

# Self-Guided School Visits to Wave Hill

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# Self-Guided School Visits to Wave Hill

*Thank you for choosing to visit Wave Hill with your class. We hope you enjoy your experience and appreciate Wave Hill's special and intimate setting. The following guidelines will help you plan and structure your visit to make it a successful learning experience for all.*

## Preparing for Your Visit

All self-guided visits must be pre-scheduled and pre-paid.

### Create a Plan

Before your visit, prepare yourself—and your students and chaperones—with topics, activities and a route. You may wish to have your class research particular plants and plant communities, artists or other topics that align with your curriculum. For ideas, two self-guided activities are suggested in this PDF, and seasonal activity sheets for kids are also available at [www.wavehill.org/visit/](http://www.wavehill.org/visit/).

### Materials to Bring

Consider bringing some of the following to use during your visit:

- Writing and/or sketching materials
- Plant guides
- Binoculars
- Magnifying glasses
- Compasses
- Books to read aloud

### Dress

Make sure your group dresses appropriately for an outdoor program.

### Chaperones

If possible, bring enough chaperones so that you can split up your class into small groups. It will make moving around and viewing the small greenhouses and other areas much easier.

### Lunch

Feel free to bring your lunches and eat in the picnic area adjacent to Glyndor Gallery.



## Facilities

Restrooms and water fountains are located near the picnic area, as are garbage and recycling bins. Please note that the picnic area is outdoors and there is no indoor eating facility for school groups.

## Glyndor Gallery

Please note that Glyndor Gallery is not always open to the public. If you are interested in viewing the artwork in the gallery, please make sure to call in advance. Schedule permitting, self-guided groups may be asked to break into smaller, chaperoned groups to in order to enter.

## Guidelines for Visiting the Garden

Reviewing these guidelines with your class in advance of your trip will help prepare everyone for a successful field trip. These guidelines ask school groups to exercise good common sense as they will be sharing our public garden with other visitors.

- Keep your voices low. You will hear the birds and the wind in the trees much better.
- Enjoy being and learning outdoors, but keep running and ball playing for the playground back at school.
- Our plants are alive. Please do not pick them.
- Our trees are alive, too. Please do not climb them.
- Please leave the garden as clean as you found it.
- Enjoy your visit!

## Your Visit

When you arrive at our front gate, a Wave Hill Education representative will be on hand to greet you and answer any questions.

Below is a suggested route for your visit. It could be reversed as well, starting at the Great Lawn and proceeding next to the Elliptical Garden, and so on. Use the map on the last page to guide you.

### 1 Great Lawn

Start your visit at the Great Lawn and take a few minutes to orient yourselves. If you are planning to divide into smaller groups, this is a good area for that.

Help your students get into a good learning mode with some activities for relaxation and focus.

- Try some simple breathing exercises: have students close their eyes and inhale and exhale deeply. Do some stretches.



- Have students orient themselves—using compasses or landmarks—along the four cardinal directions and describe what they see in each direction. It will help for them to use the Hudson River as the north-south axis.
- Enjoy the Pergola. Much of the year, seasonal containers and colorful plantings frame the panoramic view of the Hudson River. In winter, the Pergola makes for the perfect vantage point for enjoying expanded views in every direction.

## ② Kerlin Overlook

The Kerlin Overlook offers spectacular views west to the Hudson River and Palisades. A long, semi-circular bench provides room for an entire class.

- If you have binoculars, use them to do some river and bird watching.
- Take advantage of this amphitheater-like space to have your students read aloud or re-enact small pieces of historic literature.
- Discuss the experiences you've had at Wave Hill and plan what you'd like to do next.

## ③ The Aquatic Garden

*Closed during the winter.*

In spring, summer and fall, this garden features a pool with aquatic plants, goldfish— and occasionally frogs— surrounded by lawn, interesting plantings and expansive arbors. Various vines climb up the arbors, creating a shady, leafy bower. The area is large enough for an entire class to gather.

One of this area's highlights is the Rossbach Monocot Garden. Monocots include grasses, palms, onions, lilies and iris. They have a single, undivided cotyledon (hence the word, monocot) or seed leaf, and blade-like leaves. Dicots, on the other hand, have two cotyledons. Most flowering plants are dicots.

- If you brought materials to sketch with, use them here. Students can sit on the grass to do their sketching.
- The Aquatic Garden attracts many insects, including dragonflies, damselflies, water striders, butterflies and bees. Observe and survey the insect life.
- Students can go on a mini scavenger hunt for different shapes, sizes and colors of leaves, flowers and grasses.



#### 4 Wave Hill House East Lawn

This lawn is bordered by large specimen trees, some of which are over 120 years old. There are also several saplings planted on the lawn, providing a glimpse into the arboreal future of Wave Hill.

- Have students observe and sketch trees, adding words that describe what they see.
- Observe Wave Hill House in the background. Have your students construct narratives about the people who used to live here, and how they may have interacted with the grounds and with each other.
- Use the space on the lawn for quiet activities like meditation, tai chi, yoga or stretching.

#### 5 Conifer Slope

The Conifer Slope is just below, and to the north of, Wave Hill House. Home to a collection of cone-bearing trees, this area offers a lovely lawn and beautiful specimen trees.

- Have your students observe closely some of the different conifers they see.
  - What is similar about them and what is different?
  - Test your class's descriptive vocabulary by having them compare and contrast different specimens --arrangement of needles, size and arrangement of cones, bark texture, color, and so on.
- Conifers have interesting adaptations that allow them to survive in extreme environments. Have your students list and discuss what these adaptations might be.
- This is a good place for fun, non-strenuous group activities such as "going on a picnic", "bear hunt", "I spy" or "mother-may-I", to name just a few.

#### 6 Herbert & Hyonja Abrons Woodland Gazebo

The Woodland Gazebo is located in the heart of the 8-acre Herbert & Hyonja Abrons Woodland. Throughout the Woodland are a series of trails--some quite narrow--lined with beautiful native plants including ferns, redbud, dogwoods, viburnums and more. Use the Wave Hill map to help guide you through the trails and to the Gazebo.

- Use this area to reflect on the Woodlands, writing in journals if you brought them.
- Ask reflection questions:
  - How does it feel to be in the middle of the woods?
  - What sounds do you hear?
  - What *don't* you hear?



## 7 Elliptical Garden

The Elliptical Garden is home to native plants, set in a formal design around a bluestone patio.

- The cracks between the stones are great places to look for insects. Use the magnifying glasses to look closely.
- Read a story aloud.
- Why native plants? Discuss the advantages of “going native” and the issues with invasive non-natives.
- Did you bring plant guides? If you did, use them to help identify what you see. Otherwise, try to describe a plant’s characteristics:
  - What is its silhouette?
  - How tall do you think it is?
  - Are the branches and leaves arranged in an opposite or alternate pattern?
- Try meditating, using the sound of wind as a focus.





# Framing the Garden

*Thank you for choosing to visit Wave Hill with your class. We hope you enjoy your experience and appreciate Wave Hill's special and intimate setting.*

All self-guided visits must be pre-scheduled and pre-paid.

## Overview

Wave Hill's gardens are more than collections of beautiful flowers; they are painstaking compositions, or arrangements of visual elements, that draw in and direct the eye. While the gardeners may change the appearance of the gardens by growing plants of different colors or textures, they must remain true to the gardens' structure by working with the original walks, walls, stones and hedges that form the "bones" of the gardens. In the language of gardening, these structures are known as frames.

### In a garden, what is a frame?

A frame can be defined as a structure that sets off some part of the garden for special notice or contemplation, such as a pair of gateposts, a stone wall or a "window" carved among the branches of trees to reveal a distant view. Frames give the gardens shape and highlight their beauty.

This self-guided activity is designed to help students better appreciate the garden as a work of art by asking them to identify how framing elements highlight the composition of a garden. Using images of exhibitions in Glyndor Gallery as a starting point, explore the composition of the stunning Aquatic Garden with your class. Have your students break into groups to look closely at the architectural details of Wave Hill's Herb, Dry and Alpine Gardens. Students can work together to record their reflections and observations on the worksheets provided.

## Materials to Bring

- Catalogs for previous exhibitions in Glyndor Gallery
- Framing the Garden worksheets
- Pencils

You may pick up materials for this activity in the Perkins Visitors Center.



## Introduction

Encourage your students to reflect on how the artists' work was placed or mounted in the gallery space, and how the space affects the way you experience the artwork.

You might ask your class:

- How were architectural details, like windows, doors, walls or mantels, used in the exhibitions?
- Do you think the artwork would be the same in a different gallery? How might the effect be different?

In Glyndor, the artwork is integrated into the rooms of the gallery. In the garden, the plantings are designed to complement their surroundings. Introduce the concept of frames and framing to students, so they may understand that the gardens at Wave Hill are not just flower beds, but works of art. Explain that today the class will explore some of Wave Hill's beautiful gardens and study them as art.

## Three Views of the Aquatic Garden

*Please note that this activity is best suited to warmer months: The Aquatic Garden closes for the winter.*

For this activity, encourage a quiet, contemplative mood by inviting students to enjoy the peace and beauty of the garden. Allow students to take in the garden at their own pace. You may want to incorporate breathing exercises or meditation into this activity.

1. Lead your students to the Aquatic Garden. Take in the view from the pergolas that border the Aquatic Garden. From this view, each pergola frames the entire garden.
2. Sit on the benches under the pergolas. Admire the view of the pool through the frame of the vines that grow along the pergolas.
3. Stand on the grass along the edge of the pool. The stone around the pool frames the water and aquatic plants.

At each stage, you can ask students what frames they notice. Do their answers change as they experience more?

After you've explored the garden, gather for a more in-depth discussion.



You might ask your class:

- How do the frames contribute to the mood of the garden?
- How might the garden feel different if the frames were different shapes or made of different materials?
- What perspective do you like best? Why?

## Drawing from the Herb, Dry, and Alpine Gardens

*For this activity, students will use the provided worksheets to describe architectural elements. You may need to go over the worksheet with your class before the activity, in order to make sure they understand each question.*

These three, terraced gardens provide clear-cut examples of framing and are favorites for students to explore. Because they were created on the foundations of an old greenhouse, they have a very architectural feel. On the lowest level, the herb garden features plants used in cooking and medicine. Mediterranean plants that thrive in rocky soil grow in the mid-level, dry garden. Diminutive alpine plants are sheltered by the greenhouse on the upper level.

For this activity, separate your students into small groups and assign a chaperone to assist each group. Divide groups among the herbal, dry, and alpine gardens. Ask each group to explore their garden area, using the provided worksheet to describe the space's architectural elements.

Afterwards, discuss your students' answers with the class.

## Optional Activity

After students have had a chance to complete their worksheets, they can act as tour guides and lead the rest of the class through the highlights of their garden space.

Now that your class can “see” the gardens like artists, enjoy exploring the rest of the grounds!

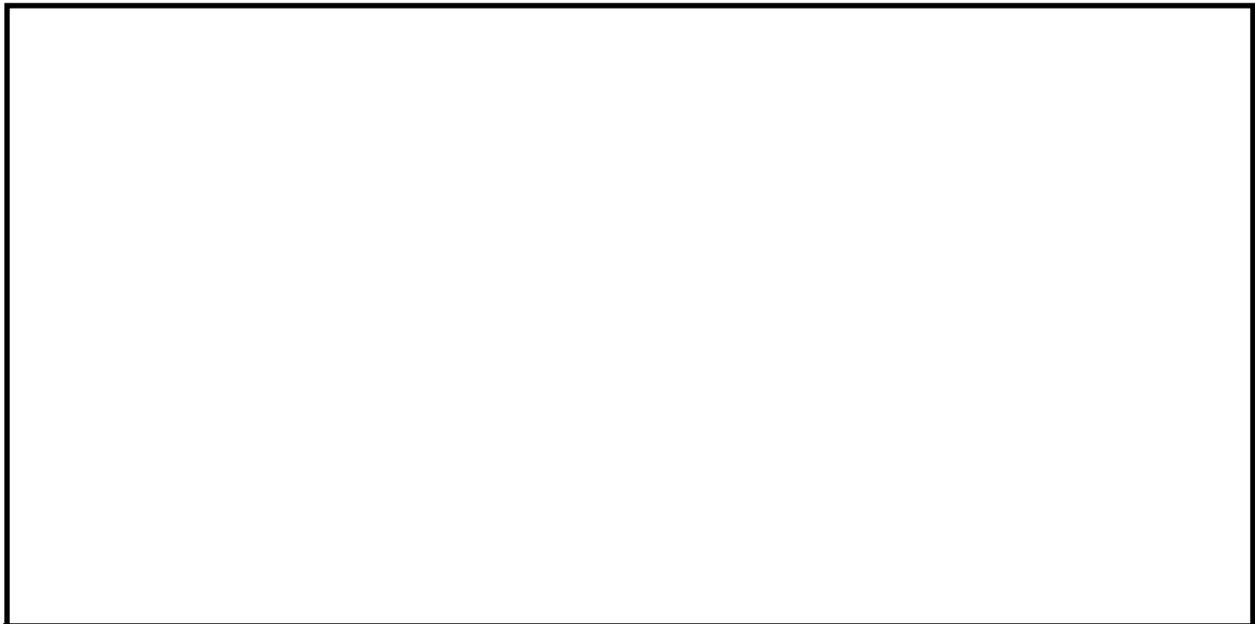


# Framing the Garden: Student Worksheet

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student Name

\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

1. With the box below showing the outline of your garden, use the key to fill it in with the plants or structures that frame the space. Remember, in a garden a frame—a wall, pillar or pair of trees—sets off part of the garden for special notice, just as a picture frame highlights a picture.



**KEY**    $\triangle$  = tree    $\bigcirc$  = plant    $---$  = path    $\square$  = garden bed, wall

2. Are the frames in your garden symmetrical? Are they identical on the right and left side, like your right and left hands?  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. Do the plants in your garden grow within, or spill over, the existing frames?  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. What do you notice first? Do the frames draw your eyes in a certain direction, such as up, down or side-to-side?  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. Use three words to describe the design of your garden.  
\_\_\_\_\_



# Self-Guided School Visits to Wave Hill

*Thank you for choosing to visit Wave Hill with your class. We hope you enjoy your experience and appreciate Wave Hill's special and intimate setting.*

## Wave Hill History Quest

All self-guided visits must be pre-scheduled and pre-paid.

### Overview

Welcome to the Wave Hill History Quest. Thank you for visiting and choosing to go on the quest. The History Quest is written in a series of rhyming riddles that serve as clues about different locations on the Wave Hill grounds. Read the rhymes out loud to your group, or have them read the clues out loud from the Student Clue Sheet. Visit the different locations and solve the riddles to learn about Wave Hill's unique history.

Enter the grounds by walking on the brick path, which leads from the parking area and ends at the Great Lawn. Your group's quest will start on the Great Lawn.

### Materials to Bring

- Paper
- Pencils
- Wave Hill Map & Guide

You may pick up materials for this activity in the Perkins Visitors Center.

### Introductory Clue

*History is found not only in books.*

*The past is also written in the land, to be read by those who care to look.*

*Today you'll search for evidence from history;  
Wave Hill's grounds hold the key to this mystery.*

*With riddles as clues and maps to guide, will your class  
discover where all of Wave Hill's secrets hide?*



## Clue 1# Conifer Slope/Exposed Boulders

*The lawns may look like a place to play,  
but that's not how we'll spend our day.*

*Go to the northernmost spot on the grounds,  
where conifers and slopes abound.*

*Find a mostly buried boulder from the past.  
This rock was here first; will it be last?*

### For Teacher

Once you have reached the Conifer Slope—an area featuring a variety cone-bearing (as opposed to flowering) trees. Your class will find some partially exposed boulders. Have them take some time to look at these boulders closely; you may want to use magnifying glasses to get an even closer look. Take note of the color and pattern of these rocks; they are made of gneiss, a metamorphic rock. Metamorphic rocks are a key to the geologic history of Wave Hill—they tell a story of geologic upheaval and change. This land has been formed by plate tectonics, or the movement of the earth's plates. As the plates move, they grind past, over and under one another, and the bedrock is heated, bent and broken. These gneiss boulders were created when preexisting rocks melted and then slowly cooled, creating large crystals and bands of minerals within the rock.

Ask your class:

- Do multiple types of rock coexist? What do you think might cause this to happen?
- Why do you think Wave Hill chose to leave these boulders exposed?
- What stories do these boulders tell us about the past?

Activities for your class:

- Think about the long life of these trees and all the things that they have witnessed.
- Create a timeline of important events in the life of one of the trees.
- Write short stories from the perspective of the tree.



## Clue #2 Copper Beech

*Standing tall, surrounded by smaller plants,  
a tree this big makes us all feel like ants.*

*For over a century this tree has stood,  
its ancestors from the land of Robin Hood.*

*What secrets has this giant seen,  
from World War II to astronauts and everything in between?*

### For Teacher

This copper beech has been growing on the Wave Hill grounds for over 120 years. Copper beeches are native to Southern England and can be found in older gardens all over the northeast. Beloved for their beautiful smooth grey bark, spreading branches and dark leaves, these trees grace many an estate's lawn. Today many copper beeches suffer from a fungal/algal infection known as bleeding canker. This infection causes the cracking and oozing of the bark which you can observe on the trunk and branches.

Ask your class:

- When do you think this tree was planted and who do you think may have planted it?
- What might a tree like this be used for?
- Do you see any evidence of animals living in this tree?
- What animals do you think live in the Copper Beech, unseen by us?

Activities for your class:

- Think about the long life of this tree and all the things that it has witnessed.
- Create a timeline of important events in the tree's life.
- Write short stories from the perspective of the tree.

## Clue #3 Herb Garden/Foundation of Original Greenhouse

*Here we find plants that heal and plants that hurt,  
plants whose fibers can make a shirt.*

*In this place where a greenhouse once provided shelter,  
now rosemary, thyme and angelica nestle together.*

*Ruined walls surrounding sacred greens—  
What do you think this riddle means?*



### *Clue #3 Herb Garden/Foundation of Original Greenhouse continued*

#### **For Teacher**

This section of Wave Hill is built upon the foundations of the original estate greenhouse, and dating back to the early 1900s. When Wave Hill was given to the city of New York in 1960, the greenhouses were in disrepair. The decision was made to build new greenhouses on a different site but to keep the original foundations and use them as a base for the herb garden. The herbs in this garden come from many different places. All are labeled with their name, use and country of origin.

Ask your class:

- Why do you think the decision was made to keep the original foundations?
- How many of the herbs are you familiar with?
- Do any of your families grow herbs at home?

Some activities for your class:

- Count how many different types of mint are in the garden.
- Identify the different regions that these plants originally come from.
- Pick a favorite plant and sketch it, labeling it with its medicinal properties.

### **Clue #4 Glyndor House/Wisteria Vine**

*Older than the wall upon which it grows,  
this southern plant has adapted to our northern snows.*

*Woody tendrils twist, bend and grasp the walls for support,  
no one would ever call this plant short.*

*The building upon which this mighty vine spreads its leaves  
shelters the art gallery beneath its eaves.*

#### **For Teacher**

Glyndor House was the residence of the Perkins family from 1903 until 1960, when they donated the Wave Hill property to the City of New York. The original Glyndor was built on the footprint of another house which once stood here. When building commenced on Glyndor, Mr. Perkins asked that the wisteria vine which grew on the south side of the property not be cut down, as it



#### *Clue #4 Glyndor House/Wisteria Vine continued*

provided shade for the porch. That means that the wisteria vines which ring the building on the east, west and south sides could very well be nearly 200 years old. Wisteria is a beautiful vine, known for its low-hanging clusters of scented flowers.

Ask your class:

- How do people choose the plants they grow? What purposes can plants have?
- How are people's lives affected by the plants around them?
- How does the wisteria vine cling to the wall?

Some activities for your class:

- Count how many wisteria vines are growing on the walls of Glyndor.
- Walk all the way around Glyndor Gallery to appreciate the wisteria from all angles.
- Discuss how plantings can be used to insulate or cool down a building.

## **Conclusion**

*Now your quest is through.*

*Who solved the riddles? I hope it was you!*

*Here's a reminder of the things you found;*

*an ancient vine, foundations used for plants, a tree from England and bedrock peeking up from the ground.*

*You've spent the day discovering the history of Wave Hill.*

*Now write your own quest—or have you had your fill?*

## **For Teacher**

Your class has now completed the Wave Hill History Quest. For a fun, follow-up activity have your students create their own quests, either in their neighborhoods or at your school.

