

**TIPS from a VETERAN TEACHER**  
**By Kim Robinson,**  
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**of Headlands Institute Teacher Advisory Group**

Tip #1      PREPARING THE PARENTS

As soon as your dates for your Headlands Institute trip are confirmed, get parents involved. I begin with an informational evening for parents, where I:

- Come dressed for a hike in the Marin Headlands
- Have a student who's already participated in the program available to answer questions
- Bring examples of post-trip journals
- Hand out the necessary Headlands Institute paperwork
- Bring borrowed samples of the required equipment to discuss
- Show the Headlands Institute DVD—call Headlands to request a copy

Tip #2      PICKING CHAPERONES

The parent information night is an excellent time to recruit chaperones. Chaperones should:

- Have outdoors and hiking experience and experience leading groups of children
- Be willing to take time off work
- Take an active role prior to and after the trip
- Be willing to discipline

Tip #3      ENGAGING YOUR STUDENTS

Once you've confirmed the dates of your trip, plan a day to begin engaging your students. As in the parents' informational meeting, come to class dressed for a hike with samples of equipment. Emphasize that kids should get their equipment as soon as possible, especially comfortable shoes with good traction, which will need to be broken in. Also emphasize the importance of rain gear. Review the Headlands Institute materials with your students. Pay special attention to medical forms, equipment lists and student responsibilities.



Additionally, I recommend:

- Planning mini-hikes with the kids during lunch on specific days to help break their shoes in.
- Encouraging students to borrow gear if they have difficulty purchasing all of it.
- Publishing a newsletter about the trip and asking for equipment donations.
- Approaching local businesses or corporations for sponsorships.
- Hosting a hiking fashion show and outdoor lunch for the kids about two weeks prior to the trip. This is a fun way to check gear and make sure it's appropriate. Have the lunch even if the weather is bad, because at the Headlands Institute you eat outside no matter the weather.

**Tips from a  
Veteran Teacher**

**(continued)**

## MISCELLANEOUS TIPS

- Network with another teacher in your area who's been to Headlands Institute.
- Familiarize yourself with the Headlands Institute maps at [www.HeadlandsInstitute.org](http://www.HeadlandsInstitute.org). Additional maps are available through the National Park Service at [www.nps.gov/goga/pphtml/maps.html](http://www.nps.gov/goga/pphtml/maps.html). The Marin Headlands Visitor Center also has hard copies of these maps. The phone number is 415-331-1540.
- Take a tour prior to your program.
- Students will be given journals upon their arrival. Have students bring pencils and a plastic Ziploc bag, to help protect their journal from the weather.

I hope these tips will help you prepare for your Headlands Institute trip. Have a wonderful time!

Kim Gesicki-Robinson