Educational Services

The National Air and Space Museum, at its building on the National Mall in Washington, D.C., and the Steven F. Udvar-Hazy Center in Chantilly, Va., offers educational opportunities to students, teachers, family groups and walk-in visitors. Through new distance-learning technology, museum educators also offer worldwide access to the museum’s unparalleled collections and activities. More information on the museum’s educational services can be found at: airandspace.si.edu/education.

Public Programs for the Visitor

- **Docent Tours**: Trained docents lead a variety of tours for the public at the museum in Washington and the Udvar-Hazy Center. Focusing on specific themes, the tours cover historic events and the people associated with particular artifacts. Tour topics and schedules can be found in the education section of the museum’s website.

- **Family Programs**: The museum encourages families to learn together with special themed “Family Days” that celebrate aviation and space. Visitors can “Meet the Experts,” see live performances and participate in a variety of activities. Typical Family Days include: African American Pioneers in Aviation Day, Mars Day and International Space Day.

- **Early Childhood Education**: “Flights of Fancy” story times are held several times a week and the “Barron Hilton Pioneers of Flight Gallery” features several displays and educational programs for children, as well as “Don’s Air Service,” a hangar display with a touchable engine and wood propeller, airplane mechanics tools and an interactive gear wall where 3–8-year-old future airplane designers and engineers can have a hands-on learning experience.

- **Discovery Stations**: Discovery Stations are mobile exhibits built around touchable artifacts and/or hands-on activities. Visitors can learn about early barnstormers, living and working in space, the principles of flight or telescopes at Discovery Stations located throughout both museum locations. Details on available Discovery Stations and their locations are available daily at the Welcome Centers at both museum locations.

School Programs

The National Air and Space Museum serves school groups with scheduled programming and supplemental materials. With advanced tour reservations, groups can take advantage of a variety of specialized docent-led and classroom activities. Self-guiding materials and supplements are available for school groups and students who wish to learn on their own during and following museum visits.

The museum’s school programming development, delivery and access are enhanced through partnerships with local educational organizations. The public school systems of Loudoun and Fairfax counties in Virginia have supported the museum by assigning to the Udvar-Hazy Center two experienced, full-time teachers. The Potomac School in McLean, Va., has made available a teacher part-time. These “Aerospace Educators-in-Residence” help tailor programming to appropriate age and background levels and make it conform to national and state educational standards.
Docent Tours: In addition to a “Highlights” tour for students, docents and education staff provide thematic tours—“Air Power: Aviation in World Wars” and “Air Transportation: Past, Present, and Future”—that include components of the National Education Standards. School tours can be reserved by calling (202) 633-2563.

Classroom/Learning Lab Programs: Classroom-style programming at both museum locations is supported by in-house facilities including the interactive “How Things Fly” gallery and Albert Einstein Planetarium in the Washington building and the multimedia classrooms of the Udvar-Hazy Center’s Claude Moore Education Center. Classroom programs include “Paper Airplane Design,” “Forces of Flight” and “Current Events in Air and Space.” Discovery Station materials can also be used in a classroom forum upon request.

Education Service Center: At both the Mall building and the Udvar-Hazy Center, the Museum distributes self-produced educational materials and materials from NASA and other sources. The ordering process and much of the materials are available for download from the education section of the museum’s website. The “Become an Aerospace All-Star” brochure is, among other things, a handy tool for home-school curriculum.

Professional Development for Teachers: Through short-term workshops and longer teacher “institutes,” museum staff train teachers to use the Education Service Center's resources to enrich their classroom teaching and relate museum artifacts to curriculum content.

Electronic Outreach and Distance Learning

The museum’s Education Division is developing ways to expand programming via the Internet and other distance learning technology. The goal is to be able to provide meaningful supplemental programming on topics relating to aviation and space exploration, using the museum’s artifacts and curatorial expertise, to anyone, anywhere, at any time. Capabilities are evolving rapidly and will be posted in the education section of the museum’s website.

Electronic Field Trips: Through broadcast, satellite and the Internet, the museum offers virtual access to students nationwide in collaboration with Ball State University.

Online Activities: The museum website (airandspace.si.edu) offers online gallery tours, archived lectures and similar programming as well as information sources and links. Content is added on a regular basis.

Educational Videoconferencing: The museum offers Interactive Videoconferencing programs featuring the museum's staff and docent volunteers. These interactive electronic experiences augment teacher lesson plans and correspond to national education standards.

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