

First Missouri State Capitol State Historic Site Educator's Guide



*Missouri State Parks – a division of the
Missouri Department of Natural Resources*

Goal

The goal of this guide is to provide an intellectual and contextual basis for the interpretation of Missouri statehood, life in the early 19th century, and the First Missouri State Capitol State Historic Site.

Grade Levels

The content and lessons contained in this guide are appropriate for elementary grade levels 2 - 5. However, instructors can adapt the provided information for upper level instruction.

Essential Questions

1. What does it mean to be a state? What is the difference between a state and a territory in the United States?
2. What are the differences between the state and federal governments?
3. What is a state capitol? What functions does it serve?
4. What are the similarities and differences between the federal and state constitutions?
5. How did slavery factor into or influence Missouri statehood and the placement of both state capitols?
6. How did life in the 19th century differ from present day in terms of: culture, politics, gender, and economics?

Missouri Grade Level Expectations K – 4

Social Studies

- 1.A. Identify and explain why Missouri has a constitution and why the state makes and enforces laws
- 1.B. Explain the major purpose of the Constitution
- 2.A. Outline issues of Missouri Statehood, such as the Missouri Compromise
- 3.C. Identify and explain the functions of the three branches of government in the state government
4. A. Explain or demonstrate how people trade using money and bartering

Missouri Show Me Standards

Communication Arts

7. Participating in formal and informal presentations and discussions of issues and ideas

Social Studies

1. Principles expressed in the documents shaping constitutional democracy in the United States
2. Continuity and change in the history of Missouri
3. Principles and processes of governance systems
4. Economic concepts (including productivity and the market system) and principles (including the laws of supply and demand)
6. Relationships of the individual and groups to institutions and cultural traditions

Background Information

Missouri's first legislators — some of them frontiersmen and others of the upper class — met in the buildings of the First Missouri State Capitol State Historic Site in St. Charles to undertake the task of reorganizing Missouri's territorial government into a progressive state government.

Before Missouri was granted statehood on Aug. 10, 1821, various locations in St. Louis had served as the seat of government for territorial affairs. As statehood became a certainty, the search began for a site to become the permanent seat of government. An undeveloped tract of land located in the center of the state overlooking the Missouri River was chosen to become "The City of Jefferson," Missouri's permanent capitol.

Until the new Capitol could be constructed, the state's first legislators needed a place to meet. Nine cities competed for the honor of hosting the state's temporary seat of government. One of these cities was St. Charles, a growing center of trade located on the Missouri River with easy access to the most rapidly growing areas in the state via the river or the Booneslick Trail. The citizens of St. Charles pledged that if their city was chosen as the temporary capital, they would furnish free meeting space for the legislators.

On Nov. 25, 1820, Gov. Alexander McNair signed a bill making St. Charles the first Capitol of the state of Missouri. The state's legislators met in St. Charles for the first time

on June 4, 1821. Heated debates over state's rights and slavery filled the rooms of the new temporary Capitol.

The meeting place provided by the citizens of St. Charles was on the second floor of two recently constructed adjoining Federal-style brick buildings. The Peck brothers, Charles and Ruluff, owned one of the buildings and they operated a general store on the first floor. Chauncy Shepard owned the adjoining building with a carpenter shop on the first floor. The second floor of the building was divided and used as Senate and House chambers, an office for the governor, and a small committee room. Four Missouri governors ran the state's affairs from the Capitol in St. Charles until the new Capitol in Jefferson City was ready in 1826. (McNair 1821-1824, Frederick Bates-1824-1825, Abraham J. Williams, 1825, John Miller- 1826 – 1832)

Starting in the early 1900s, the buildings and neighborhood around the First State Capitol began to slowly decay. The buildings that now make up the First Missouri State Capitol State Historic Site were acquired in 1960 by the state of Missouri through then-Gov. James T. Blair. Concerned citizens of St. Charles who recognized the value of the buildings prompted his efforts. The state began a 10-year restoration project that initiated the revitalization of the historic core of St. Charles.

Six rooms in the Capitol complex have been restored to their original state, and are furnished to the 1821-1826 period. The Peck brothers' residence and general store have been restored and furnished as they might have looked in the early 1800s.

Vocabulary

Before coming to the site, students should be familiar with the following terms:

- *Barter* – To trade by exchange of commodities rather than by the use of money.
- *Cistern* – an underground reservoir for the storage of a liquid, especially rainwater
- *Constitution* – A written record of fundamental principles or established precedents according to which a state or other organization is acknowledged to be governed.
- *Legislator* – One that creates or enacts laws or a member of a legislative body.
- *Governor* – The executive head of a state in the United States.

- *House of Representatives* - The lower house of the U.S. Congress and of most state legislatures.
- *Middle Class* – A class of people intermediate between the classes of higher and lower social rank or standing; the social, economic, cultural class, having approximately average status, income, education, tastes, and the like.
- *Pelt* – The untanned hide or skin of an animal.
- *Slavery* – The state or condition of being a slave; a civil relationship whereby one person has absolute power over another and controls his life, liberty, and fortune.
- *Senate* – An assembly or council of citizens having the highest deliberative functions in a government, especially a legislative assembly of a state or nation.
- *Senator*- One that creates or enacts laws or a member of the upper legislative body.
- *State* – An organized political community, living under a government.
- *Statehood* – The status or condition of being a state, especially a state of the United States.
- *Trade* – An exchange of items, usually without payment of money.
- *Well* – A deep hole or shaft sunk into the earth to obtain water, oil, gas, or brine.

Educational Activities

Pre-Visit Activities

- ❖ First Missouri State Capitol State Historic Site Webquest – This pre-field trip activity is designed to acquaint students with important elements of Missouri State governance so that they arrive with a basis for historical comparison. During the activity, students will visit reputable websites for the purpose of researching and accumulating information on contemporary aspects of Missouri government. Topics emphasized include: the current Missouri Capitol site, the three branches of state government, and the Missouri Constitution.
- ❖ Pre-Visit Brainstorm & Questionnaire – This short pre-field trip activity is designed to assess what students know before and after their visit. This assignment

provides instructors the opportunity to correct misconceptions, teach from personal experience, and to assess what students learned on their visit to the historic site.

Post-Visit Activities

- ❖ Post-Visit Discussion & Questionnaire- This short post-field trip activity is designed to assess what students learned during their visit to the First Missouri State Capitol State Historic Site. The instructor will review answers with the class, addressing remaining misconceptions or confusion. Following the questionnaire, the instructor will lead a discussion during which the students can comment on the tour itself, content, and the experience.
- ❖ First State Capitol Little Book – This activity is designed to encourage creative reflection of the students’ visit to the First Missouri State Capitol State Historic Site. Using white computer paper, students will create a small booklet. Although creations will vary, prompts will be provided to guide the activity.

Bibliography & Additional Sources

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Suggested Internet Resources

Congress For Kids

<http://www.congressforkids.net>

First Missouri State Capitol State Historic Site

<http://mostateparks.com/park/first-missouri-state-capitol-state-historic-site>

First Missouri State Capitol State Historic Site – On Facebook

<https://www.facebook.com/FirstMissouriStateCapitolStateHistoricSite>

Missouri Kids!

<http://www.sos.mo.gov/kids>

Missouri Department of Economic Development

<http://www.ded.mo.gov>

Name: _____

Date: _____

First Missouri State Capitol State Historic Site Contemporary Webquest

Directions: In complete sentences, answer the questions below by exploring the internet links provided.

Missouri State Capitol

Go to: <http://www.sos.mo.gov/symbol/capitol>

Where is the *current* Missouri State Capitol?

1. What is the purpose of the State Capitol building? Who is “housed” there?

Branches of State Government

Go to: <http://www.mo.gov/government/guide-to-missouris-government/>

1. How is Missouri’s government *organized*?

Click on the “Governor” link in the “executive branch” description or go to: <http://governor.mo.gov/>

2. Who is the current governor of Missouri?

Go to: <http://www.house.mo.gov/content.aspx?info=/info/memfaq.htm>

3. How many members serve in the Missouri House of Representatives?

Go to: <http://www.senate.mo.gov/Newsroom/Pages/DidYouKnowHome.html>

How many members serve Missouri Senate?

The Missouri v United States Constitution

Go to <http://understandingtheusconstitution.weebly.com/compare-and-contrast-of-the-us-and-missouri-constitutions.html> How many pages is the United States Constitution?

Go to: <http://www.moga.mo.gov/mostatutes/moconstn.html>

1. How many pages is the Missouri State Constitution?

2. Why *do you think* the Missouri Constitution so much longer than the U.S. Constitution?

Extra Credit Question – Use your historic research skills to figure this out!

4. What part of the initial Missouri Constitution caused problems for entry into statehood?

Name: _____

Date: _____

First Missouri State Capitol State Historic Site Pre-Visit Questionnaire

Directions: In complete sentences, answer the questions below. Use your answers during class discussion.

1. What is a state capitol? What happens there? Why are they important? What is a capital? What is the difference between a Capitol and capital?

2. On what river is St. Charles located? Why were/are rivers important?

2. How is a state government different from the federal government in the United States?

3. What was life like in 1821? How did people travel? What did people do for work? How did they get food? What did they drink?

4. What was the Missouri Compromise? Was it important? Explain why or why not.

5. What is a state governor? What *do you think* a governor should be like? (Example: How long should they be in school, should they be born in the state they represent, should they be old or young, etc.

Name: _____

Date: _____

First Missouri State Capitol State Historic Site Post-Visit Questionnaire

Directions: In complete sentences, answer the questions below. Use your answers during class discussion.

1. What is a state capitol? Are they important? Explain why or why not.

2. How is a state government different from the federal government in the United States?

3. How was life different in 1821? (Example: How did people travel? What did people do for work? How did they get food? What did they drink?)

4. What was the Missouri Compromise?

What was/were your favorite part/s of the tour?

What was/were your least favorite part/s of the tour?

What was the most interesting thing you learned?

What was the most important thing you learned?

If your younger brother or sister were to take a tour of the First Missouri State Capitol State Historic Site, what would you tell them?

First Missouri State Capitol State Historic Site *Little Book* Lesson

Grade Level: 3 – 5th Grade **Class:** History, Social Studies

Time: (1) 45 - 90 Minute Class Period

Materials:

- 8 ½ x 11” white paper
- Scissors
- Art supplies (crayons, paint, markers, colored pencils, etc.)
- Pencil or Pen

Prep Work:

- Using the white board or digital projector, the instructor will write prompts on the board. There are some suggested prompts below; however, they can easily be customized to fit any classroom.
 - My Trip to the **First Missouri State Capitol State Historic Site**
 - Missouri Government – Then and Now
 - My Favorite Memories of the **First Missouri State Capitol State Historic Site**
 - What I learned at the **First Missouri State Capitol State Historic Site**
 - Missouri in 1821
- It is recommended that the instructor create a sample booklet to pass around the room.

Phase 1: Introduce Assignment/ Booklet Construction

In this phase, the instructor will introduce the assignment and pass around an example booklet. Once the instructor has answered all questions he/she will show the students how to make the booklet. A tutorial is available at the link below:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mmPZIFBR6I8>

The instructor will circulate around the class, making sure all students have properly constructed the booklet.

Phase 2: Decoration

In the second phase of the assignment, the instructor will allow the students to write and decorate the booklets in accordance to the prompts.

Phase 3: Conclusion

In the final phase of the assignment, students present their little booklets to the class.