Drafting a Fantasy Iditarod Team!

Developed by: Jen Reiter, 2014 Iditarod Teacher on the Trail**™, Revised 08/2023**

Discipline / Subject: Science (adaptations of sled dogs) & Math (calculations)

Topic: Adaptations

Grade Level: 2-8; others with modification

Resources / References / Materials Teacher Needs:
List of appropriate Iditarod kennel sites
Denali Distance Learning – Science of Sled Dogs materials
https://www.nps.gov/teachers/classrooms/the-science-of-sled-dogs-distance-learning-program.htm

Lesson Summary:
Students will analyze the adaptations that sled dogs have which allow them to thrive in the Arctic. They will learn the parts of a dog team and the characteristics of the various team members in order to draft their own fantasy Iditarod team.

Standards Addressed: (Local, State, or National)
Common Core Math Standard (Grade 4):
Use the four operations with whole numbers to solve problems.

Next Generation Science Standard:

3. Interdependent Relationships in Ecosystems: Environmental Impacts on Organisms
3-LS4-3.   Construct an argument with evidence that in a particular habitat some organisms can survive well, some survive less well, and some cannot survive at all.

Learning Objectives:	**Assessment:**
1. TLW identify adaptations that sled dogs have that enable them to survive in harsh conditions 2. TLW identify the positions of dogs in a team 3. TLW identify desirable characteristics for dogs in each position	The students will use their knowledge to draft sixteen dogs for their Fantasy Iditarod Team.

Procedural Activities:

Day One: Adaptations of Sled Dogs
Note: If you can participate in the Denali Distance Learning Program The Science of Sled Dogs prior to this lesson, a lot of this can be review. If not, the program resources materials provided by Denali for the program give a great explanation of both the adaptations and the characteristics the kids will be looking for. Information on joining a program and the program materials can be found here:
https://www.nps.gov/teachers/classrooms/the-science-of-sled-dogs-distance-learning-program.htm

1. Mood Setting Video: http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=MKtVqn3jefA
2. Tell the students that today they will begin drafting their Fantasy Iditarod Team!
3. Introduce/Review the adaptations that they will be looking for in their dogs: tongue, feet, fur, circulation, tail (see Denali Science of Sled Dog materials for details).
4. Introduce/review the team positions and brainstorm a list of desired characteristics for each position. Example: Leader – smart, confident, enthusiastic; Swing – team player, smart, perceptive; Team – strong; Wheel – biggest on team, calm and steady, strong
5. Explain that the students will need to draft 16 dogs for their team (2 lead, 2 swing, 10 team, and 2 wheel). Sixteen (16) is the maximum number of dogs allowed at the start. Discuss different strategies for planning the team. Do you want some extra leaders in your team dogs just in case?
6. Introduce the scoring for the Fantasy Team: points are awarded for dogs that "complete" the race. "Completing" the race, in this case, means that the musher/kennel completes the race since it is often difficult to tell which dogs are returned. The place that the team finishes determines the number of points earned. Points are awarded for EACH dog. (See the scoring sheet for details) Students will also earn points for the musher they are officially tracking, but that is another lesson in a few days!

Day Two: Draft Your Team
1. Introduce the students to the kennels they will be choosing their dogs from. This takes a bit of planning on the teacher's part. Find a few kennels that do a good job of talking about their dogs on their websites for the students to explore. I had 8 mushers at 6 different kennels for my kids to explore. You could give them more or less. (See attached table for examples)
2. Distribute the Planning Sheet (attached) for the students to choose their dogs. This is also a good strategy discussion point. Do you pick a lot of dogs from one kennel in the hopes that kennel does well? Or do you spread dogs out so that if one musher scratches it doesn't have a huge impact on your scoring? Remind them to take into consideration the adaptations and characteristics they have discussed.
3. Teachers will collect the planning forms at the end and return them at the end of the race to total the scores!

Materials Students Need:
Internet access
Fantasy Iditarod Team Planning Sheet

Technology Utilized to Enhance Learning:
Iditarod Kennel websites (see attached for a starting point)
Distance Learning Skype opportunity through Denali National Park

Other Information:

Modifications for Special Learners/ Enrichment Opportunities
- The scoring can be as easy or difficult as you wish to make it depending on the math skills your students practice.
- Students can work in pairs or teams to draft their teams. It can also work as a cooperative learning group project with students taking on different roles in the project (researcher, scribe, etc).
- Once students have "drafted" their team, they can complete the paperwork to officially "register" for the race. Paperwork for this can be found on the official Iditarod website. We complete the Application Form: Race Application and the Microchip Form But, there are several other forms that could be used in the "Race Center" "2024 Musher Information" section of the website. An interesting discussion to have is why there are so many forms and what the purposes behind them are. Is it for safety?   For whom? Is this something the mushers casually decide to do?

Additional Information

Below is a list of kennels and mushers in this year's race that are examples for this assignment, but they are not the ONLY mushers you could use. You can find links to all of this year's mushers' websites in their biographies on the Iditarod website: https://iditarod.com/race/2024/mushers/

Musher	Kennel	Website	Comments
Deeter, Jeff	Black Spruce Dogsledding	https://blacksprucedogsledding.com/meet-the-dogs/	Both Jeff and KattiJo have run the Iditarod.
Hall, Matt	Smokin' Ace Kennels	http://www.smokinacekennels.org/smokin-ace-athletes	Click on each picture for information.
Hennessey, Anna	Anna in Alaska	https://www.annainalaska.net/	Trains at Shameless Huskies Kennels.
Otto, Amanda	Husky Homestead	http://www.huskyhomestead.com	Trains with Jeff King.
Ryan, Redington	Redington Mushing	http://www.redingtonmushing.com	2023 Iditarod Champion
Sass, Brent	Wild and Free Mushing	https://wildandfreealaska.com/the-team/	2022 Iditarod Champion

Fantasy Team Scoring

- o For EACH Dog (technically, 160 points possible):
    - Kennel/Musher finishes in place 60-69 = 1 point
    - Kennel/Musher finishes in place 50-59 = 2 points
    - Kennel/Musher finishes in place 40-49 = 3 points
    - Kennel/Musher finishes in place 30-39 = 4 points
    - Kennel/Musher finishes in place 20-29 = 5 points
    - Kennel/Musher finishes in place 10-19 = 6 points
    - Kennel/Musher finishes in place 4-9 = 7 points
    - Kennel/Musher finishes in third place = 8 points
    - Kennel/Musher finishes in second place = 9 points
    - Kennel/Musher finishes in first place = 10 points

For chosen Musher, points above times 5

Kennel Codes

Nathan Schroeder Mushing – NSM
SP Kennels – SPK
Wild and Free Mushing – WFM
Osmar Racing and Tours – ORT
Dallas Seavey Racing – DSR
17th Dog Kennel – 17DK

Musher – Nathan Schroeder (NS)
Mushers –Aliy Zirkle (AZ) and Allen Moore (AM)
Musher – Brent Sass (BS)
Musher – Monica Zappa (MZ)
Musher – Dallas Seavey (DS)
Musher – Matt Failor (MF)

Microchip Code

2016 – Kennel Code – Musher Initials

Example: Monica Zappa's Dweezil would be coded: 2016-ORT-MZ

Name: _____ Date: _____

Fantasy Iditarod Team Planning Sheet

Position #	Position	Name	Kennel Code	Musher	Age	Sex	Reason Chosen	Points Awarded
1	Lead							
2	Lead							
3	Swing							
4	Swing							
5	Team							
6	Team							
7	Team							
8	Team							
9	Team							
10	Team							

11	Team							
12	Team							
13	Team							
14	Team							
15	Wheel							
16	Wheel							