

THE ENRICHMENT PROJECT

Badge Program

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EXPLORE MY WORLD

Steps

1. Map.

Find a map of your city, town or county as it currently is. You can use your library or Google Earth. Compare it to an older map and see how the area has changed. What has been lost to the passage of time and “progress”? How can you use this information to help others explore your world?

2. Library.

Explore the offerings at your local library. You may want to explore beyond your library if you have colleges or universities with a library that can be used by the public.

3. Historical society.

Does your area have a historical society or group? Check with your local chamber of commerce or city council to find who has information on your area.

4. Local government, agencies and more.

Local governmental offices and agencies may have information you can access. Check online to see what information is available. Start with Google and search for the name of your city or town to find government information first.

5. Interest groups.

Some groups have very specific interests. For example, where I live, we have the “Save the Dunes” organization (savedunes.org) which works to help protect the ecosystem, educate the public and more for Indiana Dunes. See what interest groups are in your area.

6. YouTube.

Go to YouTube and type in the name of your city or town. See what videos you can find that might interest others. For example, I live in Michigan City, Indiana. When I searched, some of the things I came up with were:

- Steelhead fishing
- Michigan City Soul Steppers
- South Shore train track changes (1958)
- Winds and surf at the lighthouse
- Michigan City Wolves (football)
- History video from 1870-2011 (hour long nostalgic look)

From the list, we have everything from sports (fishing and football) to dance (soul steppers) to local weather and more. There are a lot of ways to get others interested in your local area.

Side Note: The South Shore is an interurban line between South Bend, Indiana and Chicago, Illinois. It has two stops in Michigan City and we frequently use it to go to Chicago for special events and museum trips.



Explore My World

Your world is where you live. Exploring the physical areas, history and current inhabitants can make your own world a lot richer.

Note: Before you start, plan to keep track of what you learn so you can use this information later.



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UNIQUELY YOURS

7. **Waterways and other geography.**

Do you have waterways? This might include lakes, ponds, rivers and creeks. Perhaps instead you live near mountains or swampland. Is there anything special about them? Are there activities you can do that deal specifically with water and geography?

For example, the start of the Little Calumet is nearby and we've done an event with the DNR to check the size of tadpoles, crayfish, etc. in the area as part of their ongoing tracking of life and chemicals at the start of the river.

8. **Parks.**

Find out about the parks in your area. What do they offer the public for free? Do they have any special programs you can request? How can they add to your exploration of your world?

9. **Playgrounds.**

This is probably where your kids want to explore. This includes schools, parks and anywhere they can run and play. Most do not have activities that are provided. What can you do with the kids to help them explore their playgrounds?

10. **Learning centers.**

Do you have organizations that offer classes or workshops to the public? They may not be called learning centers, but they will act as one. These might include dance schools, art museums and more.

11. **Historical markers.**

Many areas have markers where historical events have taken place. Check Wikipedia to start your search.

12. **Historical buildings and museums.**

Find information on the oldest buildings in your town. Do you have any museums that you can visit? Some sites may still be open and allow tours so you can learn about them.

13. **Transportation.**

Does your town have transportation that others might think is unusual? How does everyone get around town? Have you tried the various types of transportation available?

14. **Shops and restaurants.**

Of course, shopping is very important in many areas. Do you have a lot of smaller shops, strip malls, etc.? Try to find the oldest shops and explore how they have changed.

15. **Businesses.**

Explore the businesses in your area. Why did they choose to locate in your town? What businesses have been around the longest? Which ones have gone out of business or moved? What have they done to change your area?

16. **Organizations.**

What organizations are represented in your area? What kind of experiences can they offer non-members?

17. **All about the people.**

The people in your community help to form it just as much as the geography and businesses do. Do you have anyone who you would consider famous, infamous or influential in your community? What projects have been started by individuals that have changed your community? What cultures are represented? Do you have celebrations focused on certain ethnic groups?



18. Calendar of events.

Find a calendar of events for your community. Start attending events you haven't before to see what else is happening in your city / town. Encourage others to participate with you.

19. What's new?

Local newspapers are great for exploring what is happening in your world. Explore your newspaper. Does it provide online stories? How can you find archives?

21. Collections.

Find out what collections are available in your area. This might be stories, photographs, artworks, etc. These might be located in historical buildings or by individuals. Can you get permission to view them and hear the stories?

21. Share.

Take the information you have gathered, organize it so others can use it and share. This might be through a printed document, blog or Pinterest board of your area.

You can visit my Pinterest board listed below for an idea on sharing.

Sites to Explore

www.google.com/earth

www.youtube.com (type in your city / town)

www.laportecountyhistory.org/histmarkers.htm

en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Indiana_state_historical_markers_in_LaPorte_County

www.pinterest.com/larajla/my-hometown-michigan-city-in

Check out larajla's Enrichment Project to start your own adventure.