



PA State Standards

The world of the Amish is perfectly suited to the teaching of Pennsylvania's academic standards. Yet, meeting the State standards for various areas of instruction does not have to be "standard." We believe in educating excitingly. We also know that teachers have busy lives, and we always try to take nearly all of the actual field trip details out of teacher hands, both before and during the trip.

The standards for GEOGRAPHY look at applying skills and knowledge to life situations at home at work and in the community, cross-walked with those in civics and government, economics and history. The Amish community is a microcosm to be explored and compared with that of the student's.

In this regard, the four HISTORY standard statements are easily incorporated into a study of Amish culture:

1. Political and cultural contributions of individuals and groups.
2. Material artifacts and historical places
3. How community and change has influenced history
4. Conflict and cooperation among social groups and organizations

And for Pennsylvania History, an Amish Experience field trip touches on the complete grasp of...

Pennsylvania History Standard 8.2

8.2.9.C – Identify and analyze how continuity and change have influenced Pennsylvania history from 1787 to 1914. Consider belief systems and religions such as the Amish, the Ephrata Cloister, and the Harmonists.

In the **HUMANITIES**, the Amish world is a place to explore problem solving skills as the Amish adapt to new technologies, analytical skills necessary to evaluate and critique a media-saturated culture, the comprehension of basic symbol systems and abstract concepts, while a very different way of doing things challenges students to be more creative in their thinking.

In the area of **WORLD LANGUAGE**, there the standards are met in many ways....

National Standards: Connections, Standard 3.1 – Students reinforce and further their knowledge of other disciplines through foreign language. The Amish Experience provides excellent opportunities to bolster knowledge and understanding of subject areas, including history, humanities, and sociology. Students will discover the Amish and their way of life, following the heritage of a group of people escaping persecution in Europe to pursue a life of opportunities in the newly established Pennsylvania farmlands. Understand why the "plain" culture is the way it is. "What is Rumspringa?"

Pennsylvania Standards:

12.3.3D - Apply cultural information from a variety of sources in the target language for use in other subject areas: The Amish Experience provides a source of informative, educational intrigue for students. Explore a different culture, manifested in the midst of changing political and religious idealism, honed through interaction with, and filtration of, the “outside world.”

12.3.4D - Synthesize cultural information acquired in the target language for use in other subject areas: The Amish Experience will focus your students on issues pertinent to many subject areas, including freedom of speech, personal choice in the midst of heavy tradition and peer pressure, different cultures living side-by-side, and the history of settling Pennsylvania Dutch Country and the current ramifications of that heritage. Students are resented with cross-cultural critical thinking skills so important in everyday life. “Why would anyone sail all the way from Rotterdam, Holland, to Philadelphia, Pennsylvania in the 1700’s to pursue freedom of religion?”

12.3.4C - Analyze perspectives, beliefs, and assumptions evident in the target culture and other cultures: The Amish Experience represents the premier cultural and interpretive center on Old Order Lancaster County Amish way of life. This will expose students in a relevant and accurate manner to the differences, and likewise the common traits, between target cultures and the “plain” lifestyle. In addition, it also challenges students how to think about, and interact with, a very different culture than their own. “Why do they dress that way?”

12.5.1A - Know where in the local and regional community the target language and culture are useful: Especially important for German language classes, the Pennsylvania Dutch culture is a direct representation of the German heritage, culture, and language in America as a whole, and Pennsylvania specifically. Other target languages benefit from the heritage of language, culture, and their constant metamorphosis in the face of a rapidly changing world. The PA Dutch culture is useful to every target language because students will see how in one world each culture must react and address like ideas and events in their own way. “The Amish can have telephones, but not radios?”

12.5.3A - Identify employment areas in the local community where the target language is used and how and why the target language is necessary: The Amish Experience shows students how the Amish in Lancaster County of today are fully integrated in an entrepreneurial boom of sorts. Small cottage industries have sprung up all around the Amish community, creating millions of dollars of revenue, and countless job opportunities. German language or English language; both are used as the language of business. “It’s hard to believe they speak German here in Lancaster County!”

12.5.4A - Assess available opportunities in the local community to continue involvement with the target culture for lifelong learning and personal enjoyment: The Amish Experience opens the minds of students to the enjoyable experience of living next to a very different culture in a very harmonious way. The differences exist, but a common strain in human thinking and

living trumps these differences and creates a tapestry of interwoven traditions and customs. “I guess it really doesn’t matter if your refrigerator runs on electricity or propane gas!”