

# Chapter 1

---

## School field trip to the Observatory of Funchal

Teacher: Beatriz Vieira Jorge

Escola dos 2º e 3º ciclos Dr. Horácio Bento de Gouveia, Funchal,  
Portugal,

### *Summary*

Within the scope of the Geography subject, a school field trip was scheduled, to the Meteorological Observatory of Funchal on March 5th. This is a Portuguese observatory whose mission is to monitor and study the various meteorological and climate elements in the Autonomous Region of Madeira, counting on adequate instruments for this function. In this way it is the only body able to define the specific risks that the Region is exposed in extreme situations.

Therefore we left the school with the intention of accomplishing that visit. On the way from school to our destination we were able to observe some of the interesting elements of the landscape (natural and human), as well as guide ourselves using the script of the project. Consequently, we established a relationship between the contents used in the Geography lessons, together with those from the visit. After arriving at the Observatory, the visit took place and the guide clarified everything we needed to know about the place and the topic.

### **Name of the activity**

Study field trip to the Meteorological Observatory of Funchal.

## **Introduction**

The activity was important because it allowed us to use the working techniques related to Geography, namely observation, localization, description and interpretation of phenomena at the level of the earth. In this case, the landscape around us, as well as have a better and more complete idea of how the station functions. Besides this, it also gave us the opportunity to get to know each other better, and involve ourselves in something in common.

## **Learning objectives**

The activity had the following objectives:

- Observe, describe, locate and interpret landscapes.
- Identify the measuring instruments to measure meteorological elements.
- Understand how a meteorological station works.
- Promote interrelations between students and teachers.
- Contribute to the implementation of the European project "Outdoor Learning – Real Learning"

## **Resources**

The material required for this activity consisted of the specific documents required by the school and which are inherent to any field study trip. The contact with the entity responsible for the place we wanted to visit, Authorization from parents, transport, a script/a guide and the evaluation sheet for this visit.

## **Activity**

Once the topic being taught in the Geography lessons was related to "climate", the class was purposed this field trip. From the beginning the students, even those who were less interested, were interested in the idea. Thus, in all the Geography lessons which took place before the day of the visit, there were always questions from the students about the activity.

### **Comments from the learners' surveys**

Following the evaluation of the field trip, all the students considered that the main goals were achieved. They also concluded that it was pertinent having in mind the contents. Moreover, this made it possible to put into practice the theory studied. Therefore, the field trip was really useful and allowed a direct contact with machinery and instruments which are used to register and study the weather conditions.

### **Final remarks**

I believe this field trip was an important asset in the contribution to the school success of these students in the Geography subject. Moreover, it was an opportunity to understand *in loco* the reality, to establish a link between theory and practice in what the students have learnt in the classroom and what they observed in the real world outside, making it easier for them to learn and understand. It made more sense to them. This is the reason why these field trips should always be adapted and supported by all those involved in the educational process. Thus, I defend the idea that we should reflect more on this kind of activity for coherent projects and also appellative for our students.