



Sample Script for Visitor Orientation

February 2026

As a Visitor Services Volunteer (VSV), you play a crucial role as an ambassador for Hillwood. You are often the first point of contact after a guest checks in, and your warm, friendly presence sets the tone for their visit. By sharing key information, you ensure that every guest has a memorable and enriching experience.

Below, you'll find a sample script to guide you in delivering a welcoming and informative visitor orientation.

Welcome

Welcome to Hillwood! Is this your first visit?

If Yes: I'd be happy to review the estate map with you.

If No: Would you like a quick refresher on the estate map before we move on to the tour options?

Estate Map Overview

Let's take a moment to go over the map and options for your visit today.

- **Visitor Center:**
You're located here in the visitor center. When you're ready to begin your visit, you can either take the stairs behind the front desk or use the elevator to exit from the second floor.
- **Museum Shop:**
Be sure to save some time to visit the museum shop, which is located on the second floor.
- **Mansion & Gardens:**
Once outside, the mansion will be across from the motor court and surrounded by the beautiful formal gardens.
- **Greenhouse:**
The greenhouse, located to the left of the visitor center, is open to the public.
- **Café:**
The Merriweather café is also located to the left of the visitor center. You can visit Hillwood's website to learn more about dining options.
- **Visitor Guidelines:**
This brochure includes visitor guidelines on the last page that you may review to familiarize yourself with what to expect in the mansion and gardens. You can also find these guidelines posted at the mansion's front door.

Orientation Film

A 10-minute orientation film is available in the theater behind us, playing every 15 minutes starting at 9:30 a.m.

Tour Options

There are a few ways to explore Hillwood, depending on your timeline and how you'd like to experience the estate:

- **Guided Mansion Tours:**
 - We offer guided and self-guided tours. Guided tours of the mansion are available at 11:30 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. (and 3:30 p.m. on Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays).
 - The tour lasts one hour and provides highlights of the collection.
- **Guided Garden Tours (Spring & Fall):**
 - During the spring (April through June) and fall (September through mid-November) months, guided tours of the gardens are available at 10:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. Tuesday through Sunday.
 - A third garden tour is available Friday through Sunday at 2:30 p.m. in April and September-November, and at 1:30 p.m. in May-June.
 - The tour lasts one hour and provides highlights of Hillwood's gardens.
- **Mobile Audio Tour:**
 - Explore the mansion and gardens at your own pace with our free mobile audio tour.
 - This tour offers the most detailed and comprehensive information, with several hours of content available.
 - To download, simply scan the QR code located on the sign at the tour desk and follow the easy instructions. We recommend connecting to the *Hillwood-Guest* Wi-Fi network for the best experience.
- **Printed Tour Brochure:**
 - If you prefer a physical guide, you can explore on your own with a printed tour brochure, which includes a map of the estate in the front flap.

Final Steps

Let me know how you'd like to experience your visit today, and I'll be happy to gather your brochures and help you get started.

If you have any questions or need assistance, please don't hesitate to ask any of our volunteers or staff members. Enjoy your visit!

Optional Guidelines Review

Depending on your comfort level, the busyness of your shift, and visitor engagement, you are welcome to share the following mansion guidelines. This is entirely optional and at your discretion.

Before you start, I'd like to highlight some important guidelines to ensure you have a comfortable visit:

- **Respect the Collection:**

Please experience the art with your eyes and imagination. Avoid touching any part of the collection or leaning on the walls, doorways, or columns, as many of these pieces are fragile.
- **Camera Use:**

Feel free to use your camera, but please photograph without a flash. For the comfort of others, we ask that you refrain from taking photos while walking, so the flow of visitors remains smooth.
- **Bag Check:**

We offer a complimentary bag check in the mansion. Please check any oversized bags, totes, backpacks, bulky items, coats, outerwear, or water bottles. You can also check your item's size here in the visitor center and lock oversized items in your vehicle, if preferable. If you have any questions about what should be checked upon arrival to the mansion, the Security team is happy to assist.