

ESL Green Contact Assignment

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<http://www.calacademy.org/>

The Living Roof of the California Academy of Sciences

Visiting the Living Roof

By exploring the many eco friendly features of the Living Roof of the California Academy of Sciences, students will learn about green issues pertaining to protecting the natural environment.

The activities for this field trip integrate reading, speaking, listening and writing skills. Students read about the Living Roof and the museum before their visit. During the field trip, they practiced speaking English with the museum staff, listened to the docent(s), and took notes. After the field trip, they wrote up reflections on their learning and shared experiences with the class.

Target Group

This assignment is intended for high-intermediate to advanced adult ESL students (Levels 6-8) or credit students. The target group levels range from 1 through 8, with the following guidelines: 1 = beginning, 5 = intermediate, 8 = advanced.

Pre-Assignment Activities

- Invite students to visit the website of California Academy of Sciences to learn about the museum at <http://www.calacademy.org/>
- Focusing on the Living Roof, study the vocabulary on the web page at http://www.calacademy.org/academy/building/the_living_roof.php
- Support students with this activity by printing out the web page so they can underline words and phrases they are not familiar with, and reviewing the material with them.
- Ask students to answer the following questions from the website:

1. Who is the architect?
 2. Who worked with the architect to design the Living Roof?
 3. What are the functions of the Living Roof?
 4. What are the *green* roofing materials?
 5. What will you expect to see on the Living Roof?
- Encourage students to make a list of things that they want to learn/find out during the field trip. Work with them to prepare questions to ask the docent(s) during the tour of the roof garden. Review the list of questions.
 - Suggest students take their notebooks to the field trip and take notes on the interviews and their observations.
 - Encourage students to take their own handheld devices that have photography or video capabilities to document their findings.
 - Contact the Education Office at the museum to set up a docent tour:
E-mail: education@calacademy.org or call (415) 379-5451

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- Suggest students explore the roof in pairs or groups and investigate different aspects, e.g. the green roofing materials, weather stations, different plants, species, etc. Information about these different assets is indicated on the signs.
- Encourage students to ask docent(s) the questions that they prepared before the field trip and to take notes during the interviews.
- Using flip cameras, personal cameras or phones, ask students to photograph the interviews and what they see on the Living Roof.
- Students should ask the docent(s) or museum staff for their permission if they are to be photographed and appear on video.

Reflection Activity

After the tour of the Living Roof, encourage students to write reflections on their learning experiences.

- Invite students to post their reflections along with their photographs on a class website to share with other students.
- In addition to sharing their learning experiences on the class website, initiate a discussion on the following questions:
 1. Are there any living roofs or roof gardens in your native country or in other countries you know of?
 2. What kind of actions do people in your native country take to preserve nature and promote environmental health?
- Encourage peer editing so that a collective video can be produced to document the students' green eco learning experiences from the Living Roof.
- Post the video on www.kqed.org, a class website, City College of San Francisco website or other educational online site.