

Destination: Charleston - The Art of Modern Travel Planning

Subject: Geography, Social Studies, & Life Skills (Financial Literacy/Planning)

Target Age: 14 (8th/9th Grade)

Duration: 60–90 Minutes (Modular)

Materials Needed

- Laptop or Tablet with internet access
- Google Maps / Google Earth
- Access to travel sites (TripAdvisor, Yelp, or Atlas Obscura)
- Budget Worksheet (Digital spreadsheet or paper)
- Presentation tool (Canva, PowerPoint, or a physical poster board)

Learning Objectives

By the end of this lesson, Wyatt will be able to:

- **Distinguish** between geographic locations (Charleston, SC vs. Charleston, NC) and explain why context matters in travel.
- **Analyze** the historical and cultural significance of the "Lowcountry" region.
- **Construct** a realistic 3-day travel itinerary including logistics, costs, and scheduling.
- **Evaluate** activities based on a fixed budget and personal interests.

1. Introduction: The Hook & The "Correction" (10 Minutes)

The Hook: Imagine you've been handed \$1,200 and told you have 72 hours to experience one of the most famous cities in the American South. You're the lead planner. Do you end up at a world-class beach, a haunted jail, or eating the best fried chicken of your life? It all depends on your research.

The "Quick Check": Ask Wyatt to find "Charleston, NC" on a map.

Talking Point: "You'll notice Charleston, NC is a small neighborhood/area near Bryson City or Charlotte. However, the world-famous historic 'Charleston' is actually in South Carolina! When planning a trip, the first rule is: **Validate your coordinates.** Today, we are going to plan the ultimate trip to the 'Holy City'—Charleston, South Carolina."

Objective Statement: Today, you aren't just a tourist; you're a Travel Architect. You're going to design a 3-day experience that balances history, food, and adventure while keeping us from going broke.

2. Body: Content & Practice (60 Minutes)

Phase 1: I Do (The Research Model - 10 Mins)

The Educator demonstrates how to evaluate a destination.

- **Vibe Check:** Show a 2-minute "Charleston Travel Guide" video or browse photos of Rainbow Row and the Battery.
- **The "Must-See" vs. The "Hidden Gem":** Explain that every trip needs a mix.
 - *Must-See:* Fort Sumter (where the Civil War began). High historical value, high cost.
 - *Hidden Gem:* The Angel Oak Tree (on Johns Island). High aesthetic/nature value, low cost.

Phase 2: We Do (Guided Exploration - 15 Mins)

Work together to establish the "Logistics Framework."

- **The Travel Math:** Use Google Maps to calculate the distance from home to Charleston, SC.
 - Discussion: Should we fly or drive? What are the gas costs vs. ticket prices?
- **The "Lowcountry" Culture:** Briefly discuss the Gullah Geechee heritage. Why is the food in Charleston different from food in the mountains? (Hint: Rice, seafood, and West African influence).

Phase 3: You Do (Independent Planning - 35 Mins)

Wyett takes the lead. He must create a 3-day "Explorer's Itinerary."

The Constraints:

- **Budget:** \$1,200 total (for 2 people).
- **Day 1: History & Roots.** Find one historical site to visit.
- **Day 2: Adventure & Nature.** Find an outdoor activity (Kayaking, Beach, or Parks).
- **Day 3: The "Wildcard."** Wyett picks something based purely on his interests (e.g., a ghost tour, a skate park, or a specific restaurant).
- **The Food Rule:** He must pick one "fancy" meal and two "local legend" budget spots.

Instructions for Wyett: "Use your spreadsheet to track costs. If you spend \$400 on a fancy hotel, you might be eating peanut butter sandwiches for the rest of the trip. Find the balance!"

3. Conclusion: The Pitch (15 Minutes)

Summary: Have Wyett present his "Top 3" picks from his itinerary.

Recap Questions:

- "What was the most surprising thing you found about Charleston's history?"
- "How did you handle the budget when you realized how expensive [Activity X] was?"
- "If we actually went next week, what is the first thing you'd want to do when we get out of the car?"

Takeaway: Travel isn't just about showing up; it's about the story you choose to build before you even leave the house.

Assessment & Success Criteria

Formative Assessment: Check-ins during the "You Do" phase to ensure he understands how to calculate gas prices or entry fees.

Summative Assessment (The Final Product): Wyett's 3-day Itinerary.

- **Success looks like:**
 - A completed budget that doesn't exceed \$1,200.
 - Logical timing (e.g., not booking a morning tour in one city and an afternoon tour 3 hours away).
 - A clear explanation of why he chose specific sites.

Differentiation & Adaptations

- **For the Tech-Savvy:** Have Wyett create a "Travel Mood Board" on Pinterest or a "Day in the Life" mock-up using Canva.
- **For the Struggling Learner:** Provide a pre-filled list of 10 attractions with prices and have him "curate" his favorite five rather than researching from scratch.
- **Extension (Advanced):** Ask him to calculate the Carbon Footprint of the trip or research the "Off-Season" prices vs. "Peak-Season" prices to see how much money could be saved by changing the dates.