

Adapting Daytrip: Rhode Island to Beginning Level Learners and Other States

This WebQuest can be used with ESL learners at all levels. As is, it is best used with intermediate or advanced students. However, with a few revisions, it can be effectively used with beginning level learners.

Recommendations for teaching this webquest with beginning level learners:

1. It is best to refer to your class' needs assessment to best tailor this activity to your students. Did they identify any locations or skills that could be integrated into this webquest? The print material can be overwhelming for beginners as well as having to read a lot on the web. Elicit from students their favorite places and use those few locations.
2. After students have discussed their favorite places, do a game like voting, or pick a name out of a box, etc. and choose only one of those locations. This would give the teacher the chance to prepare every step without coming across the unexpected because of the places students choose.
3. Several introductory/building block lessons that are usually part of the ESL curriculum would be helpful to teach prior to certain sections of the webquest. For instance, before starting the webquest, a geography lesson on Rhode Island would be useful including vocabulary on place names and directions (east, west, south, north). Before starting the transportation section of the webquest, you may have several lessons on modes of transportation, giving directions, reading a map and prepositions of location. A unit on numbers and prices would flow well into the section of the webquest on making a budget.
4. Divide learners by tasks. For example, the transportation people work together to find the directions. For the budget, do this as a combined effort after all other tasks have been done. This could be a bit competitive to see what group comes up with the lowest budget. They would then present their budget along to other groups.

5. Students should keep a vocabulary journal throughout the webquest to list vocabulary that is new to them.
6. For Step 7, presentation of research to the class, it is recommended that a cloze be used for beginning students for their presentations.

The key to adapting this webquest to beginning learners is to break down the tasks into smaller units and give a bit less print. The key is that the destination is easy to map out, they can find a restaurant, and present the information in some form.

Recommendations for adapting this webquest to states other than Rhode Island:

1. Very few changes need to be made to adapt this webquest to your state. Many of the suggested websites have comparable sites for each state. Be sure to investigate websites ahead of time that may have special video or audio features that could be helpful to ESL learners.
2. Most states have visitor bureaus that are happy to provide materials for free.
3. You may want to break your state up into regions and have groups investigate one location in a region and share with the class.