



CONNER PRAIRIE

Teacher Orientation Packet

Welcome to Conner Prairie!

Thank you for choosing Conner Prairie as your educational destination! Your adventure is about to begin! Please look through this document before your visit. It contains the following pre-visit materials designed to help you prepare for your field trip:

- Teacher Field Trip Checklist
- Essential Information
- Links to Important Forms and Materials
- Experience Area Descriptions
- Teaching Strategies & Classroom Activity Suggestions

NEW Information for Teachers!

- 1.) **Check out the new William Conner House experience!** In celebration of Indiana's Bicentennial, the Conner House has undergone an important restoration and revitalization. Guests will now enter the house from the side facing the prairie, just as guests would have done in the 1820s. Inside, students can explore the first floor, where there are a mix of exhibits and activities. Staff are available to assist and answer questions as your students learn about William Conner and the transformation of Indiana in the years following our statehood. Click on "William Conner House" [on this webpage](#) for more information including a recommended student activity.
- 2.) **Our newest exhibit, Treetop Outpost, is now open!** A four-story treehouse sits at the center of this new experience area, inviting you to climb to the top and take in the view! Inside and around its base you'll find ways to connect with nature in exciting activity areas and learn about Indiana's natural resources. Unearth artifacts of the past in a recreated archaeology site. Build things just like Hoosiers did years ago. And, add to the forest sounds around you by playing specially-made instruments. Then take a trek along the Nature Walk and discover a different view of the prairie! Your students can explore Conner Prairie's natural setting up close as they walk through a forest and along the top of a levee that is flanked by woods, farmland, prairie and the White River. Along the way they will discover plant and animal life that call this part of Indiana their home. This pathway includes interpretive signs that provide information on ecosystems and land use. [Learn more about Treetop Outpost.](#)
- 3.) **Field Trip Guides are now available!** [Click here](#) to be taken to our Field Trip Guides. Chaperones can use the guides to help their students have a deeper understanding about what they are learning in the different areas on the grounds. There are guides for each of the different historical areas, as well as a Bicentennial Guide, Science Guide, and STEM at Conner Prairie Guide.

Teacher Field Trip Checklist

Prior to Your Visit:

- Review the pre-visit information packet.
- Send home permission slips and notes to parents.
- Send us your lunch time options, mode of transportation, and planned departure time.
- Recruit adult chaperones (At least one for every 10 students in grades 2 and above. At least one for every 5 students in kindergarten through grade 1.)
- Divide students into groups and assign an adult leader to each group.
- Make copies of the chaperone two-sided information sheet.
- Choose and print a chaperone guide to hand out to chaperones on the day of your trip.
- Make copies of the map to give to chaperones.
- Fill out the chaperone information sheet with student lists, teacher goals, and other information.
- Create (or have students create) school name tags for each adult and student to wear that have the school name and teacher name on them.
- Review guidelines and goals with your students.
- Remind students what to wear for their visit. Conner Prairie operates in all kinds of weather.
- Arrange payment so it can be made with one check, credit card, or purchase order.
- Visit connerprairie.org for additional information.

On the Morning of your Visit:

- Give maps, chaperone guides, and information sheet with the list of students to chaperones.
- Hand out school name tags to everyone.
- Pack lunch boxes or coolers for easy transportation and storage.
- Review directions with the bus driver(s).
- Obtain final counts of students, chaperones, and teaching/school staff.
- Fill out the check-in form.

Upon Arrival:

- Instruct everyone to remain on the bus, yourself included, until the school tour coordinator, or other staff member, greets you.
- Provide the final counts of students, chaperones, and teaching/school staff. (On check-in form)
- Provide the coordinator with your email address so we can email you an evaluation. (On check-in form)

During Your Visit:

- Bring payment (if not prepaid) and gold attendance sheet (provided by school tour coordinator upon check-in) to the Guest Service Office in the Welcome Center.
- Explore!

Essential Information

Lunch and Departure Information Needed

To help us better serve you, please send the following information to carter@connerprairie.org or call (317)776-6000 ext. 277, at least 3 weeks before your visit:

- Your top 2 lunch-time choices (10:30, 11:00, 11:30, 12:00, 12:30, or 1:00). If you prefer a time different from these, please let us know that also.
- Your planned departure time from Conner Prairie.
- Whether you will be traveling by bus, van, or car.
- Whether you plan on visiting the gift shop or eating at the Café on the Common.

School Name Tags Required

All adults and students are required to wear a school name tag with the school name and teacher name on it. (Students names are not required). It will expedite check-in if everyone is wearing their school name tag when you arrive at Conner Prairie.

Fees/Payments

Tours may be prepaid or paid on the date of your visit. Payments may be made at Guest Services anytime during your visit. Payment in one transaction with check, credit card, or purchase order is required. Please make checks payable to Conner Prairie. Please refer to the confirmation form and cover letter we sent you for specific fee/payment information. If you will be flying in the balloon, you may wait to pay for your general school tour and balloon flight at the Guest Services office after everyone in your groups has finished the flight.

Arrival/Check-in Information

Upon arrival at Conner Prairie, make the first right and follow the drive to the School Check-in location which is marked by a large yellow School Tour banner. Pull up along the curb and remain on the bus until greeted by a school tour staff member. The staff member will provide a brief overview of Conner Prairie and answer questions.

Give the school tour coordinator the check-in form listing a final count of students, adult chaperones, and teaching/school staff. These numbers are used to calculate the final payment due, so only include adult chaperones you are including in your payment. Please do not include adults who are paying individually at the ticket desk. PLEASE NOTE: Any adults (except Conner Prairie members) who pay individually at the ticket desk will be charged regular general admission.

The coordinator will give you a gold attendance sheet. At some point during your visit, please bring this sheet and your payment (if not pre-paid) to Guest Services near the Ticket Desk in the Welcome Center. Guest Services staff will process the payment and can provide refunds in the event of overpayment. They can also book your visit for next year. (In order to speed up the check-in process, the coordinator who checks you in does not handle payments or refunds.)

Once students have been instructed to exit the buses, please have them quickly go straight through the gates and organize groups **inside** the gates. With buses and other vehicles moving around near the sidewalk, we would like students away from that area as quickly as possible.

Behavior Guidelines

Please encourage chaperones to be actively involved in the supervision of students. We need their (and your) active participation to ensure students are acting in a respectful and safe manner and to enhance student learning. Please emphasize the following behavior guidelines to your students and chaperones:

- Students of all ages, grades K-12, must be accompanied by a teacher or chaperone at all times. Students should not run ahead or go exploring on their own.
- School groups should not begin activities involving animals, tools, or fire until directed to do so by a Conner Prairie staff person.
- Be kind to our animals. Do not tease or chase them. Please do not feed them.
- Please limit use of cell phones to emergency calls and taking photos.

What to Wear

Conner Prairie operates in all kinds of weather, so everyone should dress accordingly. Comfortable shoes are important. Remember sun protection - bring sunscreen and brimmed hats. Teachable moment: On rainy days use the opportunity to discuss how weather could affect such things as fire building and traveling.

Accessibility

Conner Prairie strives to provide an educational and fun experience for guests of all abilities. If your group has anyone with special needs, please contact Guest Services for guidance on planning your visit.

First Aid/ Lost Child/ Weather Warnings

Conner Prairie staff can communicate via two-way radio or phone. We have a first aid responder on site during regular open hours. If there is a first aid need or a lost child, notify any Conner Prairie staff person. We do keep track of weather conditions. In the event of a severe weather warning, staff will be instructed to advise our guests on where to seek shelter.

Photography

Still or video photography is welcomed at Conner Prairie for personal, non-commercial use only. No tripods, please. **During your visit, you may be photographed for promotional purposes by Conner Prairie staff. If you, or anyone in your group, does not wish to be photographed, please request a special sticker during check-in or at Guest Services in the Welcome Center.**

Standards

Conner Prairie experiences relate to the Indiana State and the Common Core academic standards for all grade levels and multiple subject areas. For a complete listing of standards, please see our online school programs catalogue.

Directions

Conner Prairie is located six miles northeast of Indianapolis at 13400 Allisonville Road. It is also six miles from I-69, exit 205.

After turning into the Conner Prairie entrance, make the first right and drive to the School Tour Check-in location marked by a yellow School Tour banner. Please have everyone remain on the bus until a Conner Prairie staff member greets you. After we provided a brief orientation on the bus and the bus is unloaded, staff can provide instructions on where to park. Bus drivers are welcome to enter free of charge.

For More Information

If you have any questions about your visit, please do not hesitate to contact us at 317.776.6000 or 800.966.1836. [View our pre-visit materials](#) for our experience areas.

Important Forms and Materials

Click the links below to download these materials from our website, or visit our [information and forms page](#).

These forms and materials can be found in a separate listing on our website under the “Educators” section.

- [Check-in Form](#)
Please fill out this form before you arrive so you can quickly report student and adult attendance numbers.
- [Information Sheet for Chaperones \(two-sided\)](#)
Use this sheet to supply chaperones with needed information including the names of the students in their group and your cell phone number.
- [Conner Prairie Map](#)
Print out and copy this map for teacher and chaperone use.
- **Field Trip Guides for Chaperones**
Choose from guides specific to each historical area, a science guide, STEM at Conner Prairie guide, or Indiana Bicentennial guide. [Click here to visit our Educator webpage](#).

Experience Area Descriptions

1836 Prairietown

Step back in time to Prairietown, a village working to become a thriving community in 1836. Meet the townspeople, who are played by Conner Prairie's trained staff. Take a lesson in the schoolhouse, help with chores, load or unload a wagon, watch craftspeople ply their trades and more! There is so much for your students to see and do! Through these activities, students can compare past and present, learn about the processes that go into various trades, discover the economics of the time, and explore everyday life. The residents of this fictional-yet-historically-accurate town are eager for new neighbors to help the community grow, so they are excited to meet you to see what skills you could contribute.

We also offer achievement cards and adventure guides that can provide more structure to your visit if you so desire. For more information or to get started on using these materials, check out the [Prairietown listing on our website](#).

William Conner House

This house was built by William Conner in 1823 on this site and later preserved by Eli Lilly. You can explore the first floor and find out more about Conner and the transformation of Indiana from wilderness to a settled state. Next door is our Loom House where you can learn about textile processes such as weaving, spinning, and dyeing natural fibers. Nearby is our Animal Encounters Barn where you can interact with baby and adult farm animals. [Check out learning materials on our website](#).

Lenape Camp

The year is 1816, and Indiana is about to become a state. How will this change affect the lives of the Lenape Indians and the fur traders living here? Talk to the fur trader in the Trading Post, explore the wigwams, sit inside a log canoe, and try activities related to their life here in Indiana in the early 1800s. [Check out learning materials on our website](#).

1863 Civil War Journey: Raid on Indiana

Experience our immersive learning adventure which tells the story of Confederate General John Hunt Morgan's raid into Indiana. Feel the patriotism, excitement, and concerns of the citizens and volunteer militia firsthand through this multi-media experience. Explore the raided town of Dupont, IN, and meet our staff portraying people who experienced Morgan's Raid. This area includes two audiovisual presentations that showcase the raid (**recommended for grades 4 and up**). These shows are ongoing, but have limited capacities. [Check out learning materials on our website](#).

1859 Balloon Voyage

Just outside the Welcome Center is the exhibit that highlights the 1859 balloon voyage of aeronautical pioneer John Wise and reveals the stories behind balloon flight in the 1800s. Learn about wind currents, the speed of travel in the 19th century, and how many party balloons it would take to lift you off the ground. In addition to touring the area, those booking our self-guided tour can purchase a flight in our tethered, helium-filled balloon for the greatly reduced price of \$3 per person. The flight takes you 350 feet up above the ground for a bird's-eye view of Conner Prairie and surrounding areas! **Note: Flights are weather dependent. Because waivers and parental permission are required, balloon flights must be arranged BEFORE the day of your visit.** [View more details](#).

Treetop Outpost & Nature Walk

A four-story treehouse sits at the center of this new experience area, inviting you to climb to the top and take in the view! Inside and around its base you'll find ways to connect with nature in exciting activity areas and learn about Indiana's natural resources. Unearth artifacts of the past in a recreated archaeology site. Build things just like Hoosiers did years ago. And, add to the forest sounds around you by playing instruments. Then take a trek along the Nature Walk and discover a different view of the prairie. Your students can explore Conner Prairie's natural setting up close as they walk through a forest and along the top of a levee that is flanked by woods, farmland, prairie and the White River. Along the way they will discover plant and animal life that call this part of Indiana their home. This pathway includes interpretive signs that provide information on ecosystems and land use. [Learn more about Treetop Outpost.](#)

Create.Connect

Create.Connect is an indoor interactive area in the Welcome Center that combines Indiana history with science, engineering and technology through fun, hands-on activities. You can explore four different stations: early aviation, invention, rural electrification, and wind power.

- 1.) **Early Aviation:** Experiment with wind flow and wing angles, design, make and test a paper glider, and see the effects of moving the elevators on a small model plane's tail. Uncover information about aviation pioneers.
- 2.) **Invention:** Grab a handful of parts to design and construct a chain reaction machine. Discover the Indiana connection to a variety of inventions. Learn more about the 1950s race to space.
- 3.) **Rural Electrification:** Learn how electricity changed life for Hoosier farmers. Use simple materials to assemble and test electrical circuits.
- 4.) **Wind Power:** Check out the 30-foot tall 1890s Flint and Walling windmill. Test how different blade shapes and numbers affect a windmill's operation. See how the turning motion propelled by the wind can be used to do work and generate electricity.

In any of these areas, you may encounter a character from the past who will offer his or her own perspective of exciting developments in technology. [Learn more about Create.Connect.](#)

Welcome Center

The Discovery Station play area is also located in the Welcome Center; however, due to capacity limitations, school groups are not permitted in Discovery Station.

The Conner Prairie Store and Guest Services are located in this building.

Teacher Strategies & Classroom Activity Suggestions

Conner Prairie offers a variety of hands-on activities. Please tell your students that during your visit, they will be talking to both costumed and non-costumed staff. Usually, staff dressed in historic clothing are portraying characters from the past. They share their stories with you and stay in character. Their character's knowledge of history stops with the year they are portraying. On the other hand, staff wearing modern blue shirts or jackets and name tags can compare past and present.

Be sure to check out the Chaperone Guides located on our website for more ideas on field trip activity suggestions.

For students ages 3-8: Relate today's life to what you see on your visit.

- Compare the students' clothing to the costumed staffs' clothing.
- Visit Whitaker's Store and compare this building to a store with which the children are familiar.
- At the Golden Eagle Inn, compare the building and amenities with a hotel.
- What did people in Prairietown do for fun? How does that compare to today?
- Visit posts such as the blacksmith, potter, or carpenter. Discuss their roles in the community. What are they making? What services do they provide to others?

For students ages 9 and older: Put the past into perspective.

- Ask the villagers in Prairietown about their past experiences of migrating to Indiana and their hope for the future.
- While touring the historic areas, remind students to think of the vast changes since the early nineteenth century. How have inventions such as the sewing machine, automobile, electric light bulb, telephone, refrigerator, and computer revolutionized the country and the world?
- Visit the Conner House to learn about William Conner's role in local history.
- Have students ask the characters they meet how they get their news. How does that compare to today?
- Find out who in Prairietown is able to vote. How is that different from today?
- Explore how STEM and history can be combined in our Create.Connect exhibit, located in the Welcome Center, by building circuits, exploring early aviation, experimenting with wind mill design, and learning about inventions that have Indiana ties.

Classroom Activities

- Let students help plan the field trip to Conner Prairie. Have students work in groups to identify what they would like to see and learn during their visit. Then have students prepare an itinerary for the visit complete with travel times, most important areas to visit, and lunch schedule.
- Prepare a trip back in time to 1836. Have the students pick five items they would take with them. As you visit Prairietown, ask the residents what they brought with them when they moved to town.
- Practice map skills by using the [Conner Prairie map](#). List who lives next door to certain characters; note what direction one place is from another; trace the path from one building to another; circle the buildings where residents would find food, lodging, animals, etc. Have students design their own map of a town. What buildings would they put in their town? What would be the best placement for those particular buildings in their town?
- Have students write an article for a newspaper or publish a newspaper about their field trip experiences.
- Have students imagine they were a traveler through Indiana in 1836 and stayed in Prairietown for a few days. Students can then write a letter to family and friends back East about their experiences in the village. Students may also create a multimedia presentation that includes photos or video that describes their experience.
- For each of the five senses, list one memory of the trip to Conner Prairie.
- Have students record 5 facts and 5 opinions that they encountered during the trip.
- Have students choose 5 objects from their everyday lives. During the trip to Conner Prairie have the students locate and take a photo of 5 corresponding objects from the 1800s.
- Using www.connerprairie.org, as well as other websites for informational resources, have students prepare tables comparing and contrasting various aspects of 19th century life with today. Possible topics: cooking/food preparation, textiles/clothing, school, storekeeping, trades/crafts, food, transportation, games/toys, communication.

- Have students research the raid in Indiana by General John Hunt Morgan. Have students decide if they would have chosen to join the Union Army after the raid. What are their reasons for deciding to enlist or deciding not to enlist?
- Have students use www.connerprairie.org, or other information resources, to learn more about William Conner and the role he played in Indiana's early years as a state. Have them compare and contrast his life both when he lived amongst the Lenape Indian tribe, as well as his European life.