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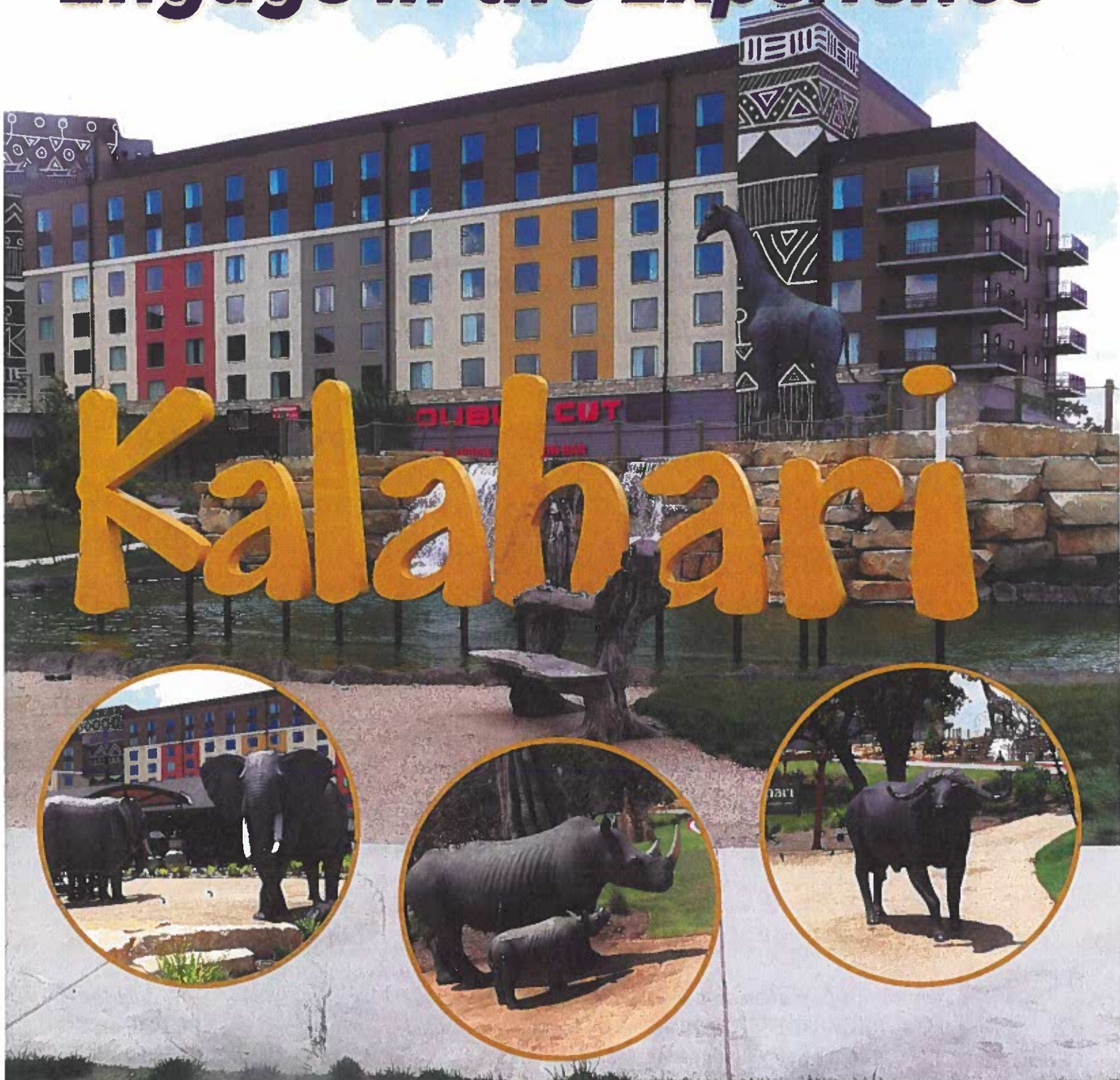
# TEXAN

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## *Engage in the Experience*





# Mystery Zoom & Virtual Field Trips

## Getting Creative with Student Engagement

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### Introduction

During this past year we have all had to get creative to help students engage in the learning experience. In the first few months of 2020 many students, teachers and parents had never used zoom but here we are — all pretty much experts in this new virtual world with zoom or zoom-like platforms, such as, google meet, google classroom, etc. Teachers have been challenged to find engaging lesson plan ideas to keep students interested and the “mystery zoom” lesson and virtual field trips are a way to connect and engage students to the world without leaving the classroom.

A Mystery Zoom is a fun and engaging way to engage whether you are virtual, in-person, or hybrid. A Mystery Zoom features a “guest” that your students can ask yes/no questions in order to figure out more about the guest. What they have to figure out can be a multitude of things: location; occupation; historical site, etc.

In order to set up the Mystery Zoom, you need to find someone to do the zoom with. This could be another classroom, a local city or state official, a tour guide at a historic site, or even a national figure. To find someone, you can put a request out on your social media platforms, ask around the school and community, or find a social media teacher group, such a Social Studies Network on Facebook. Reaching out to teachers from other schools or districts across the state or even the nation and trading Mystery Zoom challenges is a great way to give the students a different perspective and experience, as well as, to build connections to new people and diverse settings that they may not see in their own classroom or school.

**Grade Level or Course:** Grade 2 or 6

**Time Allowed:** 2-3 days for preparation and Mystery Zoom

### Social Studies TEKS

2nd Grade: 1B, 2B, 3A, 4B, 8B, 15A

6th Grade: 3C, 3D, 11A, 13A, 14B, 20A

**Materials Needed:** Mystery Guest,

computer with camera and microphone, copies of relevant maps (world, continent, country), list of prepared questions.

**Vocabulary:** The lesson vocabulary will be dependent on the content or Mystery Zoom conducted. The teacher should plan to make students aware of all relevant vocabulary prior to the Mystery Zoom lesson.

### Lesson Sequence

1. Start the class with a review of the order of questions that the class prepared previously. Be sure to have a copy of the questions located by the central set up for all students to use.
  2. Begin the Zoom by welcoming the guest.
  3. Begin the questions. As the guest answers, there will be times where you have to stop and talk as a class about what questions are still valid based on the answers given. Also, ask if there are any additional questions that can be asked. (The quality of your questions will increase with practice and use).
  4. Using the maps, have students mark off areas where the mystery guest cannot be in order to narrow down the location.
  5. When students think they have the answer, be sure to discuss it as a class. Have students explain why they think their answer is correct (this can be in the format of a thesis statement — “I believe that the location is \_\_\_\_\_ because \_\_\_\_\_”).
  6. Once students guess the correct location, you can have a discussion with your guest about his/her location and job.
  7. Afterwards, have students write a reflection on what they learned from the Mystery Zoom. As you do multiple ones, students can create Venn diagrams comparing and contrasting what they learned from each Zoom. Students can then use the information from the graphic organizer to write an essay.
- To prepare for the Zoom, work with students to develop yes and no questions to ask ahead of time. When it comes time to have your Zoom, be sure to set up your camera and microphone in a central area

so that students can come up and ask the questions. If you are going to do a location — Mystery Zoom, it is a good idea to have a series of maps for students to write on in order to mark off areas that it cannot be based on the answers of the guest.

### Other Sample Activities

Another option is to do a student-led Mystery Zoom. Students can choose an item from an online collection from a museum, such as the Smithsonian collections (<https://www.si.edu/collections>) in relation to the current topic. For example, if students are studying Westward Expansion, they can find artifacts within the Smithsonian collections (<https://www.si.edu/collections>), such as Lewis & Clark’s Expedition Journal and the Conestoga Wagon and create questions for their peers to answer that leads them from one artifact to the next. Students can also practice the Mystery Zoom by going to a different part of the building and using their questions to locate other students. Or, students can select a country and pretend that they are there for the practice Mystery Zoom.

### Sample Virtual Field Trips

#### **The Dallas Holocaust and Human Rights Museum — [www.dhhrm.org](http://www.dhhrm.org)**

The Dallas Holocaust and Human Rights Museum (DHHRM) is dedicated to teaching the history of the Holocaust and advancing human rights to combat prejudice, hatred, and indifference. It is an important history museum but also a social emotional learning institute, teaching about human behavior in history, and using lessons from that to inspire the public and students to be upstanders in their community. The DHHRM offers a wide variety of virtual field trips and resources for teachers.

Their virtual field trips can be of the whole museum, on a specific wing of the museum, or on the current exhibit. They have developed a format so that it doesn’t matter if students are at school or virtual. Students join in via a Zoom or Google Meets link. The museum has a specially constructed cart with an Ipad that moves through the museum while the museum

educator is going through the museum. Teachers get a resource packet with things to do before and after the field trip. They also have two virtual education programs connected to the exhibits and integrate materials from the museum for both elementary & secondary levels. One activity in the Reporting on History section has students traveling back to 1964 to look at the Piccadilly cafeteria event in Dallas and create a report. All of the resources are available in English or Spanish. They also have the ability to close caption the tours. The sign-up form has a section where educators can select any form of support for students. There are scholarships available for schools if your school is Title I. The museum has district partnerships with Dallas, Fort Worth, Mesquite, Duncanville, Carrollton-Farmers Branch, Irving, Richardson, Arlington, and Grand Prairie, or any school in ESC Regions 7 & 8.

To learn more about the virtual opportunities, visit <https://www.dhhrm.org/educators/plan-your-virtual-field-trips-and-education-programs>.

### **Sixth Floor Museum at Dealey Plaza — [www.jfk.org](http://www.jfk.org)**

Located in Dealey Plaza, the mission of the Sixth Floor Museum is to focus on telling the life and legacy of JFK through programming and resources. While the museum has been doing virtual field trips for years, they have been able to add some additional ones and take some in-person programs and modify them for a virtual format. One popular program is the Conflicting Evidence program where students look at evidence they have gathered within the first 24 hours of the

assassination, sifting through evidence in order to formulate their opinion based on the evidence presented. The museum also offers a Living History program that connects students with eyewitnesses and speakers about civil rights. Another popular program is the History Detective program. In groups, students learn about some of the different programs and events during JFK's presidency when they are given a set of objects to examine the items to learn as much as they can about each person. Group sizes for all but the History Detectives programs is 60 students. The History Detectives program can have no more than 36 students. All programs are presented on Zoom and can work with all classroom situations including hybrid. The costs for virtual museum tours, the History Detectives program, and the Conflicting Evidence program is \$100 for each program. The Living History program is \$120 for a 60-minute long program.

The museum offers virtual tours for educators on Mondays at 10AM where they walk through the museum. Educators can ask questions and interact with the docent. The museum also has partnerships with other presidential museums to offer a variety of talks on various topics. They are also working on summer programs that will have a daily focus presented by different museums.

The museum also has lesson plans that teachers can access, and they are developing new ones that will cover a variety of topics aimed at elementary and secondary grade levels. The museum also has a variety of interactive resources, including an interactive motorcade map. As you click on

each spot, there are primary source images, interviews, or videos to explore. They also have an interactive timeline from JFK's birth to after the assassination with primary sources, interviews, and videos. They have also developed a weekly family series with two-three activities on different themes. Currently, there are 12 lessons found on their family activity page. They have also started a Youtube series called "60's Science" that is a cross curricular series of videos on different topics (forensics, space race, heart/lungs, early computers) that are 30-45 minutes long. The videos have content up front and then experiments that families can do with household items. New videos debut on the 2nd Saturday of the month.

For more information, teachers can email [education@jfk.org](mailto:education@jfk.org). To find out more about the museum programs, teachers can visit <https://www.jfk.org/the-museum/plan-your-visit/education> to find a listing of the programs with descriptions.

### **Connect2Texas — [connect2texas.net](http://connect2texas.net)**

Connect2Texas was founded in 2005 and is a free service provided by Education Service Center Region 11. ESC Region 11 partners with Texas-based organizations including museums, zoos, parks, presidential libraries, aquariums and more to bring K-12 educational programs aligned to state and/or national standards to students all over the world. They offer an assortment of free and fee-based programs that include pre and post materials. Connect2Texas programs are unique and engaging learning experiences that bring a variety of experts in their related field directly into the classroom. Currently, they are connecting with students that are attending school in person as well as students that are still learning from home. This service is available to ALL educators around the world, including public, private, charter, and homeschools. Programs connect via Zoom whether students are at school or at home, and teachers can share their screen with other platforms. Program descriptions include Alignment to state (TEKS) and/or national standards as applicable. Most programs are 30-50 minutes in length and are inclusive of all subjects and grade levels available. Programs can also come with primary sources and materials (such as teachers guide, student pre and post activities, etc) depending on what each provider offers. Educators are able to request specific dates and times while some dates and times are set by the museums.



**Pacific combat zone sign**

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### **World Affairs Council of Dallas/Ft. Worth — <https://www.dfworld.org>**

The mission of the World Affairs Council of Dallas/Ft. Worth is to provide North Texas students with the tools and skills to make a positive change in the North Texas community, effectively interact with people from different backgrounds, and compete for jobs in the global workforce. Students are transformed from observers into informed international participants by gaining global competency skills through educational programs focused on diplomatic leadership, civic engagement, problem-solving, and cultural intelligence. This is a nonprofit and nonpartisan group whose events also work for hybrid classes as all of the current free Global Young Leaders online events are held after school hours and on weekends. They do not disturb school hours. They offer regular speaker events that are usually held outside of school hours but some do fall within the school day. When schools are able to return to in-person programming, some education events will fall during the school day and schools usually get approved for a field trip. After COVID, they will continue to hold many of our education events online as well so schools do not need buses or field trip approval. Currently, they have over 60 Junior World Affairs Council (JWAC) clubs on high school campuses around DFW. There is no cost and it is open to private, public, and charter schools. They also send out a weekly e-mail to the teacher sponsors and the student officers so they know what is coming up. These include leadership workshops, student discussions, speakers, teacher PD and travel abroad, awards, socials, grants, service projects, career days, academic competitions, etc. Teachers or students register for the free events they want and can be as involved as they choose. If a student participates in at least five events, they earn a Global Leadership Certificate and seniors earn a graduation cord at no cost. For more



**Museum of Pacific recreated island battlefield**



**World War II plane displayed at The National Museum of the Pacific War in Fredericksburg, Texas.**

information on how to start a JWAC on your campus, visit <https://www.dfworld.org/what-we-do/global-young-leaders/start-a-jwac>.

### **The National Museum of the Pacific War — [pacificwarmuseum.org](http://pacificwarmuseum.org)**

The mission of the National Museum of the Pacific War is to educate and inspire present and future generations about the Asiatic/Pacific war and its continuing global relevance in the world today. The museum has both virtual and in-person options for tours. The virtual field trips are designed to bring the museum into the classroom. During the tour, the guide can actually show them artifacts. If visiting the museum in person, they have a battlefield that students can visit and explore. Please note that school groups can visit in person preferable on Monday and Tuesday. The museum wants visitors to have a great experience and will still follow safety protocols. Programs that the museum provides cover a variety of topics, including America Goes to War Industrial Production Key to Victory, Admiral Nimitz — A Lesson in Citizenship and Leadership, and Texas & Texans in WWII. Additionally, they have designed an 11th grade lesson Called Operation Overview that is aimed to prepare students for the US History EOC. They also have Spotlight Sessions which have been recorded and cover a variety of topics, including a program for Constitution Week that talked about the 3 documents of freedom, African Americans in WWII, and The Wonder Women of WWII. Additionally, the museum has lesson plans to support trips to the museum. For full descriptions of the programs, visit the museum's website. One upcoming public program is a hybrid summer camp called Game Plan Development, where students are tasked to create a game that enables them to learn about the museum. Also, the museum has a teacher institute in the summer that is

certified by TEA where teachers can increase their content knowledge and earn 18 credits.

To register for a tour or program, go to the museum's website, select education, and select distance learning. There, you will find a link to Connect2Texas and further instructions. When you get to the Connect2Texas website, look at the event tab and register for the event you want. If the dates and times on the website are not available for you, you can contact their education department by emailing [distancelearning@nimitzfoundation.org](mailto:distancelearning@nimitzfoundation.org). Their programs are geared towards 3rd–12th grade, though they are working on lower grade lesson plans. If you are going to bring a group to the museum, you must go to the museum's website and click on Field Trips.

### **Assessment**

Students can create a product about their virtual field trip such as brochures or a diary, a podcast of their experience, or even a comic book about their trip. Teachers may also ask students to write thank you notes to the museum or docent that arranged or spoke on their field trip.

### **Modifications/Extension**

Individuals or groups of students can create museum exhibits that could be included in a school museum or added to the actual museum by completing a research project including family artifacts on the topics from their field trip.

### **REFERENCES**

- The Dallas Holocaust and Human Rights Museum — Charlotte Decoster
- The Sixth Floor Museum — Genevieve Kaplan
- Connect2Texas — Lori Hamm-Necker
- World Affairs Council of Dallas/Ft. Worth — Jennifer Bowden
- National Museum of the Pacific War — Bryan Degner
- Virtual Field Trip Resources:** [Discovery Education Virtual Field Trips](https://discoveryeducation.com/virtual-field-trips) [discoveryeducation.com/community/virtual-field-trips](https://discoveryeducation.com/community/virtual-field-trips)

*Dr. Heather K. Caldwell is an Assistant Professor of Education at Colorado State University-Pueblo. Her research interests include engaging learning practices, technology integration in the classroom, pre-service teacher experiences and success, the history of education, and women in education. She earned her doctorate from Texas A&M University in Curriculum & Instruction with a Social Studies specialization.*

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