Family Vacation:
Utah Counties WebQuest
www.uen.org/counties/webquest/

Introduction

Can you believe it? Your parents just put you in charge of the family vacation. They want you to plan a trip to a Utah county that is at least 100 miles from your home. (I guess your parents don't want you to be too close to home but not too far either.) Your mind must be racing with ideas, but you're limited by the time and money your parents have saved for this trip. Thanks to each county's travel department, who would love to have your family visit, you have many resources available to help you plan this trip.

The difficulty will be to make your plans doable and cheap (or as your Dad would put it, "inexpensive.") You also want to make sure each person in your family gets to see or do something they really are interested in. You found out that your Mom wants to see some of the natural wonders of the area (rivers, lakes, geological features, etc.), your Dad wants to see some of the historical sites (museums, monuments), your siblings want to do something fun (swimming, playgrounds, dinosaurs), and you want to do and see some things that are interesting to you. So get ready to be the family travel agent and plan the best vacation your family has ever had.

The Task

Your parents want you to provide a written travel plan (itinerary) before they will book your trip. That shouldn't be too hard, right? There's one thing you should know ... your sister is making her own plan, so your plan needs to be really good, to be better than hers. If her plan wins, she will get to tell everyone what to do (so what else is new?). Not this time!

Your itinerary will need to include:

  * a map
  * a typed list of the daily activities
  * a list of costs
  * a few pictures of the places you'd like to visit

If you really want to WOW your parents, you might want to make the final itinerary on a computer using PowerPoint or WordPerfect Presentations, SURWEB (www.surweb.org), or something else that you already know how to use. A well made poster may work just fine too. Parents like to see that you've thought things out (and to look at pictures too) so be sure your final plans look good.

The Process

First:
Pair up with a buddy or two and decide what format your final product will be (e.g. PowerPoint or WordPerfect Presentations, SURWEB, poster, pamphlet, or your own way.) That will help you decide how to gather your information and pictures.

Second:
Decide which county you would like to visit. You need to find a county that is 100 miles from you. Ask your teacher or your parents for a map of Utah. You can use this map to figure out which counties are far enough away. Be sure to take a look at some of the Web sites on UEN's Counties of Utah Web page (www.uen.org/counties) for each of the counties you think you might like to visit. The county pages are divided up into a quick summary at the top and links to some important web sites near the bottom.

As you're looking, think to yourself, "Does this county have what I need for each family member's requests? What sounds interesting to me?" Once you've chosen a county, check with your sources to make sure you're not doing the same one as your sister. (Hint: check with your teacher.) Hooray! You're ready to begin your plan!

Third:
Print out the following resources:

* A map of your county. Go to (http://www.onlineutah.com/counties3.shtml) and click on the county you have selected and look for the map link in the last column.

   * Print out the County Planning Worksheet (http://www.uen.org/counties/webquest/downloads/planning_sheet.pdf). You can use this worksheet to record the places you plan on going to and any costs that will need to be paid.

Fourth:
You can start collecting pictures. Be sure to mark the links so that you can reference where they came from. If you are just printing your pictures, make sure they have the web address on the paper. If you are copying the pictures into your computer program, be sure to copy the link.

Fifth:
Here's where you decide how to put all your information together.

Don't forget your audience! Mom and Dad have already told you what they like, so be sure to include that in your presentation. Go over your planning sheet and make sure you've got all that you were supposed to have. Then look at your finished project. What do you think? Do you like it? What about your buddies? How does it look? How about the pictures?

Sixth:
Practice sharing your presentation with your buddies or teacher. Your teacher might even have a few ideas on what your parents would like, especially since she or he is probably old like your parents. What do you think will make your presentation better than your sister's? Be sure to point those things out when you present.

Evaluation

Your final grade will be based on how well you presented your information, if your audience (i.e. parents, teacher, or student review committee) decided to go with your plan, and if your reasons make sense. Your audience will be using this Presentation Rubric to help rate your report.

Conclusion

Wow. What a trip you've created! They better realize all that you've been through to get what you showed them. Once they choose your plan (if it is well done, they have to), you better start packing. The trip will be here before you know it.

They may ask you some other questions like, "How much will it cost to drive there and back?" or "How long will it take to get there?" "Are we there yet?" If they ask these, you can use the links found on the online WebQuest to help answer those questions:

  * Current Average Gas prices in Utah
  * Utah Mileage chart
  * Mapquest (Look for Directions)
  * GPS Info (If you have one, great. If not, put it on your birthday list.)

If your family has a great time (of course they will) they just might ask you to plan their family trip next year to another state in the United States. That will be cool too! Now is your chance to start planning that trip. Have fun planning and traveling!

Credits & References

  * Thank you to Pieter Lingen for creating this WebQuest.
  * UEN Counties of Utah (http://www.uen.org/counties/)
  * WebQuest Design Pages (http://webquest.sdsu.edu/designpatterns/all.htm)