

A previsit is a trip teachers make to their field site, without their students, prior to their fieldwork. It is an opportunity to get to know and understand different aspects of the site before the day of the fieldwork. Many fieldwork practitioners agree that doing a previsit is the single most important thing a teacher can do to plan and organise highly effective fieldwork experiences and therefore it should ideally take place during the planning stage of the fieldwork.

A previsit (sometimes referred to as a recce) should be carried out even if the fieldwork is taking place somewhere the teacher has been before. One should view the field site through the eyes of a teacher delivering fieldwork not as a tourist or as an interested geographer and the things one will notice will be very different as a result.

The previsit is an essential tool in the writing of a risk assessment but this is not the only reason one would carry one out. Potential hazards should be noted as well as ways these might be managed (such as by choosing the safest access route). Many of the considerations one makes during a previsit allow for the smooth running of the fieldwork in an organisational sense, meaning that on the day, teachers can concentrate on delivering the teaching and learning experience.

Things to do and consider on a previsit

Where specifically the tasks will take place and to test these out without the students there	Observing 'normal life' - how do local people use the space?	The location of a defibrillator and places where others may be able to assist you with first aid
Access routes to the site, on foot and in vehicles	How long it takes to walk between different aspects of the site and the parking area	Where minibuses or coaches might park (or drop off and pick up) and the cost of any parking
Irritant or dangerous plants at the site and whether these can be cut back without damaging the habitat	Any local bylaws that come into effect in different situations that would affect access	The types of terrain the students will encounter and whether any particular footwear might be needed
Where one might store equipment when it is not in use	Where might be a good place to have as a base and/or a lunch spot	Where might be a good 'reset' space for students who might experience sensory overload
The types of activities that might be possible if there is any downtime	Strength of mobile phone signal and areas where there may not be any signal at all	The location and condition of public toilets
Where it might be possible for students to refill their water bottles on a hot day	Where might be a good location for the mass shelter of students were there to be an emergency	Sight and hearing lines to avoid when giving instructions to students
Sites (such as graveyards) that might emotionally trigger some students	<p>It is also a good idea on a previsit to ask questions such as 'how might this site change at different times of the day or week?' and 'how might this site change in different weather conditions?'. Teachers should also consider the cohort they intend to bring to the field site and the specific educational needs that those students have. Teachers may have to consider how they will brief these students about their fieldwork experience and what if any additional supporting resources or people might be needed.</p>	