



Field Trip to [the National Museum of the American Indian](#)

The National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI) located in Washington, DC on the National Mall. It “houses one of the world’s largest and most diverse collections of its kind. The museum’s sweeping curvilinear architecture, its indigenous landscaping, and its exhibitions, all designed in collaboration with tribes and communities from across the hemisphere, combine to give visitors from around the world the sense and spirit of Native America.”

School Group Visits & Tours:

School groups planning to visit the NMAI in Washington, D.C, are strongly encouraged to schedule visits in advance by contacting the NMAI's Group Reservations Office. If you do not schedule a tour, your school group will have to join the general entry line at any time during the day to enter the museum.

School groups are required to have one adult chaperon for every ten students. Chaperons must supervise and remain with their groups at all times and in all areas, including the museum stores. If a class is divided because of limited gallery space, a chaperon must accompany each group. Only ten students are allowed in the museum stores at one time. The NMAI reserves the right to refuse or terminate a program that is

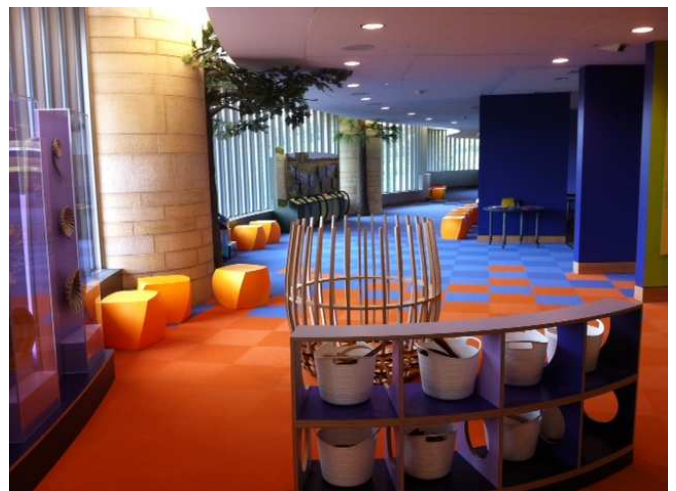
inadequately supervised or that fails to conform to standards of good behavior.

imagiNATIONS Activity Center:

A great feature of the NMAI is the imagiNATIONS Activity Center which offers a unique hands-on experience for school groups.

Here are some great things the NMAI and the imagiNATIONS Activity Center have to offer: “Native peoples have always used the natural environments around them to meet their needs, and today many of their innovations and inventions are part of daily life for millions worldwide. Visitors to the center can explore some of these ingenious adaptations through a variety of hands-on activities: Weave a giant basket to learn about the various styles of basketry. Explore different modes of transportation like snowshoes and skateboards. Sit inside a full-sized tipi and learn about the buffalo. And stamp your imagiNATIONS passport with real tribal seals as you journey through the center. Even the homes where Native people lived show how they adapted to their environments! Visitors can find out how as they wander through an Amazonian stilt house, see what makes a Pueblo adobe house special, or learn how a Comanche tipi is built.”

Students “can also learn about Ross and Cascade, Native kids who wear various styles of clothes for the different modern and traditional roles they play. Additionally, the activity center offers stories about Native cultures or by Native authors, available for reading in the center’s story room. The craft room offers visitors the opportunity to create art projects and take them home. Our newest activities include a





kayak balancing game and our Native Beats Music Room, where kids can explore music through Native percussion instruments.” Students can even participate in a competitive quiz show testing their knowledge of Native history, culture, and customs!

To schedule a tour for the ImagiNATIONS Activity Center, teachers may only register for Tuesday, Thursday, or Friday, in one-hour increments (i.e., 10–11 AM; 11 AM–12 PM, etc.). Groups must be pre-K to 6th grade only, and are limited to 30 students per hour, with a requirement of one chaperone for every five students. To reserve a group entry time, contact Group Reservations at 202-633-6644. Also remember to bring your confirmation letter on the day of your visit.

Reflection:

I have been to the NMAI many times and have enjoyed it immensely.

However, this time with revising and planning a unit for EDCI 554, I now look at the museum with the “teacher’s eye”. My favorite model of planning is the 5-E model (Engage, Explore, Explain, Elaborate, and Evaluate); I think that a visit to the museum would work best in the Elaborate stage (hands-on tasks that allow students to apply what they’ve learned so far; great time for teacher-led and student-driven investigations) after the students have basic knowledge and familiarity but prior to the final evaluation activity.

The museum has information about American Indians, but has more of a propensity towards displaying Native American Peoples’ Fine Arts and artifacts. Armed with the basic knowledge of the different regions and people who inhabit/inhabited them, students can delve deeper into the curriculum towards a deeper understanding of the concepts. I highly recommend a field trip (or even just a visit) here if you teach about American Indians; it is a beautiful museum with a lot to offer.

