

# Natural or Cultural History along the Natchez Trace Parkway



Classroom Lesson:

## What's Happenin' on the Trace? (code MHWH)

➤ **Grade:**  
7<sup>th</sup>-12

➤ **Subject Areas:**

Social Studies, Science,  
Geology, Language arts

➤ **Setting:**

Classroom/ library

➤ **Duration:**

At least one class period  
for discussion, additional  
time depending on  
report requirements.

➤ **Skills:**

Analysis, research,  
synthesis and more  
depending on teacher's  
requirements

➤ **AL Objectives:**

Variable depending on  
assignment

7<sup>th</sup>:

Geography:  
1,2,5,6,7,8,9,10,11,12  
Civics: 10, 12, 13

US Government:  
9, 14, 15

Contemp Issues/Civic :  
1,2,3,4,5,6

➤ **Vocabulary:**  
federal

**Summary:** The students will investigate current events associated with the Natchez Trace Parkway. They will write a journalism type report and/or develop a visual presentation. Subject areas may include: community events or issues, plants, animals, invasive species, boundary issues, social issues and environmental issues.



**Materials Needed:**

Access to public records, newspapers. It may be helpful to have access to the Natchez Trace Parkway's website at [www.nps.gov/natr/index.htm](http://www.nps.gov/natr/index.htm) for news releases and to the National Park Service's service-wide issues website at <http://www.nature.nps.gov/criticalissues/>.

### Instructional Information

Meets 2010 Social Studies, Science and Language Arts objectives depending on the issue chosen to investigate and the method of report.

**Alabama Objectives:**

**Seventh Grade Geography:** 1) Describe the world in spatial terms using maps and other geographic representations, tools, and technologies. 2) Determine how regions are used to describe the organization of Earth's surface. 5) Explain how cultural features, traits, and diffusion help define regions, including religious structures, agricultural patterns, ethnic enclaves, ethnic restaurants, and the spread of Islam. 6) Illustrate how primary, secondary, and tertiary economic activities have specific functions and spatial patterns.

7) Classify spatial patterns of settlement in different regions of the world, including types and sizes of settlement patterns. 8) Determine political, military, cultural, and economic forces that contribute to cooperation and conflict among people. 9) Explain how human actions modify the physical environment within and between places, including how human induced changes affect the environment. 10) Explain how human systems develop in response to physical environmental conditions. 11) Explain the cultural concept of natural resources and changes in spatial distribution, quantity, and quality through time and by location. 12) Explain geographic contexts that influenced historical events.

**Seventh Grade Civics:**

10) Describe individual and civic responsibilities of citizens of the United States. 12) Defend how the United States can be improved by individual and collective participation in civic and community activities. 13) Identify contemporary American issues since 2001, including the establishment of the United States Department of Homeland Security, the enactment of the Patriot Act of 2001, and the impact of media analysis.

United States Government: 9) Trace the impact of the media on the political process and public opinion in the United States, including party press, penny press, print media, yellow journalism, radio, television, and electronic media. 14) Describe the role of citizens in American democracy, including the meaning, rights, and responsibilities of citizenship; due process and other rights guaranteed by the Constitution of the United States; and participation in the election process. 15) Explain the role and consequences of domestic and foreign policy decisions, including scientific and technological advancements and humanitarian, cultural, economic, and political changes.

Contemporary World Issues and Civic Engagement: 1) Describe current news stories from various perspectives, including geographical, historical, political, social, and cultural. 2) Compare the relationship of governments and economies to events occurring in specific nations. 3) Compare civic responsibilities, individual rights, opportunities, and privileges of citizens of the United States to those of citizens of other nations. 4) Analyze scientific and technological changes for their impact on the United States and the world. 5) Analyze cultural elements, including language, art, music, literature, and belief systems, to determine how they facilitate global understanding or misunderstanding. 6) Compare information presented through various media, including television, newspapers, magazines, journals, and the Internet.

Learning Objectives: The students will: 1) become familiar with issues affecting the Natchez Trace Parkway, 2) examine their role as citizens in recognizing and solving those issues, 3) Examine the impact of humans on the environment, 4) develop communication skills 5) Describe the impact of technology on development of the Western Hemisphere and its ecology

Teacher Set: The students should pretend they are reporters. They will develop a written or visual project, depending on the teacher assignment. The teacher or students should choose a topic for students to investigate.

They should write a descriptive or persuasive essay. They could include visual aids or alternatively only develop a chart or poster presentation. The students should already be familiar with these writing styles and the teacher should review important points about each style. See provided student "Report Requirements" sheet.

Option: The students could write a creative fictional story using facts for the base of the story.

Possible topics:

**Biology:**

Endangered species or threatened species

- Should we worry?
- Should they be reintroduced?

Invasive plant or animal species

- Privet
- Kudzu
- Wisteria
- Cogon grass
- Nutria
- Feral hogs, cats and dogs

Spotted salamander migration issues

Beaver management concerns

Fire as a resources management tool

**Social Studies:**

Privately owned portions of the old Trace and their care

How current construction projects affect the Trace

Construction by neighbors

Agricultural lease issues

Viewshed protection

- Cell towers
- Buildings
- Private land
- Utility right-of-way
- Road right-of-way

Archeological protection

- American Indian inclusion
- Care of American Indian mounds

Boundary issues

Special use of the Natchez Trace by individuals or groups

How much influence should states have on the federal land?  
Federal firearms laws  
Should state or federal laws be enforced?  
Allowed modes of transportation

Visitor Safety

Misuse of the Trace

- Drugs
- Speeding
- Geocaching
- Illegal activities
- Timber theft
- Hunting
- Picking flowers

**Teacher Overview:** The students should already be aware that the Natchez Trace Parkway is part of the National Park system and therefore management is part of the federal government. (See lesson plan “So What is the Natchez Trace?”)

There are many issues that affect a federally protected and maintained 444 mile-long roadway the runs through three states and several metropolitan areas.

It is impossible to separate issues that affect only cultural or natural concerns as our culture affects the natural areas of the Natchez Trace Parkway.

The Natchez Trace Parkway was established to commemorate the historical significance of the old Natchez Trace. The parkway right-of-way varies from 400 to 100 feet with bulges at irregular intervals. Commercial vehicle traffic is prohibited.

Through National Park Service internal policies and guidelines and the federal historic preservation laws and regulations, the Park Service is mandated to provide for the preservation, restoration, protection, interpretation, use, study and management of significant cultural resources within the parkway.

The purpose of natural resource management, in addition to protecting a few rare or unusual species, it to support cultural and visitor use programs and to perpetuate inherent natural values.

Another objective is to maintain scenic quality along the parkway.

**Student Instruction:** Review the purpose of the National Park Service and the Natchez Trace Parkway. Review the physical qualities of the parkway.

Have the students brainstorm what they think may be some issues that would affect the Natchez Trace Parkway. Write the issues on the board or overhead as the students develop the ideas.

Discuss which issues would have definite answers or answers that are opinions. Discuss which issues would be easy or hard to research.

**Student Task:**

Investigate and write a “newspaper article” report or make a display board about one of the issues discussed in class. Be sure to answer the “who, what, where, when, why and how” questions. The tricky question will be the WHY question. If your presentation is persuasive you will need to develop an opinion about your subject. If your presentation is descriptive, then you will need to know a lot of facts.

**Teacher Closure:** Conduct a class discussion as to whether or not students changed their opinions about certain issues. At the teacher’s discretion, have the students give oral reports.

**Student Assessment:** Participation in the activity and quality of the report.

**Suggestions for re-teaching:** Associate issues with the Natchez Trace with other federal, state or local areas in the news. Invite a lawyer familiar with federal law to visit your classroom and have the lawyer focus on federal vs. state law. Invite a park ranger to your classroom to speak about one of the issues. (Please note that park rangers are available on a very limited basis)

**Extension:**

Visit the Natchez Trace and observe issues first hand. Invite someone from the Natchez Trace Parkway to come speak about one of the issues.

**Resources:**

Natchez Trace Parkway Headquarters, 2680 Natchez Trace Parkway, Tupelo, MS 38804,  
662-680-4027

National Park Service website [www.nps.gov](http://www.nps.gov)

National Park Service Policies <http://home.nps.gov/applications/npspolicy/index.cfm>

National Park Service Issues <http://www.nature.nps.gov/criticalissues/>

Code of Federal Regulation <http://www.gpoaccess.gov/cfr/>

Selected laws

<http://www.nature.nps.gov/RefDesk/index.cfm#Laws%20and%20Related%20Material>

Selected Executive orders <http://www.nature.nps.gov/RefDesk/index.cfm#Executive%20Orders>

NPS policies and guidelines <http://www.nature.nps.gov/policiesguidance/index.cfm>

Natchez Trace Parkway Environmental Assessments <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/search.cfm>

## Research Report Guidelines:

1. Pick a topic that is interesting to you. As you investigate possible topics, keep notes about the subject and keep track of where you find the information. It will save time later.
2. Decide if you will be reporting the facts or your opinion. This will determine the slant of your story.
3. Use different sources to obtain information. Keep good notes and be sure to keep track of references.
4. While you are deciding on a topic, look for a focus for your topic. Do not try to cover everything related to that topic. Stick to one main focus.

Follow the format below to write a (five paragraph) report.

1. Your investigation should cover the 5w's and H.
  - a. Who, what, why, where, when, and how
2. Journalists start off by grabbing your attention. This is called a lead.
  - a. Your lead should be a summary of the most important events or facts
  - b. Catch the readers' interest.
3. Your title should be exciting!
4. Your angle is your point of view.
  - a. Are you writing a fact sharing report
  - b. Are you writing about your opinion about the subject
5. Be sure all reports contain accurate facts.

## Display Board Guidelines

- Catchy Title
- Should include pictures
- Answer 5w's and H
- Bulleted information
- Possible format- question and answer
- Neat
- Attractive
  - Use constant font
  - Put information in logical arrangements