

Ability Guidebooks  
presents  
**Explore The World!**



**I Am Going To Make An Ability Guidebook!**  
**A Step-by-Step Guide On How To Create These Supports For**  
**People With Autism.**  
by  
**Brett Bigham**



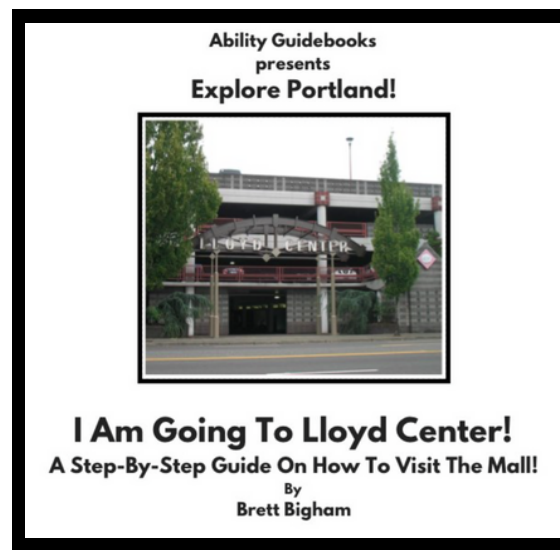
**It is my belief that every person should be able to visit the cultural destinations that our communities consider to be relevant, beautiful and important. That is why our museums have ramps for people in wheelchairs and headphones for people who have vision issues.**

**There are some people with autism who have a very difficult time going to new places. Ability Guidebooks are a way for people with this anxiety to read about where they are about to visit.**



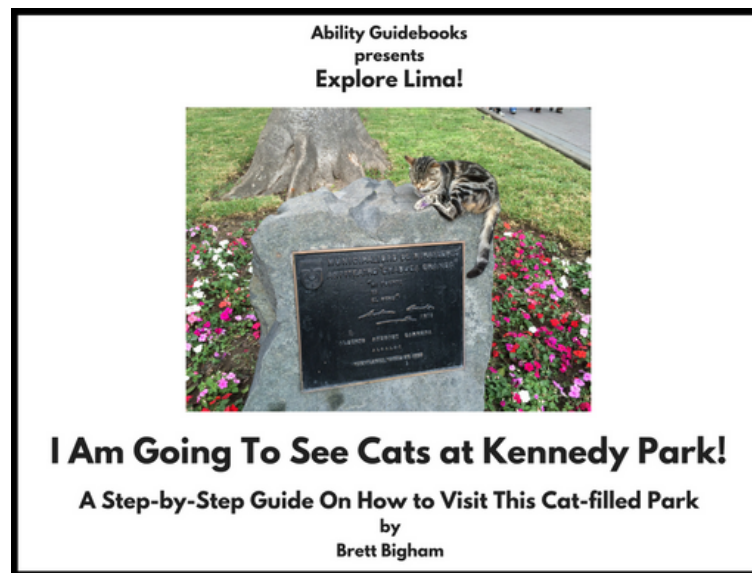
**I have made over 100 Ability Guidebooks. My goal is to inspire other people to take a few moments to create a good for their own community. Those books, added to my books, added to someone else's books will begin to make world-wide change.**

**Think about your own community? Where do the schools go on field trips? Where are some of the favorite tourist destinations? If you take the pictures, I'll help you make a book!**



**There are general rules to always follow with your pictures:**

- 1. Get a photo that shows the whole building and the street crossing to get to it.**
- 2. I always try to get a picture of someone safely crossing the street.**
- 3. Transitions from outside to inside should be shown. Get a picture of the sign, the front door or someone going through it!**
- 4. It is always good to get some pictures with people. If it is a crowded space, it is good to show it with a crowd!**
- 5. I try to avoid getting people's faces in the shots when possible.**
- 6. If you have to line up inside, show the line.**
- 7. Try to get a picture of someone buying a ticket.**



**8. Try to get a picture of the icons used for the bathrooms or the doors themselves.**

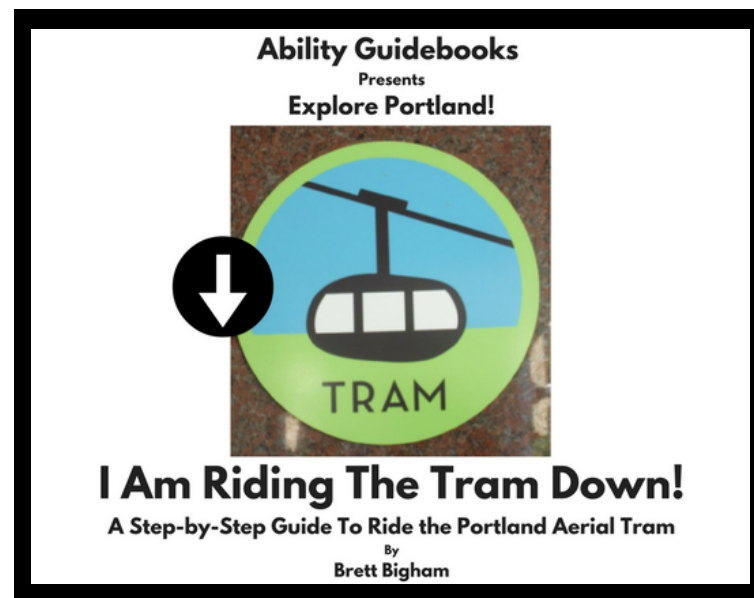
**9. Get a shot of people sitting down or of the seating areas.**

**10. Tell the story in 15 pages or less!**

**What if it is more than 15 pages?**

**This often happens for more complex destinations. See if you can cut the outing into two separate books.**

**I have found that if you have too many pages, it will be too big to email or download into my blog.**



## Text Tips

1. **Simple language! Write your text, then see if every big word can be swapped out for something shorter.**
2. **No more than two-three sentences per picture when possible.**
3. **Don't be afraid to crack a joke.**
4. **Always show a place where they can rest if they are feeling anxious.**
5. **Explain the behavior expected.**
6. **No more than Fifteen pages.**
7. **Don't write just for kids. Adults may use your book too.**





## **Common Phrasing**

**You will see I often write "Museums are serious places" and follow with the rules.**

**Generally my rules for serious places are: "use your quiet voice, " and "you should walk." I always try to say what I want them to do, not what they shouldn't do. ("You should walk" instead of "Do not run."**

**If the visit is for a museum I always tell them "Do not to touch the art."**

**Read some of my books to get an idea of how to write your own.**



## **Complexity**

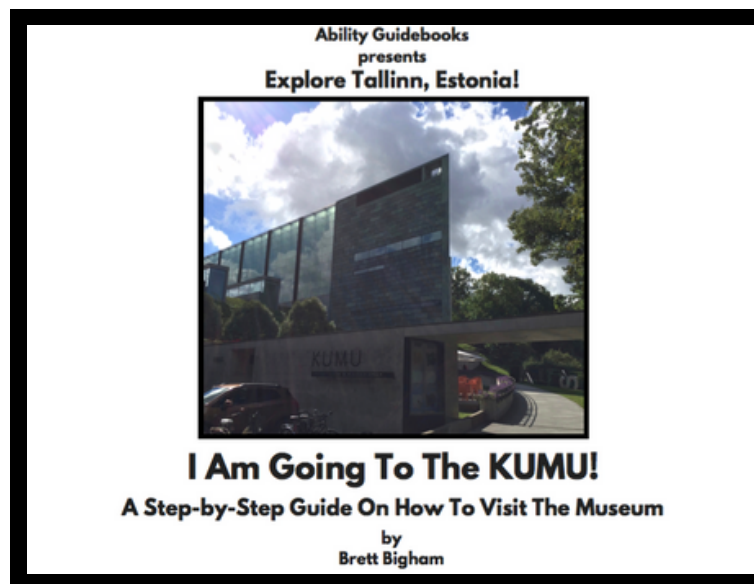
**Different destinations have very different complexity. I try to make a variety of complexities when I am making books for a community.**

**Simple: A simple destinations would be a statue or a monument that are outside and easy to get to. No complex doors, tickets, etc.**

**Medium: A simple place to visit with few rules and some freedom such as a park or a viewing platform.**

**Complex: Multi-steps and multi-skills needed!**



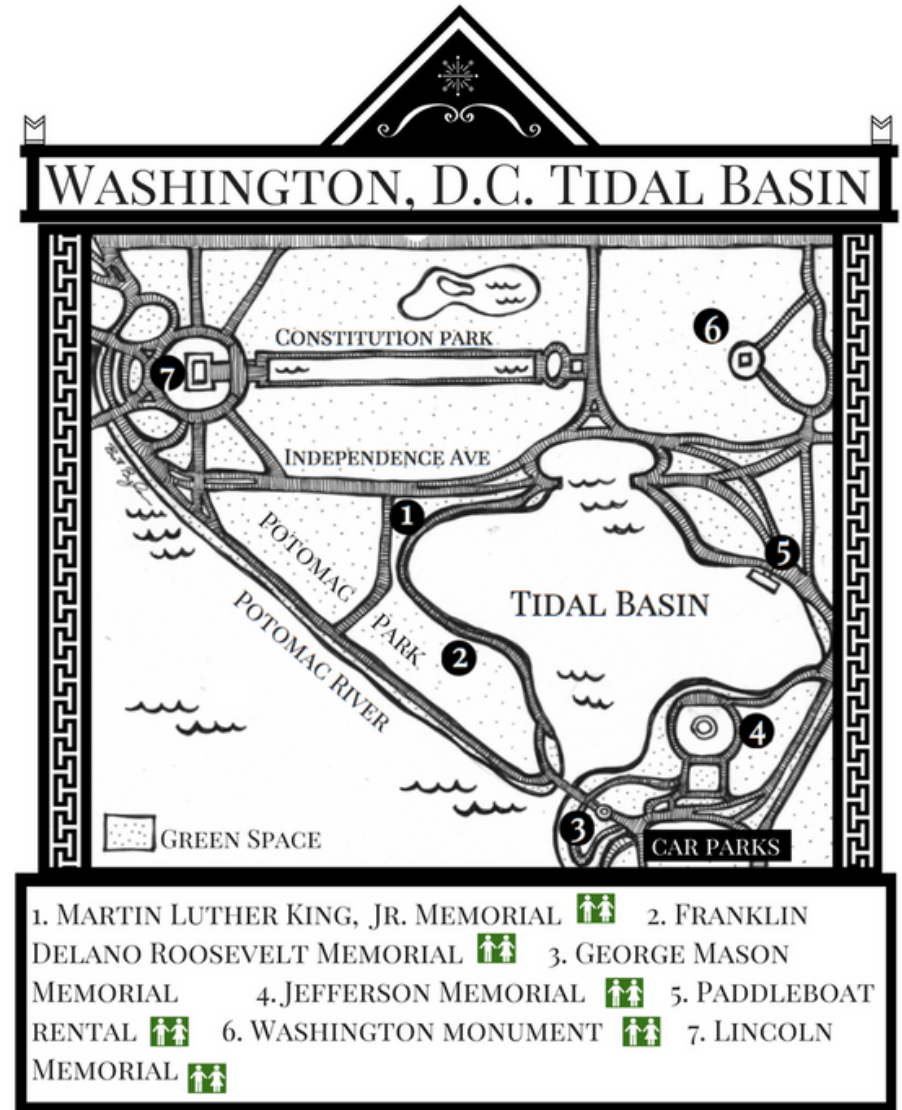
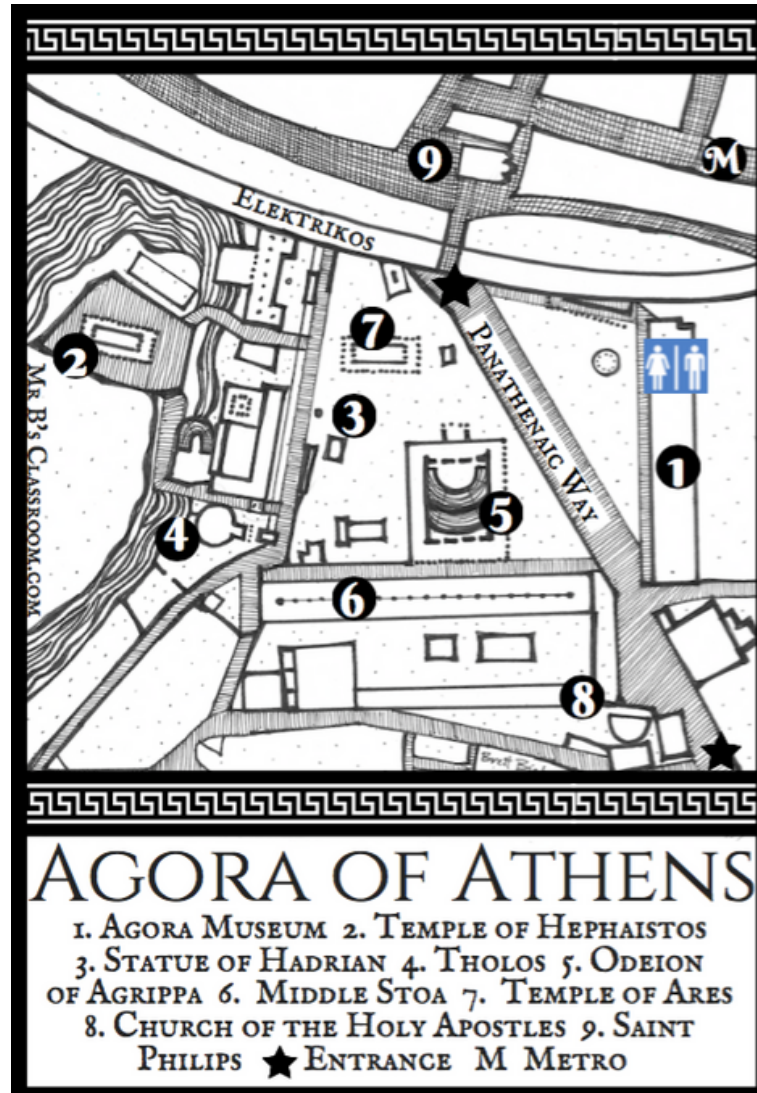


## **Places to Go, Books To Write!**

**I try to make books every where I go! Almost all of my pictures are taken on my phone! When I find I'm missing a shot, I will go on Wikimedia Commons or Flickr to find a picture. If you do this you must credit the photographer!**

**Though possible to make books from shared photos they most often do not have the picture needed for a good Ability Guidebook. (who takes a picture of the bathroom door?)**

**Sometimes a map is necessary. I make my own with dark lines for people who have vision issues. Make sure the restrooms and entrances are marked!**



**You can put more than one picture on a page if it is not a transition. I usually do this when showing art or pictures of the outdoors.**



**Museums almost always have art that shows the beauty of the human body. I include this in my books so there are no surprises.**





## Translations

**If you are fluent in any languages, consider translating some of the existing books. A book in English to visit the Colosseum is somewhat limited in the number of people it will help. That same book in Italian becomes a tool for every teacher and family in Italy.**

**I often think of my books in English as the snowball at the top of the hill. I make the snowball and get it started with a push and just hope it grows as it rolls downhill!**

**Tweet me @2014ortoy if you want to translate. Do you have bilingual students? This is a great classroom project!**

**Sometimes I feel it is necessary to explain more about the visit. This means adding a last page with notes more to the the person leading the trip than the person reading the book. (see next two pages)**

**The final page of the Ability Guidebooks is always the same. We can swap out your information for mine as the author.**

**To help keep things orderly, I'll ask that you create the books on Canva, an online program that is free for the level needed to make the books. If you work on Canva, then I can share all the formatting to make it easier and can edit the book when we share it.**

**I will act as editor with the project but retain no rights to what you created but you do agree to have them kept with all the other Ability Guidebooks, online, free-of-charge.**



## **Things to know about visiting the Acropolis Area in Athens:**

**The Acropolis and surrounding area, like many tourist sites in Europe, can be difficult places to visit if you are in a wheelchair. The ground is ancient stone and full of the pits and holes that thousands of years of traffic creates. There are paved areas that are easy to access, but not all areas are paved and many paths are gravel and dirt.**

**The Ancient Agora could easily be more than one outing and visiting all the buildings might be too much for a young visitor. This is why I have created several books for the Agora, including separate books for the Temple of Hephaestus, the Ancient Agora Museum and the Church of the Holy Apostles.**

**Enjoy your visit to the Acropolis and the surrounding area! These buildings and places of history are something that every person in the world should be able to see. My hope is that Ability Guidebooks will assist more people to see this cradle of civilization and democracy.**

**No visit to Athens is complete without seeing the Parthenon, the Olympian and the Temple of Hephaestus lit up at night. If you can't walk to them all, hop in a taxi and enjoy a loop around the Acropolis!**

**Check the Agora website for a list of free entry days as well as those people who qualify for free entry every day.**





**Ability Guidebooks are step-by-step instructions on how to access community destinations. For many people with autism and neuro-diversity, new situations can cause stress and discomfort. Ability Guidebooks help prepare people for new experiences. This is why I emphasize the places to sit and areas to relax.**

**This book will also help general ed teachers prepare their young students for a visit to the Agora.**



## **Can You Translate?**

**If you can translate this book into Greek or any other language  
I would love to hear from you!**

**Brett Bigham is the 2014 Oregon State Teacher of the Year and is a 2015 National Education Association Educator of Excellence from Oregon. Bigham is the first Special Education teacher to win these awards.**

**Bigham was named a Global Fellow by the NEA Foundation and traveled to Peru as an ambassador of that program. This allowed Bigham to create his first international Ability Guidebook for the Museo de Inka in Cusco, Peru. He has since made books for Greece, Italy, Finland, the U.K., Latvia, Estonia and the Vatican.**

**Text and Photos by Brett Bigham unless otherwise noted. Thank you Wikipedia for your photo sharing.**

**Thank you to the city of Athens and the staff at the Agora.**

**Special thanks to Mike for giving up part of his weekend for proofreading.**

**Visit [MrBsClassroom.com](http://MrBsClassroom.com) for more Ability Guidebooks.**