

Questing with School Groups

Preview the Quest

Select a Quest that has a route and topic that will work well for your class. Consider checking the clues and box to make sure they are in place, or contacting the box monitor to let them know you will be coming.

Dress/plan for the weather

With very few exceptions, Quests are located outdoors. Students who are dressed appropriately for the weather conditions have a better learning experience! Quest Books are not waterproof; consider covering Quest directions with plastic protectors. Have a back-up plan in the event the weather is truly awful.

Divide classes into small groups

Questing is best done in small groups (8 students or fewer) so that everyone can hear the directions, have a chance to find the clues, and even take turns reading. Place a chaperone with each group.

Chaperones as facilitators

The Oregon Coast Quests Book contains information which will help chaperones become familiar with Quests. If possible, have the chaperones read the following sections prior to the field trip (p. 8-12):

What Is a Quest?

History of Questing

How to Use This Book: Suggestions for Facilitators

...as well as reading through the Quest they will be leading.

Additional hints:

- You will only need one set of directions per group. This helps keep the group focused and working as a team.
- Some chaperones take the “free-choice learning” aspect of Quests to heart, so make sure they know when they need to be finished with the Quest so they won’t miss the bus back to school!
- Some facilitators find that student groups are more focused and engaged when the adult does the reading. Alternatively, students can take turns reading the directions.
- Keep the clue locations secret so it’s fun for all:
 - Within your group, if you find the hidden letter clue, try not to just shout out “I see it, it’s P!” Instead, when you see the letter, avert your eyes and step away and say “I see it!” and let the others find the clue as well. When everyone has found the clue, then you can start saying the letter out loud and writing it in the book.
 - Keep a distance between Questing groups around you. Rather than running into the group ahead, stall your group for a bit by checking the map to see where you are, taking notice of something on the trail, etc. If the group behind you is catching up to you, speed up a bit and be sneaky so they won’t see what you’ve been doing.
 - Don’t tell others where the clues and box are located. Keeping the secret is part of the fun of the Quest!





Stagger Group Departures

Stagger group departures by at least 5 minutes so that each group is able to find the clues and route on their own without just following the groups ahead. This is easier to do in a wooded trail system than in open areas like a cemetery. Plan activities that groups can do while they are waiting for their turn to begin or are waiting for the rest of the groups to finish. Depending on the Quest, this could be: looking at exhibits in an interpretive center, journaling, sketching, outdoor games, etc.

Endpoint Modifications

Finding the hidden Quest Box can take some time, as everyone wants to read the log book, sign his/her name in the book, obtain a stamp imprint, read the answers to the Questions for the Curious, etc. When dealing with staggered groups, this can cause a bottleneck at the Quest Box, and early groups may unintentionally spoil the fun for later groups if they're 'caught' with the box out of hiding. Here are some ways to reduce the end-of-the-Quest bottleneck:

- Increase departure times between groups
- Have the chaperone sign in for the entire group (be sure to include number in the group; we count logs!)
- Put dot stickers in or outside the box for students to put on their nametags to show that they finished the Quest. The chaperone can quickly grab an envelope of stickers and hand them out to students in a location away from the box hiding spot. Please do NOT use candy rewards. Remember, the sticker or stamp imprint is simply a Proof of Accomplishment, not a reward. The true reward is the journey itself and knowing the secrets in the Quest.
- Ask groups to wait for all groups to finish the Quest before pulling out the box and passing it around. Some Quests are designed so that there is physical and/or geographical distance between the last clue and the box location.

No matter how your class experiences the end of the Quest, be sure to record the visit in the log book (date, number of participants) and put EVERYTHING back in the box and return it to its hiding place. The clues and box stay out all year and the next Questers will be looking for them!

Assessments

What impact did the Quest have on your students' learning? Use journaling, pre- and post- personal meaning maps, or other techniques to uncover student ideas, attitudes and new questions that came from the Questing experience. Consider sharing an assessment report with Oregon Coast Quests!

Once you've BEEN on a Quest with your students, consider MAKING a Quest with them! Contact Oregon Coast Quests for guidance.

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