



Walk and Bike Across America
A Classroom Contest for 2nd through 8th graders
Starts: the Week of October 2 (International Walk to School Day)
Ends: the Week of November 19 (Thanksgiving week)
(Schools have the option to run it longer)

Walk and Bike Across America is a great opportunity for kids to see just how far they can get by walking and biking. This is a classroom contest that promotes teamwork. Teachers can also use this opportunity as a geography and a science lesson.

How to Play

Children will be given a form to take home and fill out with their parents on a weekly basis. This form will allow them to keep track of the number of miles they travel walking and biking to school. Each week at a designated time, a member of the class takes all the forms and adds up the number of miles that they have all traveled during that week. Children who take the bus or carpool can contribute one bonus mile for every time they travel to school by either of those modes.

The class then takes a piece of string and measures out the total mileage using the key from the map as your guide. This string will be used to measure the miles on the map. They then decide where they want to go for that amount of miles (make sure you travel along roads and not “as the crow flies”).

Each week, the class travels a little farther. At the end of the contest period, the class that has traveled the farthest gets a special prize – this can be a pizza or ice cream party donated by a local business, or a special field trip. Each school can decide on the prize.

Using this contest as part of class lessons:

Geography: As an option, the class can look up each place they travel and find out something about it. They can also get on the Internet and try to contact the city or town. There may be a school in that town that can be contacted by the students, explaining that they have “traveled” to their school.

Science: The class can also keep track of the amount of pollution they have saved. Every time a car is started, pollutants are sent into the atmosphere. Every mile after that produces more pollution. Therefore, every mile a student travels without a car is saving that much pollution. At the end of the contest period you can show how much pollution was saved by the kids not driving to school.

The startup pollution for automobiles is:
1.5 grams of reactive organic compounds (ROGs)
11.6 grams of carbon monoxide (CO)
.8 grams of oxides of nitrogen (NOx)

Thereafter, the per mile pollution is:
.7 g per mile of ROGS
8.1 g per mile of CO
.9 g per mile of NOx