

Geography of Extreme Sports

Overview: This lesson presents a variety of activities to teach geography using extreme sports as a vehicle to meet students' interests. The focus of the lessons is to enable students to think geographically and develop map analysis skills, particularly of the local community.

Standards: Minnesota History and Social Studies Standards

V. Geography; B-1-1 Maps and Globes:

The student will use maps and globes to demonstrate specific and increasingly complex geographic knowledge. *Benchmark:* Students will use political and thematic maps to locate major physical and cultural regions of the world and ancient civilizations studied.

V. Geography; B-2-1, 2 Maps and Globes:

The student will make and use maps to acquire, process, and report on the spatial organization of people and places on Earth. *Benchmarks:* 1) Students will create a variety of maps to scale, and 2) Students will compare and contrast the differences among a variety of maps and explain the appropriate use of projections, symbols, coloring and shading, and select maps appropriate for answering questions they have.

V. Geography; D-1-2 Interconnections:

The student will give examples that demonstrate how people are connected to each other and the environment. *Benchmarks:* Students will analyze how the physical environment influences human activities.

V. Geography; E-1-1, 2 Essential Skills:

The student will use maps, globes, geographic information systems and other sources of information to analyze the natures of places at a variety of scales. *Benchmarks:* 1) Students will demonstrate the ability to obtain geographic information from a variety of print and electronic sources, and 2) Students will make inferences and draw conclusions about the character of places based on analyses and comparison of maps, aerial photos, and other images.

Grade Level: 4-8

Time: Requires 2 class periods plus more time if extensions are completed

Required Materials: In order to accomplish this unit as described, the teacher needs:

1. Statistical information found at several websites
2. Blank maps of Minnesota, the U.S., and the world with cities identified
3. Atlas
4. Colored pencils, blank paper, tag board, modeling clay
5. Access to a computer to acquire data at websites

Objectives: This unit is designed so students will be able to:

1. Demonstrate their understanding of the location and distribution of man-made and natural features and the interaction of people with their environment
2. Read and interpret data sources such as lists, maps, charts
3. Create maps, charts, graphs which accurately represent data
4. Interpret data and make conclusions

Suggested Procedures: The lesson includes a variety of activities to use with students to engage them in geographic thinking to focus on the concepts of location, distribution and human-environment interaction.

Suggested Assessment: Students will be assessed by their ability to:
Demonstrate the ability to work in small groups effectively.
Make complete and accurate maps, charts and graphs
Identify, explain, and apply concepts of location and distribution to develop conclusions
Analyze and synthesize the interaction of people with their environments

Extensions: To develop concepts of location, distribution and human-environment interaction, use the following topics as well:
Other extreme sports events such as the Asian, Latin and European XGames or Junior XGames
Focus on one extreme sport, such as in-line skating or BMX

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RESOURCES

Web Links for Teachers and Students:

XGames: <http://expn.go.com/expn/index>

Winter XGames: <http://expn.go.com/expn/index>

XGames History: <http://www.tqnyc.org/NYC030417/html/xgameshistory.html>

XGames History: <http://skateboard.about.com/cs/events/a/XGamesHistory.htm>

Children's Magazine:

"Extreme Places: The Earth's Own X-Games!" (May 2006). FACES. 22(9).

<http://www.cobblestonepub.com>

Supplemental Resources

European X Games: <http://www.expn.go.com/eurox>

Asian X Games: <http://www.asianxgames.com>

Latin X Games: <http://latinxgames.com>

World Cup of Skating: <http://wcsk8.com>

Gravity Games: <http://www.gravitygames.com>

Books:

Koeppl, Dan (2000). Updated Extreme Sports Almanac. Chicago, IL: NTC/Contemporary Publishing Group, Inc.

Paulsen, Gary (2003). How Angel Peterson Got His Name: And Other Outrageous Tales About Extreme Sports. New York, NY: Wendy Lamb Books.

Tomlinson, Joe (2004). Extreme Sports: In Search of the Ultimate Thrill. Buffalo, NY: Firefly Books.

Extreme Sports Book Series:

Edgebook, X-Sports; Capstone Press, Mankato, MN

Extreme Sports; Chelsea House Publishers, Bromall, PA

Extreme Sports; Lerner Publications, Minneapolis

Extreme Sports; National Geographic Society, Washington DC

Extreme Sports Collection; Rosen Publishing Group, New York

Kids' Guides to Extreme Sports; Child's World, Chanhassen, MN

Extreme Sports

The first XGames, originated by ESPN, began in 1995 in Rhode Island with 350 athletes. The event was called Extreme Games and featured 7 events including skateboarding, windsurfing, kite skiing, skysurfing, street luge, barefoot waterskiing, bungee jumping, mountain biking, bicycle stunt riding, and the Eco Challenge (a four-person team, multi-sport event, multi-day contest, through a challenging landscape). In 1996 the games were also held in Rhode Island. The XGames were held as separate winter and summer events in 1997 and both have been annual events held in the U.S. In 1998 international athletes were allowed spots in the XGames.

The Gravity Games, an Extreme Sports competition held in Australia, competes with the XGames. In 2005 14 countries competed in Perth. These games, although they have a corporate sponsor, were driven by the athletes and include summer and winter games. Extreme sports competitions are also held in Europe, Asia, and Latin America. The Olympics now includes some extreme sports.

Ask students why they might participate in extreme sports. What sports would be considered extreme sports? Why do young people participate in extreme sports? They receive enormous satisfaction participating and competing in a risky event. They are safe despite dangerous situations—“on the edge”. It is a challenge to overcome something difficult. The athlete controls the risk and understands personal limits. Basically, participating in extreme sports is defying boundaries that others accept. Young people are expressing their individuality and achievement while challenging boundaries. Extreme sports is thought to be a substitute for hunting, warfare, and other challenges in our history according to young people who want adults to understand their drive and enjoyment to participate in dangerous feats. The athletes have personal qualities such as strength, flexibility, and tenacity. They are also noted for their ingenuity—inventiveness and creativity to develop new stunts—highlighted by their energy and spirit. For some young people, they say participating in extreme sports is like acting out a video game and is thoroughly engaging.

Surfing is viewed as the original extreme sport. It is an individual sport with great risk and requires skill and confidence. It meets the characteristics of an extreme sport and is dependent on location. Extreme sports are directly connected with their built and natural environments. That is, the sport could not exist without the extreme conditions of the air, land, and water.

Activities:

1. Examine Extreme Sports

Explain that extreme sports occur in particular environments. Extreme sports take place on air, land, and water. With the categories of air, land, and water make a list of extreme sports. Discuss their locations. Where in the world are they found? Chart the extreme sport according to several categories including Type (Air, Land, Water), Environment (Natural, Built), Athletes (Group, Individual). Students work individually or in small groups to compare the extreme sport by listing the sports under the categories, identifying potential locations of the extreme sports, and examining the possible month for events to occur and the day of week and time of day for spectators to attend.

2. Map Extreme Sports

Students will perform at least one of the mapping activities:

a) Construct a map of locations of extreme games throughout the world and their participating countries. Map current sites in the U.S. and the world where Extreme Sports competitions have been held. Also map the location of Extreme Sports Athletes. Predict the location of the next XGames and predict the involvement of another country in the XGames.

b) Map the sites of skateparks in Minnesota. Where are they located? Are they distributed in particular regions of the state?

c) Select an extreme sport, explain the Five Themes of the sport and map its location.

d) Design a World Cup course or a skatepark for 10 years old children in your area who are at a basic level of performance. Create a map of the course and construct a scale model of it. Also develop a training program for the youngsters who want to compete to prepare for the events.

e) Use the local community and design a summer or winter X game series for students your age. Use local topographic and city maps to plan and design a course. Make a model of the venues to scale.

Extension: Develop a campaign to induce your local city government to approve a skateboard park. Include the reasons for the park, map a suggested location, and make a scale model of the site. Develop an advertising campaign that includes bumper stickers promoting the idea. Present your plan to the city council.

3. "Where in the World?" Power Point

Develop a journey to different places in the world where you might skateboard or perform a different extreme sport. Describe the building, plaza, wall, or area and identify other features of the city or country. Write a brief narrative of the location or superimpose your picture on a photo of the site and make a Power Point of the places. Write 3 clues for each place on the power point. Other students will solve the locations of "Where in the World?" are you.

Extensions: Make a postcard of the extreme place

Extension: Make a card of yourself identifying your features as an athlete and create a legend or incident of you as an extreme athlete.

4. Extreme Places

Use the Faces magazine, "Extreme Places: The Earth's Own X-Games" (May 2006) to coordinate extreme sports with extreme places. Ask students what are the extreme places in the world and where are they located. Read about the extreme places of the world. Map these places on a world map. Students work in small groups to investigate each of these extreme places more thoroughly. Develop an explanation of another extreme place, or an alternative extreme place, that was missed in the magazine. Identify what extreme sport could occur in each extreme place. Life is difficult for the people who live in these extreme places and participating in a risky recreational activity may seem inappropriate to them. Identify a reason why their place may be a good location for an extreme sport to occur and develop a campaign to convince athletes to travel to the extreme place.

Extension: Make a game board of Extreme Sports in Extreme Places

Extension: Plan a route to the Extreme Places. Plan the route so you visit 12 places during the worst time of the year one month at each place, going only west to east.

5. Extreme Diversion

One of the world's largest group skates occurs every Friday night in Paris, France. The Pari Roller occurs during the summer and attracts thousands of skaters for the event that begins at 10:00 p.m. The group is led by a rollerblading police unit and followed by ambulances. Other cities with group skates include Amsterdam, Berlin, Munich, Frankfurt and London. Skating clubs in the U.S. also have group skates, but the large cities of Europe have more skaters on a regular basis who close down the urban centers for the weekly event.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roller_skate

<http://away.com/tripideas/paris-ile-de-france-inline-skating-300381.html>

Work with your local city council to have a group skate during a city event. Plan a course, arrange for sponsors, and advertise the event. Arrange a preliminary safety class for novices.

Extension Activities:

1. Discuss the controversy: "Do gender/racial differences exist in extreme sports?"
2. Graph the XGames over the past 12 years and coordinate it with a timeline of global events. What significant events were occurring in the world?
3. Determine how to make an activity into an extreme sport.
4. The Xtreme Sports Games were developed by ESPN. The Gravity Games were developed by athletes and now have corporate sponsorship. What role do businesses play in national and international sporting events? Why is it necessary? What alternative means to funding might be available?
5. Investigate crossover sports within extreme sports, such as snowboarding and skateboarding. How has modification of the sports overcome time and space?
6. Identify which Olympic events could be considered extreme sports. Map the participating countries and identify the region from which they come.
7. The XGames do not include BASE jumping, which is an acronym for Building Antennae Span Earth. Research BASE jumping to determine what it is, where it occurs, and why it should or should not be part of the XGames.