

# Washington, DC Middle School Curriculum Alignment

A School Tours of America trip doesn't just let your students study history; it lets them experience it firsthand. STA's program in Washington, DC, is designed to support Common Core standards for middle school, ensuring academic rigor and allowing students to gain a deeper, more meaningful understanding of history, one that inspires curiosity and lasts far beyond the classroom.

## Student Outcomes

Students participating in student travel will:

- Apply critical reading and analytical skills
- Strengthen writing and research abilities
- Engage in collaborative learning experiences
- Develop a stronger understanding of American history and civic engagement
- Apply historical inquiry and evidence-based reasoning

**LET'S GO**

[SchoolToursOfAmerica.com](http://SchoolToursOfAmerica.com)



# NCSS Standards

## Civics, Government, and Power

**Strand 6 (Power, Authority, and Governance):** Examine the rights and responsibilities of the individual in relation to different social groups.

**Strand 10 (Civic Ideals and Practices):** Identify and interpret sources and examples of the rights and responsibilities of citizens.

**Strand 5 (Individuals, Groups, and Institutions):** Identify and describe examples of tensions between belief systems and government policies and laws.

### Trip Connection

- Compare the "founding ideals" at the National Archives with the historical reality of disenfranchised groups (women, enslaved people) at the Smithsonian.
- Watch the legislative process at the U.S. Capitol or witnessing a demonstration on the National Mall.
- Visit the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum to see how institutions can fail or protect human rights.

## Geography and Economics

**Strand 3 (People, Places, and Environments):** Elaborate mental maps and use them to answer questions about location and human activities.

**Strand 7 (Production, Distribution, and Consumption):** Describe the role that these various institutions play in the economic lives of citizens.

### Trip Connection

- Navigate the National Mall or study L'Enfant's "diamond" grid in D.C. to understand how urban design reflects political philosophy.
- Visit the Bureau of Engraving and Printing in D.C. to see the physical production of currency and discuss the role of the Treasury.

## Culture and Society

**Strand 1 (Culture):** Compare ways in which people from different cultures think about and deal with their physical environment and social conditions.

**Strand 4 (Individual Development and Identity):** Relate such features of culture as language, religion, and social institutions to individual identity and self-development.

### Trip Connection

- Explore the National Museum of the American Indian to contrast Indigenous governance with the federal government nearby.
- Reflect on how one's own "American identity" is shaped by the collective memory at the Lincoln or MLK Memorials.

## History and Change

**Strand 2 (Time, Continuity, and Change):** Identify and use various sources for reconstructing the past, such as documents, letters, diaries, maps, and photos.

**Strand 2:** Demonstrate an understanding that different scholars may describe the same event or situation in different ways.

**Strand 2:** Identify and describe selected historical periods and patterns of change within and across cultures.

### Trip Connection

- Analyze the original Declaration of Independence and US Constitution.
- Highlight differing views of the Vietnam War (heroism, controversy, protest) at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial.
- Examine change across eras: slavery → Reconstruction → Civil Rights → present at the National Museum of African American History and Culture



# Common Core Standards

## Reading & Historical Analysis

**CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6–8.1:** Cite textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources.

**CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6–8.2:** Determine central ideas of historical texts.

**CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.6-8.3:** Identify key steps in a text's description of a process related to history/social studies.

**CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6–8.6:** Identify the author's point of view or purpose.

**CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.6-8.7:** Integrate visual information (e.g., in charts, graphs, photographs, videos, or maps) with other information in print and digital texts.

**CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.6-8.8:** Distinguish among fact, opinion, and reasoned judgment in a text.

**CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.6-8.9:** Analyze the relationship between a primary and secondary source on the same topic.

### **Trip Connections**

- Analysis of historical exhibits and artifacts
- Determine key ideas from museum exhibits and guided tours
- Compare differing perspectives on historical events (e.g., civil rights, war)
- Interpret maps, artifacts, and multimedia presentations
- Guided discussions with historians and museum educators

## Writing & Research

**CCSS.ELA-Literacy.WHST.6-8.1:** Write arguments focused on discipline-specific content.

**CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.6–8.2:** Write informative/explanatory texts.

**CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.6–8.7:** Conduct short research projects.

**CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.6–8.9:** Draw evidence from informational texts.

### **Trip Connections**

- Write arguments on historical decisions
- Student travel journals and reflections
- Research projects on historical figures, sites, or events
- Post-trip essays or presentations using primary sources



## Speaking & Collaboration

**CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.6–8.1:** Engage in collaborative discussions.

**CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.8.2:** Analyze the purpose of information presented in diverse media and formats and evaluate the motives.

**CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.6–8.4:** Present claims and findings clearly.

### **Trip Connections**

- Group discussions during and after site visits
- Guided reflection activities
- Classroom presentations following the trip

# STEM Standards

## Life Science

**MS-LS2-1 (Ecosystems):** Analyze and interpret data to provide evidence for the effects of resource availability on organisms and populations of organisms in an ecosystem.

- **Trip Connection:** Explore ecosystems, biodiversity, and evolution - National Museum of Natural History.

**MS-LS4-2 (Biological Evolution):** Apply scientific ideas to construct an explanation for the anatomical similarities and differences among modern organisms and between modern and fossil organisms to infer evolutionary relationships.

- **Trip Connection:** Examine how organisms adapt over time - National Museum of Natural History.

## Earth & Space Science

**MS-ESS1-1 (Earth's Place in the Universe):** Develop and use a model of the Earth-sun-moon system to describe the cyclic patterns of lunar phases, eclipses of the sun and moon, and seasons.

- **Trip Connection:** Study the solar system, space exploration, and Earth's history - National Air & Space Museum.

**MS-ESS1-3 (Earth's Place in the Universe):** Analyze and interpret data to determine scale properties of objects in the solar system.

- **Trip Connection:** Examine meteorites and compare the geological history of Earth with other planetary bodies - National Museum of Natural History.

## Engineering & Physics

**MS-ETS1-1 (Engineering Design):** Define the criteria and constraints of a design problem with sufficient precision to ensure a successful solution.

- **Trip Connection:** Analyze how aircraft and spacecraft are designed to solve problems - National Air and Space Museum

**MS-ETS1-3 (Engineering Design):** Analyze data from tests to determine similarities and differences among several design solutions to identify the best characteristics of each that can be combined into a new solution to better meet the criteria for success.

- **Trip Connection:** Explore prototypes and innovations over time - National Museum of American History.

## Physical Science

**MS-PS2-2(Motion and Stability):** Plan an investigation to provide evidence that the change in an object's motion depends on the sum of the forces on the object and the mass of the object.

- **Trip Connection:** Analyze how thrust, lift, and drag allowed the Discovery Space Shuttle to exit and re-enter Earth's atmosphere - Udvar-Hazy Center

## ISTE Standards

**ISTE 1.3 (Knowledge Constructor):** Students critically curate a variety of resources using digital tools to construct knowledge and produce creative artifacts.

- **Trip Connection:** Using GIS (Geographic Information Systems) to discover how geography influences where important civic and historical places are located.

**ISTE 1.4 (Innovative Designer):** Students use a variety of technologies within a design process to identify and solve problems.

- **Trip Connection:** Use digital tools and analog cryptography to solve complex logic problems - International Spy Museum's "Spy Science" workshops.

## Science & Engineering Practices (Crosscutting Skills)

**All NGSS Practices:** (especially analyzing data, constructing explanations, and engaging in argument from evidence)

- **Trip Connections:** Interpret models, artifacts, and data displays, ask questions and form evidence-based explanations, and engage with interactive exhibits and simulations - Smithsonian Museums.

## Technology & Society (STEM + Social Studies Connection)

**NGSS Crosscutting Concept:** Influence of Science, Engineering, and Technology on Society

- **Trip Connections:** Examine how inventions (transportation, communication) changed society and connect STEM innovation to historical change - National Museum of American History.

