



Introductory Letter and Packing List for Field-Based Courses

Dear Parents,

We are looking forward to your child's upcoming trip with *Experience Learning*! You can expect an outdoor living and learning experience that will include the study of camp craft, leadership and teamwork skills, and lessons on mountain and forest ecology. The key to a fantastic experience is coming prepared for a variety of weather conditions. Being warm and dry while hiking, climbing, or preparing dinner back at camp will ensure that your child has the best possible time on their trip.

Although the weather on Spruce Knob is often sunny and warm, it is also sometimes rainy, snowy, windy, and cold. We have had snow as late as May and as early as September; even in the summer months it can be surprisingly chilly or windy in the evenings. Therefore, arriving prepared is crucial. We have created the attached packing list for guidance on packing. Pack extra layers if the weather is very cold. Check www.weather.com for Circleville, WV for weather conditions, and please keep in mind that we are typically around 5 degrees cooler up on the mountain than at the lower-lying Circleville weather station.

We highly recommend clothing made from wool or synthetic materials. Clothing made from cotton, including jeans, sweatpants, sweatshirts and flannel shirts, is not recommended for this trip. When cotton clothing becomes wet, it no longer warms the body and takes a long time to dry. Wool and synthetic materials keep their "loft" when wet, which means they will be warm when wet or dry. Synthetic clothing includes materials like fleece, pile, or Under Armor- like clothes. The listed clothing is designed to function as a layered system. Layers may be worn alone in warmer conditions or together in the evenings or when conditions turn cold or wintry.

We encourage you to utilize things you or your child already own rather than purchasing new equipment. You may be surprised to find a lot of synthetic clothing in your own home! Most people have fleece, wool sweaters, nylon jogging pants, fleece hats, etc. If you find yourself in need, thrift stores are fantastic resources for inexpensive clothing. Larger chain stores also feature inexpensive synthetic clothing, particularly fleece.

Participants will be responsible for carrying their equipment in expedition-size backpacks to their campsite, typically a hike of between one and three miles. Therefore, pack items that are both light and durable in regards to clothing and equipment such as flashlights, shoes, jackets, etc.

Experience Learning provides large expedition-size backpacks, sleeping bags, sleeping pads, tents, food, and other necessary gear. Please do not pack any food or snacks for your child's stay, unless they are intended to be stored on the bus. Cellular telephones do not work in our area, and all electronics will be left in storage during the wilderness trip.

Remember, encouraging your child to take on the challenge of new experiences with an open mind and a positive attitude are also excellent preparation for their adventure.

For more information about our organization and programs, please visit www.experience-learning.org. We offer Professional Development Workshops for adults, summer camps and educational experiences for youth, and many more opportunities at our West Virginia locations.

We look forward to meeting your child soon!

Experience Learning Staff

Packing list continued on next page

Wilderness Course Packing List

Gear:

- Small school-sized backpack (1). *To carry rain gear, extra layers, journal, and lunch during day trips.*
- 32-oz water bottles (2). *Reused Gatorade or water bottles works well. Please fill with water.*
- Cup, bowl, spoon and fork (1 ea.). *Plates and knives are not necessary.*
- Heavy-duty garbage bags. (3). *These keep belongings dry and separate dirty/ wet clothing,*
- Flashlight/headlamp (1).
- Extra batteries (1).
- Small notebook or sketch pad (1).
- Pen and/or pencil. (1).

Clothes:

- Synthetic long underwear tops and bottoms (1 set). *Medium - lightweight recommended.*
- Short sleeved T-shirts (3 ea.). *Synthetic rec.*
- Synthetic long sleeve shirt or light wool sweater (1).
- Shorts (1).
- Synthetic pants (1-2).
- Heavy wool sweater or synthetic jacket. (1).
- Light socks (2-3 pair).
- Warm wool or synthetic socks (1-2 pair).
- Warm hat (1).
- Sun visor/baseball hat (1).
- Rain suit (1 set). **Jacket**

and pants. *Heavy-duty rubber/plastic is great, Gore-Tex is good. Ponchos are not adequate.*

- Hiking Boots or shoes (1) *Leather boots are fine if broken in and comfortable. Water resistant shoes with good support/tread are ideal. Rubber boots are not adequate for hiking.*
- Camp Shoes (1). *For wearing around camp. Sneakers or **Sandals with back strap only, no flip flops please.***

Toiletries for the Field:

- Toothpaste and toothbrush, sunscreen, (lip balm with SPF rec). *Travel sized versions rec. Hand-washing soap provided.*
- Medications. *Medications will be administered by chaperon or camper, not ExL staff.*

Optional Gear:

- Handkerchief
- Camera (may get wet, dirty, lost - disposable works great)
- Binoculars

Toiletries for Showers:

*At the end of the course, we will provide access to our shower house for students to shower before boarding the bus. These items **cannot** be brought into the woods and should be packed separately for storage at our facility until students return from the field.*

- Shower gear: soap, shampoo, towel.
- Clean clothes including socks (1 set).

For Caving:

Students will get very muddy and wet, so a synthetic under layer is very important, as is wearing clothes that can get very dirty.

- Old pants (1), *Wool/synthetic.*
- Long sleeve shirt (1).
- Fleece sweater (1).
- Headlamp/flashlight (1).
- Old shoes that can get wet and muddy.

DO NOT BRING INTO THE FIELD:

- x Snacks/Food
- x Cellular Phones
- x Electronics
- x Money or other valuables

Experience Learning Inc.

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