

## School Tour Interactive Ideas

*Use a distraction to distract them back to what you're doing!*

1. Make comparisons of building you see along the route: tall, taller, tallest
2. Pantomime: rowing a boat, being a scooper
3. Ask students to repeat the names of people/buildings or important vocab while pointing to those things. Ask them to whisper, speak in a regular voice, & shout!
4. Bring along a measuring tape & measure some of the students to help them understand how deep four feet is & how shallow the Erie Canal was!
5. Brainstorm different uses for a skyscraper. Be creative & silly – an indoor go-kart course? A rock-climbing wall?
6. “Scavenger Hunt” – before the tour, ask students to keep their ears out for a small number (3 -4) of words/objects. When they hear you say the word, they have to shout “Eureka!”
7. Trace the shape of City Hall or other interesting buildings with arms/hands.
8. In the Common Council chamber, ask everyone to stand up & look at what’s underneath their seat. Ask them what they think those are meant for (hat racks)
9. In the Treasury at City Hall, use a piece of paper and the stamper machine beside the security desk to show students how the date would have been cut out.
10. “I Spy” on the McKinley monument or at Canalside, or while you are walking from location to location – for example, how many stop signs can you spot by the time we get to our next stop?
11. Who can touch something made of stone/metal/marble?
12. Echo chamber (in the Marine A Silo): have students experiment with different sounds & their echoes – laughing, clapping, shouting, etc. Let them be loud! Let them know that echoes last almost 10 seconds in here.
13. Texture rubbings: pass out a sheet of paper & a dark-colored crayon to each student, demonstrate & then ask them to make a texture rubbing.
14. Sketching: pass out a sheet of paper & a crayon to every student, ask them to draw a sketch of something they can see. (This could be a good end-of-tour activity, especially if students have gotten a little antsy).

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15. Encourage students to count. They can count the windows on a building, the number of arches, the number of stairs they're walking down, etc.
16. Body Art/Architecture: Encourage students to mimic architectural details using (parts of) their bodies – columns, flying buttresses, domes, arches, etc. OR on the Riverfront Renaissance tour have them mimic the statues you come across.
17. At Silo City, encourage students to understand grain elevators by having them line up next to each other & pass a book/sheet of paper/etc. down the line, conveyor-belt style. Compare this to how a grain elevator would move the grain in buckets, but just up & down/vertically instead of sideways/horizontally
18. Younger kids especially love visuals – bring along laminated pictures of people, places, maps, etc. to show the group.
19. Stage a poetry reading at Silo City – have some short poems (e.g. haikus) prepped, hand them out to interested students & ask them to read from the stage in the American, Marine A, or at the Dock.
20. As a group, sing (or call & respond) the Erie Canal song.
21. Play a round of Simon Says while waiting for a traffic light (Simon Says tap your nose, Simon Says cross the street!)
22. Inspire students to touch building materials – stone, marble, concrete, terra cotta. Ask them to describe the differences & similarities they notice.
23. “Tangibles” – bring along a small prop to help explain a certain concept. This could be something the students pass around, touch, or simply look at. Some examples: a piece of terra cotta, grain samples, a plastic six pack ring (to visualize silos & their interstitial spaces), etc.
24. Be a Mule! Help students understand how mules used to pull boats along the Erie Canal. You could do this by bring along a length of rope: you hold onto one end and have two students hold the other end and pull you along (you could even hold a picture of a boat in front of you to help them visualize or make it sillier!) You could also do this by having a small slab of wood with a rope/string attached that students could pull along.