BIG History Lesson at the Michigan History Museum

Program Overview

Created in in 1999 by Margaret Holtschlag, Teacher of the Year 2000, the BIG Lesson concept is a study trip that is longer in length and able to have more meaningful and thorough learning than a typical one day field trip. In the BIG Lesson model, teachers bring their students to community resources – such as the Michigan History Museum as well as Nature Centers, Zoo’s, and Science Museums – to create an immersive learning experience for their students to study extensively all that that place has to offer over a number of days. By spending five consecutive days in one place there is time for teachers to lead project-based, problem-based, and placed-based learning for their students, as well as opportunity for integration of other subjects.

Changing the concept of the traditional field trip to an all-day, all-week interdisciplinary study trip, this experience includes

* Teacher-led and expert-led lessons using the museum space and props
* Observing more deeply the museum objects
* Simulations
* Behind-the-scenes tours
* Student groups working cooperatively on research.

Parents are actively involved in the learning activities and assistance to teacher. The learning before and after the BIG Lesson week expands with research projects and connections to curriculum.

Foundational practices of the BHL that teachers should plan for and will be provided training on:

* Theme for the week
* Gallery Time (student individual study of artifacts in the museum galleries)
* Culminating Project (Summative Assessment)
* Debriefing activities (Formative Assessments)
* Student Mastery and Empowerment
* Chaperone Participation

## Program: What the Michigan History Museum provides

* Professional development one-day training
* Planning meeting with BHL Coordinator to help you think through your week’s details
* Use of homebase classroom at the museum for your week
* Use of lesson bank of four MI History units for use before, during, and after your BHL week
  1. Museum and Historical Thinking Unit
  2. First Nations unit
  3. Choosing and Defining Michigan unit
  4. Automobiles unit
* Access to five museum-based Core Lesson plans and props
  1. Anishinaabeg Trade with the French (previously called ‘Voyagers’)
  2. Mapping Michigan (previously called ‘Statehood - Surveying’)
  3. Choosing Michigan (previously called ‘Statehood - Settlement’)
  4. Mining Michigan
  5. Lumbering in Michigan
* Docent Special Programs based on docent availability
  1. Immigration
  2. Bridges
  3. Shipping
* Choice of two museum-based lessons to be taught by museum personnel (docent or staff). Choose from the Core Lessons or Docent Special Programs.
* Choice of one Behind-the-Scenes tour.
  1. Michigan Battle Flag Collection
  2. Tour of the Archives of Michigan

## Parameters: Requirements for participating schools

* Cost: $400 per class, due before or upon arrival to the Michigan History Foundation
* Weeks available for BHL: Sept. 30 through Dec. 14, and Jan. 6 through Feb. 28.
* Up to two classes can participate per week.

Before your BHL week:

* Summer training will take place Thursday Aug. 15 or Friday Sept. 6 at the Michigan History Museum. SCECH's will be available for participation if you sign in and provide your PIC number.
* If a teacher cannot attend the training, their class cannot attend BHL this year.
* Meet with BHL Coordinator (Alana Retzer Brinker) 4-6 weeks prior to arrival to go over your plan for the week. Meet in person or virtually.

During your BHL week:

* Arrival time no earlier than 8:45am, officially doors open at 9am.
* Everyone in your group - students, staff, and chaperones, must wear museum button pins which will be provided to you. This replaces the stickers that other one-day visitors must wear.
* Museum staff/docent-led programs are scheduled based on docent and staff availability.
* Teachers must bring their class to the museum-led programs by the scheduled time to respect docent volunteer's time.
* Chaperone limit: 1 chaperone per 4 students per class
* No outside presenters in the museum exhibits.

After your BHL week:

* Participate in a survey evaluation of how your week went so that we can continue to improve this program.

## The Process: How to apply and prepare for the BIG History Lesson at MHM

* Check with your school administration to ensure they are supportive of you bringing your class on an all day, five day study trip, and think through how you would provide transportation for your class to ensure this is feasible for your school.
* Apply to participate in the program via this link: [Microsoft Forms](https://forms.office.com/g/8s4MtSRfGQ). The application period is May 1-May 31, 2024. Your application will be reviewed and you’ll be notified of your acceptance by June 14.
* Attend one of the required teacher trainings either on Aug. 15 or Sept. 6. You will be trained on how to plan for your BHL week and briefed on the resources that the MHM is providing.
* Your BHL week will be assigned to you based on your preferences and our availability.
* You meet virtually with the BHL Coordinator 4-6 weeks prior to your BHL week to talk through the details of your planning and let the Coordinator know what museum-led lessons you would like. The Coordinator helps you schedule your daily agenda based on the programs you choose, and helps you think through how to implement the foundational practices such as gallery time, debriefing, chaperone participation, and theme for your week.
* Prepare all the details:
  + Recruit and prepare your chaperones to be helpful.
  + Ensure transportation is all set.
  + Plan your lessons – either your own or pull from the provided lesson bank.
  + Prepare your students for gallery time by observing objects before your week comes.
* Get a good rest the weekend before you come because it will be a busy week! But your students will hopefully have a very memorable, positive experience interacting with history in 3D.