

Podcasting the Last Great Race

Developed by: Eric Smith

Discipline / Subject: Communications/Language Arts

Topic: Informational writing and communication skills

Grade Level: Middle Grades Special Education (also for grades 4-6)

Resources / References / Materials Teacher Needs:

- Iditarod website:
<http://www.iditarod.com/>
- Graphic organizers (found in the Appendix)
- Podcast capability (district server, such as First Class, or other podcasting website) and prerequisite assisted or self-training. It is very easy. Your best bet is to check with your building tech person. There are also several “How to Podcast” websites out there. One I perused was Jason Van Orden’s *How to Podcast* at:
<http://www.how-to-podcast-tutorial.com/index.htm>
- Familiarity with district privacy policy (Example: my students will be using aliases during the podcasts to protect their privacy).
- Webpage on which to post the finished podcasts (Check with your building or district technology specialist).

Lesson Summary: Students will gather information on the Iditarod, including: race history and rules, dogsledding and mushing vocabulary/facts, dog and musher biographies, checkpoint information and history, race updates and standings, and daily weather reports. They will then apply writing skills learned in previous lessons to create concise and informative news reports. Finally, students will work together to assemble and record Iditarod podcasts that will run from shortly before to shortly after the race.

Standard's Addressed: Minnesota Language Arts Standards

I. READING AND LITERATURE

C. Comprehension: The student will understand the meaning of texts using a variety of strategies and will demonstrate literal, interpretive, inferential and evaluative comprehension.

- Summarize and paraphrase main idea and supporting details.

II. WRITING

B. Elements of Composition: The student will engage in a writing process, with attention to context, organization, focus, quality of ideas and a purpose.

- Create informative reports, including gathering material, formulating ideas based on gathered material, organizing information, and editing for logical progression.

III. SPEAKING, LISTENING, AND VIEWING

A. Speaking and Listening: Students will demonstrate understanding and communicate effectively through listening and speaking.

- Orally communicate information, opinions and ideas effectively to different audiences for a variety of purposes.

Learning Objectives:

1. Students will read and demonstrate comprehension of assigned informational text.
2. Students will gather, organize, and edit an informative report.
3. Students will effectively communicate information through a podcast.

Assessment:

1. Students accurately summarize main idea and supporting details of an assigned Iditarod text using Reporter Form graphic organizer.
2. Students research and create an informative report on Iditarod and dogsledding facts, and musher biographies.
3. Using completed work from the above objectives, students create a summative script and communicate it clearly on the podcast.

Procedural Activities

1. **Early/mid-January:** Before students begin researching information for the Iditarod, they will be taught how to gather and organize information into a newspaper format. My students will begin learning how to do this in early January to ensure they have plenty of time to practice these skills. The following are two great sources that can be used to frame or supplement these lessons:
ReadWriteThink: Creating a Classroom Newspaper:
http://www.readwritethink.org/lessons/lesson_view.asp?id=249

ReadWriteThink Printing Press:
http://interactives.mped.org/view_interactive.aspx?id=110&title=
2. **Late January/early February:** Students are shown around the Iditarod website. Let them explore the different pages on their own, and specifically show them such features as the Interactive Trail Map, Iditarod Tracker, and StormReady Weather Center. Students then choose two mushers they will focus on during the Iditarod. They will use the Iditarod website and musher's individual webpage (if available) to gather information. Students are then asked to create a short biography on each musher using the *Musher Biography Report* (see Appendix). As an extension activity, my students will create PowerPoint presentations on one of their mushers and share these with the class. Students will begin finding their information on the following Iditarod website page:
<http://www.iditarod.com/race/musherlisting.html>
3. **First/second weeks of February:** Working in pairs, students are assigned a few paragraphs or a section from each of the following Iditarod website information pages. Using reporter's graphic organizers, students will summarize the main points and create a final draft that will be used in the pre-race broadcasts. The sections, organizer needed (found in Appendix), and links are as follows:
 - a. **Days 1-2:** Iditarod history (*History Report*):
<http://www.iditarod.com/learn/history.html>
 - b. **Days 3-4:** Iditarod rules (*Rule Report*):
<http://www.iditarod.com/mushers/iditarodrules.html>
 - c. **Day 5:** Iditarod trivia and facts (*Fact & Trivia Report*):
<http://www.iditarod.com/learn/trivia.html>
 - d. **Day 6:** Iditarod mushing terms & checkpoint info (*Terms Report, Checkpoint Report*):
<http://www.iditarod.com/learn/terminology.html>
<http://www.iditarod.com/race/> (Interactive Map link)
 - e. **Day 7:** Iditarod records and "flashback" (*Records Report, Flashback Report*):
<http://www.iditarod.com/learn/awards.html>

Procedural Activities (continued)

4. **Third week of February:** With help from the building tech person, show students how to record podcasts on district server (or other podcasting website) and how to organize the information they researched.
 - a. **Days 1-2:** In computer lab, learning aspects of recording podcasts.
 - b. **Days 3-5:** Students use the information they gathered and recorded on their graphic organizers to create plans for their podcasts. They will again use graphic organizers (see Appendix for *Pre-Race, Race, and Post-race Reports*) to organize how they wish to record the podcasts. While the teacher is there to provide guidance, students should be encouraged to collaborate on organizing and scripting the information for their podcasts.

5. **Last week of February (Ten school days before Iditarod starts):** Students begin broadcasting! Remind them that, during the pre-race reports, they will be educating people about the Iditarod, what it is, its history, etc. Thus, they should plan clear and logically sequenced podcasts.

6. **The Iditarod Begins!** Students continue broadcasting, but now they will shift to using the *Race Report* or similar format. Their daily race reports will include news and weather, musher placing updates, checkpoint information for the area at each point in the race, Iditarod records, Iditarod “flashbacks” (statistics from a specific past year), and any other fun information. Students continue with these reports every day throughout the race.

7. **Post-race reports:** Students get a chance to wrap up the Iditarod season with a look at the finishers, awards, race reflections, etc. Students can use the *Post-Race Report* as a guide.

Materials Students Need:

- Graphic organizers
- Pens and pencils
- Folders to organize their information

Technology Utilized to Enhance Learning:

- Computers
- Internet
- School server or podcasting website

Modifications for Special Learners/ Enrichment Opportunities:

This lesson was designed for my class of special learners and can be adapted for any group of students of any age. One of the great things about this lesson and the podcasts is that you can let students further explore any aspect of the Iditarod they may find more interesting, or conversely, you can scaffold or scale back areas where they may be having difficulties. Another extension activity would be to solicit questions from students and staff during the podcasting period, whether by email, question box, or in person. The class could then research and address a question during each podcast.

Additional Information:

I would love to hear from anyone who gives this a try! Please send me an email and let me know what works for your class, what doesn't, and any other thoughts you may have. My email address is:

essmith@isd194.k12.mn.us

Here's looking forward to a great race!

Musher Biography Report

Reporter(s): _____ Date Used: _____

Musher: _____

Hometown: _____

Family information:

Interesting facts:

Previous race history:

Dog information:

Other:

Iditarod History Report

Reporter(s): _____

Time period: _____ Date used: _____

- What happened and why?

Time period: _____ Date used: _____

- What happened and why?

Time period: _____ Date used: _____

- What happened and why?

Iditarod Rules Report

Reporter(s): _____

Rule Number _____

Date Used: _____

- What it says:

Rule Number _____

Date Used: _____

- What it says:

Rule Number _____

Date Used: _____

- What it says:

Rule Number _____

Date Used: _____

- What it says:

Iditarod Trivia & Facts Report

Reporter(s): _____

Interesting trivia or fact:

Date used: _____

Interesting trivia or fact:

Date used: _____

Interesting trivia or fact:

Date used: _____

Interesting trivia or fact:

Date used: _____

Iditarod Terms Report

Reporter(s): _____

Term: _____ Date Used: _____

- What it means:

Term: _____ Date Used: _____

- What it means:

Term: _____ Date Used: _____

- What it means:

Term: _____ Date Used: _____

- What it means:

Iditarod Checkpoint Report

Reporter(s): _____

Checkpoint Number and Name: _____

Date used: _____

- Interesting facts:

Checkpoint Number and Name: _____

Date used: _____

- Interesting facts:

Checkpoint Number and Name: _____

Date used: _____

- Interesting facts:

Musher Records Report

Reporter(s): _____

Record: _____ Date Used: _____

- Musher _____
- Time/Number _____
- Year _____

Record: _____ Date Used: _____

- Musher _____
- Time/Number _____
- Year _____

Record: _____ Date Used: _____

- Musher _____
- Time/Number _____
- Year _____

Record: _____ Date Used: _____

- Musher _____
- Time/Number _____
- Year _____

Iditarod "Flashback" Report

Reporter(s): _____

Year: _____

Date Used: _____

- Champion & Time:

- Rookie of the Year:

- Golden Harness Award:

Year: _____

Date Used: _____

- Champion & Time:

- Rookie of the Year:

- Golden Harness Award:

Year: _____

Date Used: _____

- Champion & Time:

- Rookie of the Year:

- Golden Harness Award:

Iditarod Pre-Race Report

Date: _____

Introduction Topic: _____ Reporter: _____

- Script notes or summary:

Iditarod History Topic: _____ Reporter: _____

- Script notes or summary:

Iditarod Rule Topic: _____ Reporter: _____

- Script notes or summary:

Iditarod Facts/Trivia Topic: _____ Reporter: _____

- Script notes or summary:

Other:

Iditarod Weather Report Form

Date: _____

Checkpoint	Cloud Cover	Hi Temp.	Low Temp.	Wind Speed	Wind Chill	Visibility

Notes: _____

Reporter _____

Iditarod Race Report

Date: _____

Introduction Topic: _____ Reporter: _____

- Script notes or summary:

Weather: (refer to Weather Report sheet) Reporter: _____

Checkpoint Info: (refer to Checkpoint report) Reporter: _____

News Headline: _____ Reporter: _____

- Script notes or summary:

Current Musher Placing: _____ Reporter: _____

- 1st place: _____
- 2nd place: _____
- 3rd place: _____
- 4th place: _____
- 5th place: _____

Iditarod Flashback: (refer to Flashback Report) Reporter: _____

Musher Bio: (refer to Musher Bio Report) Reporter: _____

Iditarod Record: (refer to Record Report) Reporter: _____

Iditarod Post-Race Report

Date: _____

Introduction Topic: _____ Reporter: _____

- Script notes or summary:

Weather in Nome: (refer to Weather Report sheet) Reporter: _____

News Headline: _____ Reporter: _____

- Script notes or summary:

Final Musher Placing: _____ Reporter: _____

- 1st place: _____
- 2nd place: _____
- 3rd place: _____
- 4th place: _____
- 5th place: _____
- 6th place: _____
- 7th place: _____
- 8th place: _____
- 9th place: _____
- 10th place: _____
- Others of note:

Awards: (students refer to Iditarod website for Finisher's Banquet award descriptions and winners)

Award: _____ Reporter: _____
Description: _____

Winner: _____

Award: _____ Reporter: _____
Description: _____

Winner: _____

Award: _____ Reporter: _____
Description: _____

Winner: _____

Award: _____ Reporter: _____
Description: _____

Winner: _____

Award: _____ Reporter: _____
Description: _____

Winner: _____

Award: _____ Reporter: _____

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Winner: _____

Award: _____ Reporter: _____

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Winner: _____

Award: _____ Reporter: _____

Description:

Winner: _____

Award: _____ Reporter: _____

Description:

Winner: _____