

Travel Diary

Subject: Language Arts, Health



OBJECTIVES:

- Students will understand how they can substitute walking and bicycling for car trips.
- Students will analyze the benefits of walking and bicycling instead of driving by writing a paragraph about their experiences.



MATERIALS:

- Travel diary handout
- Student homework handout



SETTING: indoors



ESTIMATED TIME:

Each of the three parts takes approximately 30 minutes.



VOCABULARY:

- Transportation, barriers



ACTIVITY SOURCE

Transportation Authority of Marin's Safe Routes to School program



OVERVIEW:

This lesson helps students to make healthy choices early in life. The students keep track of their trips for a week and how they get there. They then discuss the many other options available and are then challenged to change some of those trips to "active" trips by walking and biking, or even transit and carpooling. They then keep track for another week and see how many trips they were able to change.

BACKGROUND:

Private cars have become an integral part of American life and lie at the very heart of the American Dream of comfort, convenience and freedom of movement. It is not realistic to imagine that cars are going to disappear anytime soon. We live in an environment designed for automobiles. Children often cannot navigate their neighborhoods because of the hazards of traffic, and often rely on their parents to be driven many places.

Today's youth between the ages of 5-15 do not walk or ride their bicycles as much as they once did. 30 years ago 60% of children walked or rode bikes to get to school. Today the national average is 13%.

Walking and bicycling places is an easy way to build in exercise into our everyday routines. Almost one-half of all car trips taken in this country are under three miles, and one-third are under a mile. These trips could easily be substituted with walking or bicycling. *Marin County Safe Routes to Schools, Travel Diary*

LESSON SET-UP:

Photocopy the following:

- Letter to parents
- Homework ("How my parents got to school")
- Two copies for each student of the Travel Diary

STATE STANDARDS

Language Arts:

2.1: Writing Applications (Genres and their Characteristics)

Write narratives;

B. Relate ideas, observations, or recollections of an event or experience.

B. Provide a context to enable the reader to imagine the world of the event or experience.

Math:

1.2: Order and compare whole numbers and decimals to two number places.

Travel Diary

PART I (first week):

1. With a blank black board or large sheet of paper, ask the students to brainstorm as many possible “ways to get around.” Answers should include walking, bicycling, skateboard, trains, cars, etc.
 - After you have created this list, go over each one and get an informal show of hands of who has experienced that form of transportation.
2. Pass out the Travel Diary forms and explain to the students that for the next week they will be keeping track and recording the various forms of transportation they use to and from schools, to after-school activities, meet with friends, etc. Explain how the form is to be filled out, giving the necessary information for each trip made.
3. Decide as a class (or you as a teacher decide beforehand) how they will be filling out their Travel Diary. Some suggestions:
 - Students fill out their travel diaries as part of their daily journal writing;
 - Do them orally as a class for a few minutes each day;
 - Students fill them out each day in pairs; or
 - Students fill them out on their own time.
4. The second part of their homework assignment is to ask their parents and/or grandparents how they used to get around when they were in 4th grade. Again the question should include to and from school, shopping trips, play dates, etc. The students should write the responses down on a sheet of paper and bring with them to class for the session next week.
 - You could use this as an opportunity to teach about adding up decimals.

PART II (second week):

1. Have the students get out their Travel Diaries from the previous week and get a flavor through a show of hands as to:
 - How many found that most trips were by car?
 - How many people biked places?
 - Did anyone walk? Bus? Carpool?
2. Ask for a show of hands to see how many people found that their parents walked to school. Took a bus? Rode a bike? Were driven by their parents? Ask for volunteers to report back anything they found interesting or surprising in

what their parents or grandparents told them.

3. Have students review the trips listed on their previous week’s log and with regard to each trip made by car, have them note on their forms the degree of difficulty (easy moderate or hard) of replacing that particular form with walking, bicycling or taking public transit.
4. Pass out another batch of Transportation Logs and encourage/challenge them to see how many trips they could make by bike, walking or bus instead of by car.
 - It would be helpful to pass out a letter to their Parents at this time which explains this activity to them.

PART III (third week):

1. Have students get out their two diary forms from each of the two weeks and scan them or any changes (less/more trips by car? Additional trips walking and bicycling? Other changes?)
2. Have students write a narrative about their experiences from week one to week two in terms of the following questions. Or simply have a discussion about the following topics:
 - What were some positive changes that came from these experiences (I felt better after getting exercise, for example).
 - What were some barriers that prevented them from making changes (e.g., there is too much traffic to bike, or parents don’t allow to take public transit)?
 - When barriers are presented, brainstorm along with the students for possible solutions to help overcome the barriers to change.
3. If students have written paragraphs, ask some students to share them.

EXTENSION IDEAS

1. Have students keep this journal for a third and fourth week, to see if they continue to change their transportation habits.
2. Brainstorm a list of the costs associated with driving, including non-monetary ones. Costs include gas, maintenance, personal health, pollution and the stress of driving in traffic.

Student Name: _____

Travel Diary

Week of _____ (dates)

Day of Week	Travel starting place and destination	Mode of Transportation	Distance in miles OR how long did it take
EXAMPLE: <i>Monday</i>	EXAMPLE: <i>Home to school</i>	EXAMPLE: <i>Car</i>	EXAMPLE: <i>2.5 miles – 10 minutes</i>

Weekly Totals

MODE **NUMBER OF TRIPS** **NUMBER OF MILES (TOTAL)**

Bike _____

Walk _____

Bus _____

Carpool _____

Car _____

