

LESSON PLAN 56: TAKE A VIRTUAL TOUR

Objective: Learn about a place by viewing a computer-simulated environment

Age range: 6-13

WHAT IS A VIRTUAL TOUR?

This is a computer-generated simulation of an existing location, usually composed of a sequence of photos or video images. Their aim is to give the viewer a sense of actually walking through the space. They often incorporate other multimedia, such as sound effects, music, narration, and text

DID YOU KNOW THE ROYAL CONNECTION?

The first use of the term 'virtual tour' is said to have been in 1994 when Queen Elizabeth II officially opened a 3D reconstruction of Dudley Castle in England. It's a combination of 'Virtual Reality' and 'Royal Tour'. Check it out at exrenda.net/dudley/index.htm

YOU WILL NEED

Browser, Internet access, Plug Ins (as required).

WHAT ARE PLUG INS?

Websites sometimes use special programming to make images move – like Flash, QuickTime and Java. You may need to download a small, free piece of software to enable your Web browser to 'see' this motion. This is commonly called a 'plug in'.

DEVELOPING SKILLS

Visual presentation and interpretation, exploration, geography, history, computer graphics.

METHOD

It's fairly straightforward really. Introduce the concept of virtual tours to your students. Explain where and why you will be visiting – it may be a general outing or to see a specific building or item. Then simply open the website of the tour and away you go.

10 VIRTUAL TOURS TO GET YOU STARTED

1. **Lascaux A Visit to the Cave** (fizurl.com/lascaux) gives a breath-taking 3D journey through the famous cave of Lascaux in France and its ancient paintings.



2. **3D Interactive of Angkor Wat** (fizurl.com/angkor) is *National Geographic's* incredible animations of landscapes and daily life at Cambodia's Angkor in the 13th Century.



3. **The Virtual Museum of Iraq** (virtualmuseumiraq.cnr.it/homeENG.htm) shows off many amazing artifacts from thousands of years of this country's history.
4. **The Virtual Cell** (fizurl.com/virtualcell) takes you on a field trip to a cell. See close-ups and read additional information.
5. **Taj Mahal Virtual Tour** (taj-mahal.net) is a trip to the building and its grounds. It includes views from the roof, minarets and crypt (normally closed to the public).
6. **Louvre Virtual Tours** (fizurl.com/louvre) allow you to walk the museum's exhibition rooms, galleries, grounds, and façades, each with basic information.
7. **Virtual Tour: Graceland Mansion** (elvis.com/graceland/vtour/) guides you around the home of Elvis, including the front lawn and the Jungle Room.
8. **Moon View** (earth.google.com) is a 3D tour of the moon. Narrated by astronaut Buzz Aldrin, simply select 'Moon' in the main toolbar of Google Earth.
9. **Virtual Tours of the US Government** (virtualfreesites.com/us.government.html) lets you visit the White House and other official sites.
10. **Virtual Tour of the Auschwitz-Birkenau** (remember.org/auschwitz/) guides you through the buildings and grounds of the concentration camp.



ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES

There are hundreds of other virtual tours to choose from. Let us know if there are any you particularly like and how you have used it in your classroom.

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