

WALK & BIKE ACROSS AMERICA



GUIDEBOOK
Version 1. 2006-07

WALK & BIKE ACROSS AMERICA



Table of Contents

Introduction.....	1
How to Register	2
Lesson Plan	3
Make the Game Interesting	5
How to Initiate the Activity	6
Letter to Teachers.....	7
Class Mileage Tracker	8
Student Mileage Tracker	9
Poster.....	10



Walk & Bike Across America is a program of Safes Routes to Schools, a project of the Transportation Authority of Marin.

Introduction



Walk and Bike Across America is a web-based interactive game that promotes physical activity. Participating classes receive a wall map and access to the web-based map. Students track the miles they walk and bike to school and then combine those miles with their classmates to accumulate enough miles to travel around the map. The Web site includes Excel spread sheets to assist in tracking individual and class miles.

Each site represents a significant national park or historic site that links to the National Park Services web pages. These pages will give the students important information about the site, which will broaden the students' knowledge of the United States. Students can also eat their way across the country by landing on the many healthy fruits and vegetables grown and/or sold around the country and learning about its nutritional value and other interesting facts.

This activity can be done as a class project or can be run for the whole school, thus adding up even more miles. Learn about the greatness of America while increasing the health of your students and decreasing the traffic around your school.

How to Register



1. Visit the Web site at www.saferoutestoschools.org/walk
2. Go to the bottom of the page and click on "application page"
3. Complete each section of the application page
 - a. Choose a starting point. Marin schools will start in Marin. Schools from other areas of the U.S. should choose the site closest to your school
 - b. Choose a user name and password – this is the teacher/organizer's access to the complete site
 - c. Choose a Class nickname – this will identify your class or school each time you access the site
 - d. Choose a secret word – this will be your students' access to the site to view the websites you have reached in your travels.
4. Submit application page
5. SR2S will receive an email indicating you have registered. Staff will check the application to ensure that it is legitimate school that is qualified to use the site (the site must be used by a school, not an individual student)
6. You will receive an email indicating that you are ready to enter the site.

Lesson Plan Title: Walk and Bike Across America

Grade level: 4-12

**Subject Areas: Geography,
Health, Math, Physical Education,
Computer Science, Social Studies.**

**Skill Set: Mapping, Nutrition and
Physical Activity, American History**



Introduction

This is a class project that combines physical activity with computer-based learning of America's rich cultural heritage. Students learn how to use maps, compute mileage, and be physically active, while exploring America's national parks, historical heritage, and nutritional information via key agricultural sites.

Objective

Students will gather the miles that the class (or the whole school) walks and bikes and will use those miles to virtually travel a computerized map of the United States visiting 85 sites across the country.

Set Up

Post the hard copy of the map on the wall in a prominent location. If gathering miles school-wide, place the map in a central location in the school.

Materials

- Map (provided)
- Digital Spreadsheets for tracking individual miles (provided)
- Digital Spreadsheet for adding individual miles together (provided)
- Computer
- Push pins and colored string

Preparation

Distribute individual spreadsheets to each student for tracking individual miles within their class, or if you are tracking mileage for the whole school then distribute tracking sheets school wide to each class).

Class Instruction, Modeling, and Discussion



Step one: Each student receives a mileage tracker spreadsheet to keep track of the number of times he or she walks or bikes to school. (To determine his or her distance from school the student can use any map program found on the web such as MapQuest or Yahoo Maps. Enter the student's address as one point and the school address as the second point. The program will give you the miles. Younger students will need parental assistance for this process.)

Step Two: Each week, students turn in their mileage tracker spreadsheet to be entered onto the class mileage tracker. This spreadsheet will calculate the total miles for the week. (If the whole school is playing then the totals from each class tracker should be added together.)

Step Three: Enter the total miles for the week on the web site. Students will then know how many miles they have to travel to reach their chosen destination. Have the class vote for their preferred travel direction and first destination and start traveling. The map will show you how far you have gone this week.

Step Four: When the collective mileage allows students to reach one of the destination points on the map they can virtually visit that site. They'll find out more about the United States and the wonderful treasures it has to offer.

Step Five: Mark the progress on the physical map using pushpins to designate sites visited, and tying string to the pins to show the path taken. (Note, while it is possible to draw directly on the map, it could potentially damage the map and does not allow re-use. We suggest you have your map laminated so it can be used repeatedly over time.

Discussion

This activity can continue over a period of weeks or even months. Discuss the various sites visited. What does each site contribute to America's cultural heritage? Why are physical activity and good nutrition important? How does walking and biking to school contribute to the health and safety of the student and the school? (Less traffic, less pollution, more exercise, it's fun, etc.).

Assessment

Were the students able to accurately calculate the mileage? How many miles were traveled and how many sites were visited? Have the students increased their knowledge of key cultural and historic sites in the United States? Did the students learn important nutritional information?

Options

For students who ride the bus:

If a student takes the bus to school and walks to the bus stop, calculate the miles from the student's home to the bus stop and use those miles.

For students who carpool:

If a student carpools to school, then that student offers one bonus mile a day toward their class total for each time they carpool to or from school. Note, a carpool is defined as two or more families who share driving to school. Large families are NOT a carpool. A carpool must eliminate at least one car trip.

Make the Game Interesting



Walk and Bike Across America offers a number of educational opportunities. Although this is designed as a non-competitive activity, you can still use competition to encourage more participation. Here are a number of ways in which you can increase the educational value of this activity and/or make it more enticing.

- Post the number of miles and the places you have visited in your school newsletter.
- Put the map in a central school location so that others can view your progress.
- Assign students to write essays about the places that they visit. They can be asked to do further research on that site by exploring more related websites. Publish the best essays in the school newspaper or in a local newspaper.
- Focus on Nutrition – Specifically visit the agricultural sites. Introduce class discussions on the importance of fruits and vegetables as part of a balanced diet. Assign essays to augment the information found on the sites.
- Challenge the individuals – Award the student who walks or bikes the farthest. Request a donation for a prize from your PTA or from a local store.
- Challenge other classes – Ask each class to track their own miles and see which class can visit the most points on the map. Award the winning class with a special treat.
- Challenge other schools – Challenge a neighboring school to compete in determining which school can visit the most points on the map. Reward the winning school with a cash prize or other incentive.
- Arrange for a class trip to actually visit the nearest point on the map. In a class competition, the winning class gets to make the trip.

How to Initiate the Activity

Classroom Activity

Contact your principal and request permission to approach the teachers at your school. This activity is best suited for grades 4th and up. This activity can be incorporated into the regular curriculum. For instance, fifth grade classes normally study American History. It can also be used as part of a math class, physical education, mapping, or nutrition. If there is a teacher at your school who is an avid bicyclist or walking enthusiast, you might want to contact them directly. You can also make a presentation at a regular staff meeting. Safe Routes to Schools staff would be happy to assist you in approaching your principal or making a presentation to the staff. A letter to the teacher is included in this packet as well as a flyer that can given to teachers or posted in the staff room.



Volunteer Run Activity

Walk and Bike Across America can be simplified and run by the Team Leaders. Neil Cummins School in Corte Madera has set up it's own version of Walk and Bike Across America as a whole school activity. Every Wednesday at Neil Cummins is Walk and Roll to School day. Rather than adding up miles, each time the student walks, bikes, or takes the bus it counts as one mile. The kids check in and are given cards to track the number of students participating. They use those cards to vote on which direction they would like to travel on the map.

Tasmin Pessa, Team leader at Neil Cummins explained the contest to the students during motor skills and science classes, which are a natural tie-in to the curriculum. "I think a really neat hook is that I tell them that their actions really make a difference in our environment, their health and for the neighborhood. I think the last one probably is the most effective as they can see so clearly the impact of traffic around our school," said Tasmin. The principal reinforced this message during the morning message on the school PA.

The Wednesday Walk and Roll participation gradually increased over the course of the activity. On International Walk to School day, which was not promoted any differently than a normal Wednesday, they had 175 kids sign in. Then Walk and Bike Across America started. By November they had 204 kids sign in and had accumulated 704 miles. Students can visit the web sites accessed through the walk at home or the school computer labs.

Letter to Teacher



Dear Teacher,

We are pleased to announce a new classroom activity for Safe Routes to Schools called Walk and Bike Across America. This computer-based game combines geography, health and nutrition, physical education, math, computer science and social studies in one activity.

Walk and Bike Across America is a class project, in which the students track the number of miles they each travel (walking or biking) to and from school on a daily basis and add the class miles together weekly to travel across a computerized map of the United States. The students can conduct the activity as a class, or gather miles from the entire school (thus increasing the number of miles that they can travel).

There are 85 sites on the map including national parks, historical monuments and key agricultural sites providing nutritional information on fruits and vegetables. Each location has a pop up menu that links to an informational website allowing the class to virtually visit that place and learn about its historic and cultural information. The class can travel to as many sites as they choose within the number of miles they have collected. Once they have reached one site, they can use more miles to travel to another site.

Safe Routes to Schools provides each participating school with a wall map and downloadable Excel files to assist with tracking individual and class miles. A lesson plan is attached that provides more detailed information about the activity.

Thank you for considering this activity for your class. We look forward to working with you in the coming school year.

Yours truly,

STUDENT MILEAGE TRACKER

To be completed by each student for the duration of a week.

Name: _____

School: _____

Teacher: _____

Grade: _____

Week of: _____

Walk & Bike Across America website:
www.saferoutestoschools.org/walk

This form can be downloaded from the website as an Excel spreadsheet with built-in formulas to ease compilation of miles.

A. Length of trip in one direction (in miles)

Trips Walked or Biked this Week

- Write a 1 in the box below when you walked or biked to school or home that day.

Monday morning	
Monday afternoon	
Tuesday morning	
Tuesday afternoon	
Wednesday morning	
Wednesday afternoon	
Thursday morning	
Thursday afternoon	
Friday morning	
Friday afternoon	
Total number of trips	

B. Total number of trips this week

- Add up all the times you walked or biked in one direction this week.

C. Total miles walked or biked this week

- Multiply the Total Miles per trip (A) by the number of trips this week (B).

SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOLS PROGRAMS



Safes Routes to Schools is a project of the Transportation Authority of Marin.