

Pack Your Bags!

Skills Focus

Research, Writing, Informational Texts

Connection to Habits of Good Readers

Evaluating, Inferring, Clarifying

Overview

It's time to pack your bags! If you could go anywhere with your family, where would you choose? In this activity, you and your family will plan an imaginary trip and practice your literacy skills along the way.

Guiding Questions and Talking Points

The following questions and talking points may be helpful for sparking a discussion about travel:

- If you could take a trip to anywhere in the world, where would you like to go and why?
- What do your family's answers say about you? Do you like cold or warm places? Do you like to travel far or stay close to home? Do you like to relax or be on the go? Are you adventuresome?
- If you wanted to take a family trip, what types of things would we need to do in order to make it happen?

Intro Activity

Sit together as a family. Ask each family member to name one place they would like for the family to visit together. Have each person explain why he or she thinks this would be a good family trip.

Before (Background Knowledge and/or Vocabulary)

To build background knowledge, explain to your child that there are many different terms that people use when discussing travel. Many of these terms have the same meaning, like accommodations and lodging. When planning a trip, it is important to know what these terms mean as you consult different resources.

The following terms may be helpful for children as they learn about traveling:

- Accommodations: the housing options or place you stay while traveling.
- Amenities: the features that provide comfort, convenience, or pleasure.
- Excursion: a short trip or outing to some place.
- Itinerary: a detailed plan for a journey, especially a list of places to visit.
- Lodging: a temporary place to stay.
- Route: a course, way, or road for passage or travel.
- Destination: the place to which a person travels.

During

Ask your child to choose a place he/she would like the family to visit. Then, invite your child to do research to learn about the destination so you can best plan your imaginary trip. The research can be done independently or with another family using resources from the library or online. Encourage your child to consult a variety of sources in order to gather as much information as possible about the location. After reading information from different sources, your child should summarize what he/she has learned in order to share the information with the rest of the family.

- **Emergent readers** can ask different family members what types of places they like to visit and what types of activities they like to do when on vacation. Encourage your child to use this information to help select a place that will appeal to members of the family. They can also use this information when explaining why the destination they have chosen is the best one for the family.
- In addition to researching the destinations, **proficient readers** can research the destination, and the cost involved in traveling to that destination. If the place can be reached by multiple means (airplane, car, train, bus), have your child research the cost associated with each means of travel. This information can be presented when explaining the best destination for the family.
- **Advanced readers** can create a chart or graph that depicts three possible options for the family trip. The chart/graph should compare each destination using a specific set of criteria (i.e., climate, activities, cost, etc.). Have your child present the chart/graph and then explain which destination he/she feels is the best option for the family.

Pack Your Bags! (cont.)

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After (Extension Activities)

- Do some research to find out what landmarks or sites of interest exist in your community or near your home. Gather travel brochures for these local landmarks and attractions. Share your findings with your family. Plan a day to trip to one or more of the destinations.
- Create a travel brochure for a destination you would like to visit. Include facts you have gathered from research about the location.
- Design a postcard to send from a selected destination. Create an original drawing or use images from magazines or the computer.

Web Resources

The following websites may provide useful information about a variety of destinations:

- www.notesfromtheroad.com
- www.worldatlas.com
- www.travelforkids.com
- www.justkidstravel.com

Suggested Readings

[National Geographic Kids Ultimate US Road Trip Atlas](#), Crispin Boyer

[National Parks: A Kid's Guide to America's Parks, Monuments, and Landmarks](#), Erin McHugh

[Ben's Dream](#), Chris Van Allsburg