

Sagamore Hill National Historic Site

Virtual Field Trip

Teacher Resources and Lesson Plan

Hi, teachers! Welcome to Sagamore Hill National Historic Site's virtual field trip! We are excited to have you along for the journey! This field trip is designed to allow students from all over the country to experience a National Historic Site from their own computers, while also sparking their curiosity about the National Park Service and, of course, Theodore Roosevelt!

This virtual field trip is expected to take approximately two to three forty-minute class periods, depending on your students and the amount of discussion included in the lesson. If you are looking for a shorter activity, any section of the field trip can be used on its own, allowing you to modify it to fit your time constraints. This field trip fits into any United States History course and would be taught during the Progressive Era unit as per New York State Standards.

Although this virtual field trip is geared towards students in grades 4 through 8, this can easily be modified by teachers for high school students as well. Questions and suggestions regarding this lesson plan are welcome! Send an email to sahi_education@nps.gov

Interested in inviting a Sagamore Hill park ranger to your classroom as virtual guest speaker? Send an email to sahi_education@nps.gov in advance of your lesson!

Common Core Standards met for this field trip include:

- [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.1](#) Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources.
- [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.2](#) Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of the source distinct from prior knowledge or opinions.
- [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.

Materials for this field trip include:

- Internet Access (can be modified if Internet access is not available)
- Worksheets for each section of the field trip
- These can be printed out or distributed digitally

Essential Questions:

1. What do the objects in Theodore Roosevelt's home express about the life of a president and his family?
2. How do students' homes compare to those of a home from the late 19th/early 20th century?

Objectives:

1. Students will be able to make inferences about the Roosevelt family and their time period using primary sources such as a virtual tour and historic photographs.
2. Students will be able to draw their own conclusions about the achievements and values of President Roosevelt and his family.
3. Students will be able to relate their lives to historical figures through the universal themes of family and home life.

Procedure:

- To start, the teacher will give some background to Theodore Roosevelt and Sagamore Hill. There is information included for the teacher in the background information section below, or the teacher can choose to use their own knowledge of Theodore Roosevelt.
- The students will all receive a copy of the field trip guide, digitally or hard copy, and begin to explore the house.
- If there is limited technology available, the teacher can make this a group field trip instead of an individual one by showing the websites and tours on the technology available and "walk through" the tour all together.
- There is also an option to put the students into smaller groups and have them hand in one assignment for the entire group.
- The students will follow the prompts, touring the house as they go through the questions.
- Once the students have completed their work, it can be submitted to the teacher or gone over together in class.

Background Information:

Important concepts regarding TR and Sagamore Hill.

- Sagamore Hill is protected by the National Park Service.
- Theodore Roosevelt (TR) was 26th President of the United States.
- TR was a dedicated husband and father.
- TR was a native New Yorker and Long Islander.
- TR had a long career in civil service in state and federal governments, as well as the military.

- TR was a conservationist (a father of the movement) , naturalist, and generally a nature lover.
- TR was an adventurer, rancher, hunter, soldier, world traveler, and explorer.
- TR was an author of about 30 books and wrote for several periodicals during his life.
- TR himself regarded US involvement in the construction and completion of the Panama Canal as his most significant accomplishment.
- TR was a world diplomat and peacemaker who received the Nobel Peace Prize.
- Edith was the First Lady and the “chief executive” of Sagamore Hill.
- Sagamore Hill was a working farm.
- Each Roosevelt child had his or her own personality and accomplishments
- The Roosevelt Home had very innovative technology for its day (comparison to today).
- The Roosevelts kept a staff of servants, without whose work and dedication they could not have maintained their lifestyle (emphasis on cook, nanny, maids, farm workers)

For more information about TR and Sagamore Hill, visit the [Photos and Multimedia page](#) or the [Learn About the Park page](#) of [our website](#).

Site Information:

Sagamore Hill began being built in Oyster Bay, Long Island, NY in 1884. The home earned the name, “The Summer White House” as Roosevelt and his family stayed in Oyster Bay during the summer months of Theodore Roosevelt’s presidency. Theodore Roosevelt occupied the home until his death in 1919. Today, it is a National Historic Site.

Additional information such as park tickets, tours, hours, and virtual content are located at the [National Park Service Website](#).

This virtual field trip was created by Nicole Costanza through the Teacher-Ranger-Teacher (TRT) program and was made by a teacher just like you! Nicole is a teacher from Long Island who was selected as the TRT for Sagamore Hill during the Summer of 2020. While this plan was made over that summer, it certainly will grow and change over time and include new resources, questions, and options as time goes on!

To learn more about the Teacher-Ranger-Teacher program, please visit the [Teacher-Ranger-Teacher website](#).

Welcome to Sagamore Hill!

Sagamore Hill is a National Historic Site that is cared for by the National Park Service and was home to the 26th President of the United States, Theodore Roosevelt! While originally built in 1884 for Theodore Roosevelt to live in with his family, when he became the President, Sagamore Hill became known as the “Summer White House.” Not only did Roosevelt spend time with his family here, but he also hosted important political figures, conservationists, and activists at his home as guests.

There is a lot to see at Sagamore Hill and as you go on this virtual field trip, you’ll have the opportunity to explore the house and learn all about the family who lived there, what life was like during the turn of the century, and how Roosevelt was able to work from his home in New York!

Directions: As you go through each part of the tour, there are questions that go along with the rooms you will be looking at as well as links, images, and other resources to help you on your field trip! Before you get started, click on the links below and take some time to click through the rooms of the house. Make a note of anything that looks interesting to come back to later.

First Floor: Start the tour from the front door and see the main living spaces where guests would have been welcomed into the home.

Second Floor: View the second floor to see the family’s bedrooms, bathroom, and guest rooms.

Third Floor: View the third floor to see servants’ quarters and TR’s private office.

Write down interesting things you noticed (don’t forget to write what floor you saw it on!)

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What are your first impressions of the house? Do you have any questions you hope to have answered as you explore the field trip?

Part 1: Theodore Roosevelt – The Man Himself!

Before we start learning about the house, let's learn about Theodore Roosevelt! Theodore Roosevelt, also called TR, was born in New York City on October 27, 1858. While growing up, TR had asthma and was often very sick. With some encouragement from his father to exercise and be active in order to improve his health, TR began spending time outside. He was a curious child who began to study as much as he could and was especially interested in nature and animals. As he grew up, he enjoyed being outdoors and building up his strength.

For his education, TR was tutored at home in his youth and went on to study at Harvard college. Shortly after, he entered political life and became a New York state legislator. During this time, TR's first wife and mother passed away, leading him to leave New York and head to the Dakota Territory to start a cattle ranch -- you could even call him a Cowboy!

Splitting his time between his ranch and New York, TR was married to his childhood sweetheart Edith Kermit Carow and began to live at Sagamore Hill in Oyster Bay, NY in 1886. During this time, he left his ranching life for government service, holding very important positions such as Civil Service Commissioner, New York City Police Commissioner, and Assistant Secretary of the Navy. He resigned from this position to fight in the Spanish-American War and formed the Rough Riders, which was a group of men from all different states who volunteered to form a cavalry regiment. The Rough Riders became nationally famous when they charged up Kettle Hill in Cuba, helping to win the war.

After the Spanish-American War and the success of the Rough Riders, TR was elected Governor of New York. As governor, Roosevelt worked hard to fight against corruption in the state government and in 1900, he was nominated as the Vice President of the United States under President William McKinley. In September of 1901 while visiting the Pan-American Exposition in Buffalo, NY, President McKinley was shot by an assassin and would later die of his wounds. This meant that Theodore Roosevelt would become the President of the United States!

During his presidency, TR continued to take on big businesses by breaking up trusts (which is a large company that controls an entire field of business) and became known as a "trustbuster." Also while in office, Roosevelt received the Nobel Peace Prize (the first US President to receive one!) for helping to end a war between Russia and Japan, increased government regulation of the food industry with the Meat Inspection Act and Pure Food and Drug Act, worked to protect National Monuments for the public to enjoy, and oversaw the creation of the Panama Canal!

After his time as President was over in 1909, TR decided to go on a new adventure. TR and an expedition crew sailed across the ocean to go on a long hunting trip in Africa, where they collected specimens for the National Museum of Natural History in Washington D.C. After touring Africa, TR met up with the rest of his family in Europe. While in Europe, TR met with many important figures including the British Royal Family and Wilhelm II, the emperor of Germany. After a year abroad, TR returned home to Sagamore Hill, but did not sit still for long! He soon became involved in politics again and ran for a third presidential term in 1912 with the Progressive Party. Although TR did not win the election, he remained an active person, writing many letters and books, giving speeches, and touring the country. He even went on a trip to Brazil in South America to explore an uncharted tributary of the Amazon River!

Theodore Roosevelt was certainly a very busy man – he called his active lifestyle “The Strenuous Life!” Throughout his career, TR tried to help better the lives of the American people as a public servant or elected official by offering the public what he called a “Square Deal.” In 1919, after living a very eventful and exciting life, TR died in his sleep at the age of 60 at his Sagamore Hill home.

Let’s start our tour! Using this [Google Arts & Culture virtual tour](#), find the rooms that are listed below and read about each room! Our focus for this section is understanding Roosevelt’s interests, personality, and accomplishments through objects in these rooms.

A quick note on animal trophies: As you look into the Front Hall, it is hard to miss all of the animals displayed as trophies or rugs, so let’s talk about that first! Taxidermy (what we call these rugs or trophies) is not as common today as it was in wealthy American homes during TR’s lifetime. Theodore Roosevelt was a hunter and a conservationist, and these animals are mementos from his many hunting trips all over the world. A conservationist is someone who protects natural resources from running out -- this includes protecting animals, too! At first, it might seem like a hunter of these animals couldn’t possibly support conservation, but in fact, TR and some of his hunter-conservationist friends [helped bring bison back from near extinction](#), [gathered important animal specimens to be studied in museums](#), and even [declared the first National Wildlife Refuge to protect over-hunted birds](#). Not convinced? Read this [article on TR and Conservation](#) and watch this [video by the American Museum of Natural History about TR’s conservation efforts](#).

Our first room to look at is the Library! This room was not just a library, but used as TR's office when he was President, a family room in the evening, and a study. Based on what you see in the library, what do you think TR valued? What was important to him? Why? Explain your answer.

Now find the North Room. There is a lot of stuff in here! Find an object in the North Room that links back to one of TR's accomplishments and explain its significance. Look back at the reading at the beginning of this section to get a reminder of some of his achievements!

For the last room in this section, head over to the Gun Room (hint: it is the last one in this gallery) This room also served a lot of different purposes. Read through the description and take a look around. We tend to think of rooms like this as an office for work, but that is not it's only use! Look through this [gallery of the Roosevelt's enjoying their family time at Sagamore Hill](#). Which do you think TR valued more, family time or working? Don't forget to explain your answer.

Part 2: Family Life at Sagamore Hill

Sometimes it is easy to forget that the Roosevelt family was just that - a family! Time spent at Sagamore Hill was not all work and politics -- there were kids growing up, family meals shared together, and even a bit of trouble to get into!

For this portion of our field trip, use the [virtual tour](#) to find the rooms as you go! While you go through the rooms and answer the questions, imagine yourself growing up at Sagamore Hill with your family! What do you think it would be like to grow up here?

As you "walk" through the door and into the Front Hall, what are the first things you notice?

Walk into the Drawing Room and take a look around. Does this room look like any room in your house? What would you use this room for?

Next, let's head on into the kitchen! Look around - what is some technology you see that is surprising to you? What do you see that looks like something you would have in your own kitchen?

Now go upstairs and look at the children's rooms. Start with the Nursery, then look at Alice's Room, and the Boys' Room. What do these rooms tell you about the family? What hobbies do you think they enjoyed? What evidence made you think that? (tip: remember to explain which room you are finding them in!)

Go look at the Cook's Room and the Maid's Room. What differences do you see in these rooms when you compare them to the children's rooms or other parts of the house?

Think about your own room! In each of the rooms at Sagamore Hill, you can see how the family decorated and it tells us a lot about the historical figures who lived here. What do you think the decorations in *your* room say about you? What might a student looking at your room 100 years from now think about you?

For more information on family life, look through [the "Theodore Roosevelt at Sagamore Hill" photo gallery!](#)

Part 3: Political Life at Sagamore Hill

Now that you have looked at what family life was like, it is time to learn more about Sagamore Hill and its political history. Remember, before Roosevelt was President, he had many other government positions including governor of New York, Assistant Secretary of the Navy, and the Vice President of the United States! With all of the positions that Roosevelt had, there was a lot of work that needed to be done and a lot of people who would come to visit for business matters.

You can use [this virtual tour](#) to find the rooms as you go! While you go through the rooms and answer the questions, imagine yourself being President. Who do you think you would host at your house and what topics would you discuss?

Let's start at the front of the house! Head on over to the Library. This was Theodore Roosevelt's home office. While you look around the room, notice how it is decorated.

Look in the library. We know that TR worked while at Sagamore Hill. Looking at this room, what do you think is the most important piece of technology in his office that allowed him to work while also enjoying time with his family at their home?

Next, go to the North Room. Look through the pictures and read the captions. When you are done, look at this [gallery of political gifts](#) to the Roosevelts. We know that gifts are meaningful and we all put thought into the gifts we give to others, so we know that all of these gifts must have a special meaning! If you were going to give a gift to a President or leader of a country, what would it be and why?

Staying in the North Room, what are some of the objects that stand out to you?

What do you think those objects tell us about what Theodore Roosevelt valued? Can you link these objects to any of TR's life accomplishments? (Go back to pages 5-6 to look at TR's biography if you need help remembering his accomplishments!)

Part 4: Conclusion

We hope you enjoyed your tour!! Before you are finished, think about the questions and impressions you had when you first “walked through” Sagamore Hill.

After learning about TR and Sagamore Hill, do you still feel the same way you did when you first saw it? What are your final thoughts about Sagamore Hill and the Roosevelts?

What was your favorite thing about Sagamore Hill? Did anything stand out to you or surprise you?

If you had to tell someone else just one fact about TR or Sagamore Hill after this field trip to make them want to come and visit, what would you tell them?

Thank you so much for coming on this field trip! For any other questions about Sagamore Hill or Theodore Roosevelt, or even just for some more information, visit Sagamore Hill’s official website through the National Park Service at nps.gov/sahi