visited that played a part in the historical event she studied. If, for example, you visit a Civil War battlefield, you might point out its name and tell your child that the two sides in the war often gave battles different names. The Union side usually chose names that referred to a nearby body of water, such as a river, while the Confederate side named the battle by the nearest town. So, the battle called "Antietam" by the Union side (referring to a creek of that name) was called "Sharpsburg" by the Confederate side (referring to the Maryland town that was nearby).

Let's Talk About It

Ask your child:

What was historical about the place you visited?

What kinds of things communicated the history of the place?

Did the visit make you see our town in a new way?

Even though the place we visited was not in our town, did it make you think of something historical from where we live?