

TEACHERS ACTIVITIES



Theme:

Snow has a special magic of its own, which makes winter a season of wonder and fun.

Topics For Discussion:

Before watching the program, discuss areas of the world, the United States, and your own state that usually do, or do not, have snow. Use corresponding maps to visualize the locations of these areas. Lead students to conclude from this discussion that many people on earth have never experienced snow. (Depending on where you live, this may include them!)



Discuss activities that require cold weather and/or snow for participation. What types of equipment, materials, and clothing are needed for these activities?



Invite students to share their favorite snowy day experiences. These may be based on routine weather where they live, on vacations to other places, or on their own imagined "snow days."

Curriculum Extension Activities:

Revisit the three poems that are read in the program. Discuss some of the images of winter that are suggested by the words in the poems. Obtain a copy of the book, *Snowy Day: Stories and Poems*, so that the class may read the poems themselves. Have the students illustrate the three poems.



Pantomime some snow activities, such as building a snowman or having a snowball fight. To build a snowman, students might dramatize rolling the snow into a ball, lifting the ball into place, patting the snow into shape, adding features, etc. To pantomime a snowball fight, students might act out forming the snowballs, throwing them, ducking to keep from being hit, getting hit with a snowball, etc.

In areas where there is snow in winter, make a snow gauge and measure the amount of snowfall. A clear plastic container, such as a soda bottle, marked off in inches or centimeters with a permanent marker, works very well. Place the snow gauges in several places around the school grounds, e.g., on the steps, near a tree, on the playground, outside the classroom window, etc. Have students compare the amounts collected from the different places. Check the weather forecast. How do the amounts in the students' snow gauges compare to what was predicted? Let the snow in the gauges melt to see the ratio of snow to water.



Small animals burrow into the snow for protection against the cold, and people in the past have built homes from snow. Discuss with students how it is possible that snow can serve as insulation. Conduct an experiment to test this possibility. On a very cold day, dig a small hole at the base of a snowbank and place an outdoor thermometer inside the hole. Place another thermometer nearby outside the hole. (Small groups of students working together may want to try this with several snowbanks.) Check both thermometers later in the day and compare the temperature inside the snowbank to the air temperature outside. Brainstorm a list of winter season sports. (Not all of the sports may be snow-related, depending on where you live.) Make a class graph of the students' favorite winter sports.



The formation of icicles is unpredictable, with regard to both the places they form and the sizes. Have students try to make their own icicles. Use a gallon-size plastic milk jug and punch a few small holes in the bottom. The holes need to be small so that the water will drip rather than flow out. They need not be the same size, however; a straight pin and a tapestry needle would yield holes of different sizes. A small cut with a sharp knife or a razor blade might be another possible opening. Tie the jug from its handle somewhere outdoors, e.g., a sturdy tree branch, the monkey bars, etc. On a cold day, fill the jug about 3/4 full with water. Check the jug for several days to see the progress of the icicles. The best icicles are formed when both freezing and thawing is occurring, so water may need to be added to the jug more than once. When icicles are formed, have students measure the icicles and notice which openings permitted the largest formations.

Organize a keypal project to collect information about winter in other parts of the United States and the world. Have students brainstorm the questions they would like to ask, such as the following: what months are your winter months, what activities do you do in winter, what is the average temperature in winter where you live, what kinds of clothes do you wear in winter, and the like. Send the questions via e-mail. As the responses come in, mark the locations of the students who answered on a map. Discuss the information and draw conclusions about winter in different areas. After the initial exchange of information, students may wish to transmit pictures of the class engaged in wintertime activities to their keypals.



Research the Iditarod. How did it get started? What path do the participants follow? (Find it on a map of Alaska.) When does it take place? How do people prepare for it? How is the winner determined? There are several World Wide Web sites that allow students to follow the daily progress the Iditarod participants. The following URL contains links to other sites: <http://www.iditarod.com/>

SUPPLEMENTARY BOOKLIST:

AKIAK: A TALE FROM THE IDITAROD
by Robert J. Blake (Philomel)

THE SNOW SPEAKS
by Nancy White Carlstrom, illus. by Jane Dyer (Little, Brown)

SUSAN BUTCHER AND THE IDITAROD TRAIL
by Ellen M. Dolan (Walker)

DEAR REBECCA, WINTER IS HERE
by Jean Craighead George, illus. by Loretta Krupinski (HarperCollins)

WINTER AT LONG POND
by William T. George, illus. by Lindsay Barrett George (Morrow)

WHEN WINTER COMES
by Robert Maass (Henry Holt)

DOGTEAM

by Gary Paulsen, illus. by Ruth Wright Paulsen (Delacorte)

IT'S SNOWING! IT'S SNOWING!

by Jack Prelutsky, illus. by Jeanne Titherington (Greenwillow)

MUSH!

by Patricia Siebert, illus. by Jan Davey Ellis (Millbrook)

THE BRAVEST DOG EVER: THE TRUE STORY OF BALTO

by Natalie Standiford, illus. by Donald Cook (Random House)

IDITAROD DREAM

by Ted Wood (Walker)

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