

Printable Teaching Guides

Virtual Field Trip – Albany, New York

Objectives

Students will:

- Learn about the history of Albany, New York.
- Learn about the importance of the New York State Capitol.
- Write and illustrate a journal entry about their favorite aspect of the New York State Capitol building.

Brief Description of Internet Site

The *New York State Assembly* website offers information about the New York State Capitol, as well as an online tour of the building.

Build Background

- Explain to students that Albany has been New York’s capital since 1797. Many important historical buildings are located around the Nelson A. Rockefeller Empire State Plaza. Ask: *What are some of the most important buildings in Albany?* (The New York State Museum, The Performing Arts Center, The Executive Mansion, The New York State Capitol)
- Tell students that the New York State Museum offers numerous exhibits on New York history. Ask: *What kinds of exhibits might someone hope to find at the museum?* (Permanent exhibits include showcases of the Adirondack Wilderness, Birds of New York, Fire Engine Hall, and Native Peoples of New York.)
- Tell students that the architecture of the Performing Arts Center, called the Egg, is unique. Construction began in 1966 but it was not completed until 1978. The egg-shaped structure rests on a stem that dives six stories into the ground. The structure itself is actually surrounded by a “girdle,” or a concrete beam, that transmits the weight of the Egg. Ask: *What makes the architecture of the Performing Arts Center unique?* (No straight lines or sharp corners exist in the building, which has curved walls that meet on the concave ceiling.)
- Tell students that three architects helped create the New York State Capitol. The building was inspired by architecture from France. It took 32 years to construct and is considered one of the most interesting buildings in the United States. Ask: *What are some important events in the state capitol’s history?* (The Capitol building has had its share of problems, including a fire that burned 450,000 of the capitol’s books and 270,000 manuscripts in 1911. It is one of only ten state capitol buildings without a dome roof. It was first constructed on quicksand, which was replaced with concrete.)

Teach

What to do:

- Connect to: <http://assembly.state.ny.us/Tour/>
- Select Let’s Begin the Tour! Take the virtual tour of the New York State Capitol. Ask: *Which stops on the virtual tour do you find the most interesting? Why?* (Answers will vary.)
- Have students visit the Assembly Murals. Tell students that the original groined ceiling was replaced in 1888. Ask: *Who painted the original murals?* (William Morris Hunt)
- Have students visit The Capitol Fire. Tell students that a terrible fire swept through the capitol in 1911. Ask: *What stopped the fire from destroying the entire*

building? (The fire was slowed by the papier-mâché ceiling in the Assembly Chamber.)

Close

- Have students discuss what they learned during the virtual field trip.
- Have students write and illustrate a journal entry about the New York State Capitol.