



EXPEDITION/EXPLORATION GUIDELINES

GENERAL

To begin the planning process, think of places that you have not visited and/or activities that you have not done and are of interest to you. For subject areas think about cultural, educational, historical, science, nature, or a challenging activity that is new and different for you. Another idea is to contemplate a career of interest to you and develop a trip around this career.

Once you have identified activities and locations begin the research and planning process. This is essential to the success of the activity. Think of the six key news reporter questions: who, what, when, where, why, and how. The internet is a great resource but also think of other resources such as people you know including family, friends, relatives, coaches, and teachers. It is perfectly acceptable to build a team of your choosing to accomplish an expedition/exploration activity as long as you are an active participant in the planning and execution process. Your effort in planning will definitely be evident in the results. Research and planning is critical to the success of your project and trip.

The general outline for an expedition/exploration report should include an introduction, followed by a planning and preparation section, followed by a section on the execution of the trip with observations and a narrative on the experience, and a conclusion in closing that summarizes the trip and your thoughts.

Often-Asked Questions by the CAP During Their Report Review

1. Why or how did you become interested in this trip?
2. How did you prepare and plan for this trip?
3. What research did you do before making this trip?
4. How were you challenged during this trip?
5. Did your trip go according to plan?
6. What did you learn from this trip?
7. What was new and different for you on this trip?
8. Would you have done anything differently in hindsight?

Note: This does not mean that each and every question above has to be specifically answered; only that they be considered during the development of your reports.

Suggestions & Recommendations

For trips that qualify for the medal level, it is a good idea to include a chronology in the report for the execution section. It does not have to be hourly but a general AM and PM by day for example.

Always include photos of unique scenes, landmarks, descriptive signs, or yourself in action at the locations of your trip. Take photos of people who are unique to the area or who are doing things unique to the location. Take a picture of a tour guide with yourself if appropriate. Upload digital pictures to a folder with the name of the trip on your computer so you can easily find them and include in your report with descriptive text.

If the Congressional Award Program form is not signed by a validator from wherever you have been, I will sign as the validator but try to get the signature whenever possible.

Include brochures and maps whenever they are available from the location of your trip in your report.

Keep receipts whenever it is possible.

If possible, ask questions of a guide or someone similar to include their responses in your report. It demonstrates your desire to engage and be proactive.

As a general rule, the reports should contain a minimum of 250 words for each of the three day trips, 500 words for the Bronze Medal (2 Day/1 Night), 750 words for the Silver Medal (3 Day/2 Night), and 1,000 words for the Gold Medal (5 Days/4 Nights).

Some ideas for the Day Trips include: The Museum of Natural History, The Bronx Zoo, The Liberty Science Center in NJ, The New York Aquarium, the Intrepid Air & Space Museum, the Battleship New Jersey, The NY Botanical Garden, Green Belt Full Day Hikes, NYC 5 Borough Bike Ride, A trip to the city combining places like the NYPD Museum with the FDNY Museum, or The 9/11 Museum, or a walk across the Brooklyn Bridge, Governor's Island, The Irish Hunger Memorial, or The Statue of Liberty with Ellis Island, A day of white water rafting, a canoe trip, Big Onion Walking Tours in NYC (but you will need to combine 2 in one day), The NJ Vietnam Veteran's Memorial, Monmouth Battlefield in NJ, Staten Island Science Museum, a new and challenging one day activity like mountain climbing or canoe trip, a new one day cultural exploration, or any other creative and/or challenging activity that interest you . . . remember . . .

- If it sounds like a vacation and a nice thing to do . . . that is what it is and will not count.
- One day activities require eight hour duration that does not include travel time.
- Plan and research before you go . . . very important . . . do not expect for all to be revealed when you arrive.
- Bring appropriate gear as required to include a camera with digital capability to upload to your computer, notebook and pen, raingear, etc. . . . Create a List . . . This goes into the preparation section of your report. Having the proper gear will allow you to be more efficient with your time and result in a more effective report.
- Consider using a personal recorder (or use your cell phone) to collect information quickly.
- It is acceptable to work as part of a group or with other people for these trips and activities including your family.

Multi-Day Trip Ideas include: Philadelphia, Boston, Washington, Canada, National Parks, camping in combination with other outdoor activities, Gettysburg, Lancaster PA.

Final Thoughts

The purpose of these expedition/ exploration trips is to expand your horizons and awareness of the world around you as well as to question and challenge yourself. Recall Dan McGuire's quote, "The whole trick to life is to open your eyes and to see what is going on around you."