Pre-visit Lessons and Activities: Wadsworth-Longfellow House

These pre-visit lessons and activities are suggested exercises to prepare your students for their tour of the Wadsworth-Longfellow House. Each lesson/activity can easily be adapted to meet the needs of students of all grade levels and to fit into your classroom schedule whether you’re looking for a short introduction to or an in depth exploration of the content of the tour.

Visit Longfellow Online (http://www.hwlongfellow.org/): This Maine Historical Society website examines not only Henry Wadsworth Longfellow’s life and work, but also his homes (including the Wadsworth-Longfellow House) and the story of his family. The website includes a searchable database of Longfellow’s poems, lesson plans for teachers, a filmography, and more. Whether you have one hour or one or week to prepare prior to your visit, it is a great resource for teachers and/or students to learn a little background on the story of the house and the family who lived there.

Create a Wadsworth-Longfellow Album on Maine Memory Network (http://www.mainememory.net/help/help_albumfront.shtml): Maine Memory Network is a statewide digital museum that provides unprecedented online access to an ever-growing collection of more than 45,000 primary sources contributed by over 270 organizations throughout Maine. MMN’s Album Tool allows students to collect and annotate favorite items from MMN into one place. Students can make as many albums as they want and the albums are a great way to organize and go back to favorite images. Instruct students to make an album that tells the story of someone who lived in the Wadsworth-Longfellow House or the story of the house itself. This activity is equally appropriate as a pre-visit lesson to orient students to the house and family and/or as a post-visit lesson to review what students have learned.
Longfellow's Poetry: Review with students some of Longfellow’s poetry, specifically “The Rainy Day”, which he composed at the Wadsworth-Longfellow House, and “My Lost Youth”, in which he reminisces about the Portland of his childhood. If time allows, instruct students to research the history of one of the two poems and/or create artwork inspired by the poems. All of Longfellow’s poetry can be found on the searchable poetry database on Longfellow Online at http://www.hwlongfellow.org/poems_front.php.