

ACCESSIBLE, MULTI-DISCIPLINE FIELD EXCURSIONS

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Fieldwork, a key element of many science degrees, can be expanded to include a variety of associated humanities and arts disciplines, and allows for an experiential learning environment that is not easily replicated in classroom settings. Students make observations, measurements and inferences in natural environments that facilitates them making connections between elements that might otherwise appear disparate.

Planning accessible excursions relies on a combination of local knowledge, Google Earth, some inter-disciplinary collaboration, and perhaps some specialist transport. An amazing array of discovery can occur on an average city centre street or suburb. Walking/wheeled tours of historical districts can combine various aspects of history and society, for example urban settlement, migration patterns, planning and infrastructure, public health, social issues (the list goes on), as well as a broad array of sciences and engineering. Most large buildings in a city centre will showcase a global array of geology in their building and facing stones. Hidden parks, gardens and public spaces provide ample opportunities to look at ecology, zoology, botany, city ecosystems and adaptations. Access to rivers, lakes or wetlands expands these horizons. Bridges or construction sites allows engineering insights. Accessibility should not be a barrier to learning outdoors.

This presentation will showcase how to select accessible locations, tips and tricks for finding suitable content across a range of science and related disciplines, and present ideas for locations and follow-up work.

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