Distance Learning
Education Guide

Distance learning programs bring your students to the museum without ever having to leave their seats! Through the use of two-way video your class will join museum educators as we explore Virginia’s natural heritage and uncover its rich biological and geological history. Together, with the use of videoconferencing and interactive activities, we will spark imagination, enhance curricula, and support Virginia and national educational standards. Distance learning programs can be developed and adjusted to meet your needs. Education staff will work with you to establish your videoconferencing connection in advance. Let us know how we can connect with you!

Email discover@vmnh.virginia.gov or call (276) 634-4185 to find out more.

The Circle of Life
By investigating the relationships among organisms and looking at examples of producers, consumers, and decomposers, students will understand the transfer of energy that occurs among all living things and the fundamental processes it fuels.

Classification: 101
Amidst specimens from the African Savanna, students will follow educators on a journey through our spectacular African mammal collection. Step into the shoes of a scientist by using observable characteristics as a basis for species classification. By examining the physical characteristics of different mammals, students will understand more about species identification, variation, and adaptations.

It’s Alive!
Your students will join educators to investigate more about the life cycle(s), characteristics, behaviors, and adaptations of one or all of our fascinating live animals. Students will have an opportunity to see the museum’s live turtles, snakes, or Madagascar Hissing Cockroaches in action!

Special Exhibits
In addition to our permanent exhibits, distance learning programs can be designed in correlation with the themes of our special exhibits. For more information on upcoming special exhibits and accompanying, standards-aligned programming, e-mail discover@vmnh.virginia.gov or call (276) 634-4185.
Fees:
$90 for one program  $180 for one program with VMNH staff onsite
$135 for two programs  $270 for two programs with VMNH staff onsite
$170 for three programs  $340 for three programs with VMNH staff onsite
$210 for four programs  $400 for four programs with VMNH staff onsite

All programs are tailored to specific standards of learning based on your grade level. Contact us for more information at 276-634-4185 or email discover@vmnh.virginia.gov.

Natural History? What is that?
Your class will join educators as we investigate what “natural history” is and what the scientists who study it really do. Students will explore the work that VMNH scientists conduct in the field and in the lab and will learn about some of the fascinating research inside museum walls. With interactive activities and the use of real fossils, artifacts, and specimens, your students will come away with a better understanding of the nature of the science and what makes the Virginia Museum of Natural History such an important institution.

A Look inside the Labs: Paleontology
Surrounded by specimens that are millions of years old, your students will literally peer into the window of what paleontologists and technicians do in the Vertebrate Paleontology Lab. After learning about the tools and special technologies used in the lab, your students will explore more concepts in depth through engaging activities. Students will have a better understanding of the incredible changes that have occurred on Earth.

A Look inside the Labs: Archaeology
There is more to archaeology than digging in the dirt. Educators will provide students with a comprehensive look at the fascinating work of an archaeologist. They will see a variety of tools used both in the field and the lab and will interpret various artifacts just as a scientist would.

Virginia: 300 Million Years Ago
Travel back in a time before the dinosaurs roamed the earth and join educators as they illuminate what life was like in an ancient swamp. During this program, students will see real coal samples and fossils of now extinct plants.

Dawn of the Dinosaurs
Did you know Virginia is the only locality in the world where complete insect fossils from 225 million years ago have been found? Join educators as we examine fossils from this Era and compare them to their modern counterparts. Through the use of technology and modern and fossilized specimens, students will feel like they've made the discoveries themselves!

Unsolved Mysteries
Why would the fossils of marine animals and land mammals from long ago all be deposited in the same place? With VMNH educators, students will view fossils from an active dig site along the Fall Line north of Richmond. We will look at a re-creation of a bone bed and hypothesize what may have happened along this ancient shoreline to cause the deaths of such a wide variety of animals. By examining fossil evidence and understanding how Earth’s surface changes over time, students will explore scientific explanation of this location 14 million years ago.

Layer it on Me
Over the course of the last several millions of years, sea level has risen and fallen a number of times. With a re-creation of the cliff layers along the banks of the lower James River, your students will examine the record of species that lived over four distinct time periods. Students will explore the concept of change over time and better understand how species type and abundance throughout the different layers are key to understanding the environmental conditions at the time they lived.

Walking Among Giants
Travel back in time 14,000 years to the last Ice Age — a time when muskox, mastodons, mammoths, and giant ground sloths lived in Virginia. By examining casts of bones, teeth, footprints, and real fossils we will explore how the behavioral and physical adaptations of these animals helped them to survive in the not too distant climatic past.

One Man’s Trash is Another Man’s Treasure
Don’t miss out on this unique opportunity for students to explore archaeology. By examining artifacts such as pottery pieces, animal bones, and projectile points, students will be able to make conclusions about American Indian culture both before and after European contact. Led by VMNH education staff, students will better understand how trash of past civilizations can be a valuable tool for archaeologists.

The Earth as We Know It
Join educators for an exciting investigation of the forces that shape the world. With models and demonstrations, students will make connections between how the energy trapped inside the earth has moved continents and has shaped the earth’s surface over time.