

LIFE AND GEOGRAPHY ALONG THE ROUTE 66

Materials Needed:

Film: Great American Footrace

Maps of the United States, individual states, and regions

<http://www.ilt.columbia.edu/k12/naha/maps/findtrib.html>

<http://www.ilt.columbia.edu/k12/naha/maps/nausa.html>

<http://www.kstrom.net/isk/maps/tribesbystate.html>

<http://www.kstrom.net/isk/maps/houses/housingmap.html>

Colored pencils for labeling maps

Computers with Internet access

National Geography Standards:

1. How to use maps and other geographic representations, tools, and technologies to acquire, process, and report information from a spatial perspective.
2. Understands the physical and human characteristics of places.
3. Understands that people create regions to interpret earth's complexity.
4. Understands how culture and experience influence people's perceptions of places and regions.
5. How physical systems affect human systems.
6. How to apply geography to interpret the present and plan for the future.

Purpose:

The purpose of this lesson is to provide students with experience mapping, organizing, and planning for a marathon race such as the Great American Footrace and provide meaning to spatial, environmental, and human characteristics of geography.

Objectives:

1. Students will be able to identify and describe geographic regions along Route 66 (the race route).
2. Brainstorm and discuss how they would prepare for the race.
3. Trace the race's route on a map
4. Analyze the route map and geographic regions to be passed through in preparation for the race.
5. Create a budget and follow it.
6. Calculate stopping points based on average miles covered per day.
7. Calculate climatic/weather conditions along the race route based on time of season.
8. Keep a journal pretending to be a runner in the Great American Foot Race.

Activity 1:

Have students identify a runner they'd like to learn more about. Once they've thought of the specific runner, ask the following questions:

- How much do you know about this runner?
- Where was he from?
- Did he finish the race?
- If he dropped out, where did he quit and why?

Once students have learned more about their runner, break them into small groups. Ask them to imagine they are that chosen runner, preparing for the Great American Foot Race and then as a group to brainstorm and answer the following questions: Note: this list is representative but certainly not exhaustive. Include other questions as you see fit.

- What would you do to prepare for such a race?
- What would you take with you? Why?
- How would you carry it?
- How would you budget for the entire race? Break this into a daily rate.
- Where would you stay at each stopping point?
- What would you do if you heard rumors about dangers along the race? For example, threats to your life, weather or climate conditions, treacherous roads you must run on.
- What other obstacles will you have to overcome?

Discuss the responses as a class.

Activity 2:

After students have brainstormed as many things as they would take with them on the race, have students:

1. Draw or locate a map of the United States
2. Plot and mark the race along Route 66.
3. Have small groups pick region/state on race route, and map it in detail, including landforms and bodies of water.
4. Graph average monthly rainfall and average high and low temperatures.
5. Report geographic information about the region/state such as elevations, landforms, forests, deserts, etc.
6. Based on the film *The Great American Foot Race*, have "runners" determine as best they can what types of climate, terrain, and weather conditions and any other obstacles they will encounter in specific areas during the time they will pass through, for example the deserts of New Mexico, mountain regions, etc. For example: Starting from the start date, and averaging 40 miles per day, when do you expect to be in the Mojave Desert or mountains of Arizona. What types of conditions had you better prepare for? Are there places to stop to eat, sleep, bathe?

7. Have students refer back to their list of items to take with them on the race. How would they change that list now, knowing more about what to expect on the route?

Activity 3:

Have students keep a journal along the race. Entries should include the day before the race. Again pretending they are their identified runner, they should include what they expect to see or terrain they expect to cross tomorrow, how are they feeling (scared, excited), any other thoughts, feelings or observations they may have etc. Write for a specified period of time (one week, month) while pretending to be one of the runners. The journal entries should discuss how far they ran each day, what they encountered such as weather conditions, parades or other celebrations in towns along the route, where they slept, etc. Sketches could be included of the places or animals they saw, people they met or of the terrain they had to cross. Final entry should be either the day they dropped from the race or the finish of the race.