



A Teacher's Guide to Archway Adventure

The Archway was designed with tour groups of all ages in mind. Here are some tips to help you make the most of your student field trip to the Archway.

Scheduling your time at the Archway

Though it is “self-guided”, we find that the Archway’s historical tour can take as little as 1.25 hours or as much as 1.75 hours depending on the stops you make and pace you set. In addition, when planning your tour, please consider the following:

- When your group arrives, you will first want to send them to the restrooms. There are no restroom facilities available on the tour. Depending on the size of the group, this will take some time, 10 minutes, or so
- If you have a group of 20 or more, we’ll want to split up into smaller groups of 10-12. This will take 5 minutes, or so
- We’ll give each group an orientation to the audio guide before sending them on the tour. This will take 5 minutes, or so.
- You may want to consider additional time to prepare your students with pre-tour instructions or questions to focus their thinking and stimulate discussion.

If you add a reenactment, it will take an additional 15-20 minutes. Other special programs take up to 45 minutes.

Grouping students

If you have a group of 15-20 students, or more, please consider breaking into smaller groups that can each be accompanied by at least one adult.

Adults can be charged with:

- Helping with audio equipment
- Keeping the group to a reasonable pace – Adult “Trail Bosses” lead the group and don’t allow students to race ahead of them.
- Supervising students so they don’t touch or climb on the exhibits.

If you wish to pair students with “travel buddies,” two headsets can be plugged into each Archway audio guide unit. Young students can be paired with older students or adults or with a travel buddy.

Lunch at the Archway

Classes who bring sack lunches are welcome to use our indoor event room and outdoor picnic shelter if they have not been previously reserved for other uses. Please let us know if you plan to bring sack lunches and we can check availability of these spaces when you arrange your tour. Availability is subject to change.

Personal Audio Guides

Everyone who takes the tour will receive a mobile audio guide that automatically describes the various scenes on display as students travel through the exhibit, but can be customized to accommodate your group's pace and interests.

Personal Audio Guide Orientation

1. Use the lanyard to hang the audio guide around your neck and adjust it to belly –button height .
2. Most of the audio will begin automatically when you pass the small black transmitter boxes hung throughout the exhibit.
3. Other, optional information is available where you see numbered cards hung in the exhibit. To access this information, enter the number you see on the card using the numbered keys and press the play/pause button. Each of these cards adds about a minute of information to the tour.
4. If you enter the wrong number, you can reset it by pushing the red “stop” button at the bottom of the unit.
5. If you want to pause the story to read a panel or talk with each other, use the play/pause button.
6. Volume up and down buttons can be adjusted to suit you.
7. You can listen through the earphones or simply hold the unit up to your ear.
8. If students have a “travel buddy,” 2 headsets can be plugged into one audio device.
9. When you get to the base of the escalator, story number 2 should start automatically. Wait there until the narrator tells you to get on the escalator. You can also start story number 2 manually if that works better for the situation.



Exhibition Content

The 18 exhibits that make up the Archway's historical tour show what life was like on the trail along the Platte River that came to be known as the Great Platte River Road during various periods in history from the 1840s to the present day.

- Your first stop is at the bottom of the escalator that leads to the main exhibit. At this stop a Native American points out the trail to a fur trader, the first explorers of European descent to use the trail along the Platte River in the territory that would become Nebraska. Fur traders first came here in the early 1840s.
- Fort Kearney - At the top of the escalator, students will find themselves at Fort Kearny, the eastern gateway to the Great Platte River Road. Over 350,000 people packed all their hopes and dreams into ox drawn carts and traveled through Fort Kearney between 1840 and 1866 to seek a better life in the West.
- The Oregon Trail – Follow the Oregon Trail with a couple who are walking with an ox drawn wagon from Fort Kearney to Chimney Rock. Linger a while and experience a prairie thunderstorm.
- Buffalo stampede – Learn about the importance of the buffalo to the Native culture. Wait here a while and you'll hear the rumble and see the advance of a buffalo stampede on the prairie.
- The 49ers – Visit a camp of 49ers as they plan the quickest route to California. When gold was discovered in California in 1848, it stirred another 150,000 people to follow the Great Platte River Road through Nebraska to search for their fortunes in the West.
- Mormon Handcart Expeditions: Weather on the trail could be unpredictable. See what happens when over 1,000 Mormon pilgrims are overtaken by a fall blizzard in Wyoming's Sweetwater Valley.
- Abandoned Wagon: When ox drawn wagons reached the Rocky Mountains, decisions had to be made about what to carry over the mountains and what to leave behind. See many of the types of items that were left on the trail.
- Gravesite: Many pioneers experienced tragedy on the trail when family members, friends and traveling companions perished.
- Journey's End: Life changed for the pioneers who reached their destination and for the Native Americans who were already there. Hear stories from some of the people whose lives changed forever. Consider the impact of western migration on all the individuals involved.
- Pony Express Station: See a Pony Express rider stop to switch horses at our replica Pony Express Station. Imagine the entrepreneurial spirit that led to the development of the Pony Express.
- Overland Stagecoach: See Mark Twain on the steps of an overland stage coach and hear a brief account of his trip.
- Pawnee Scouts: The Pawnee Scouts were part of the United States Army in the years between 1864 and 1877. Led by Major Frank North, the group was originally stationed at Fort Kearny and assisted in the fight against tribes that were hostile to the migration of settlers from the eastern U.S.
- Train Trestle: Linger at the bottom of the train trestle. Watch for the night train. It's coming through any minute now.
- Golden Spike: Relive the Golden Spike ceremony that joined Omaha with the west coast and established the transcontinental railroad.

- Lincoln Highway: See a Ford Model -T struggling over an unpaved section of “America’s Main Street,” the Lincoln Highway and hear stories from a travelers’ campground on the first transcontinental highway.
- I-80 Drive in: Experience a 1950s Drive-In Theater
- Fiber Optic Cable: Look down the manhole and hear about the transcontinental fiber optic cable network from a cable installer.
- Roadside Café: The last stop on the tour is an early 1960’s Roadside Café with a window overlooking the traffic on I-80.

Travelers on today’s I-80 are following in the footsteps of the pioneers who headed down the Oregon Trail in the 1840s. The means of transportation have changed, but the route has stayed pretty much the same. We are still following the Great Platte River Road across Nebraska.