

## DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 459 551

EC 308 738

TITLE Face of America Character Education Curriculum.  
INSTITUTION World T.E.A.M. Sports, Charlotte, NC.  
PUB DATE 2001-08-00  
NOTE 40p.; T.E.A.M. stands for The Exceptional Athlete Matters.  
AVAILABLE FROM World T.E.A.M. Sports, 2108 South Blvd., Suite 101,  
Charlotte, NC 28203. Tel: 704-370-6070; Fax: 704-370- 7750;  
e-mail: info@worldteamsports.org. For full text:  
<http://www.worldteamsports.org>.  
PUB TYPE Guides - Classroom - Teacher (052)  
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.  
DESCRIPTORS Achievement; Athletics; Attitudes toward Disabilities;  
Curriculum Development; \*Disabilities; Elementary Secondary  
Education; \*Health Education; \*Language Arts; Lesson Plans;  
\*Moral Development; National Standards; \*Stereotypes  
IDENTIFIERS \*Character Education

## ABSTRACT

This document presents a description of the Face of America Classroom Program, a character education program based on a mission to bridge and build communities through sports. Three language arts lesson plans are provided on three themes: achievement, stereotypes (especially of people with disabilities), and strategies for healthy minds and healthy bodies. The format of each lesson plan provides the lesson's central objective, skills promoted, estimated time required, a full activity, background information, links to the Face of America Web site for each activity, writing prompts, links to the lesson plan's development of character education, and links to national curriculum standards. Presented separately are suggestions for ways to modify each lesson plan for teachers of health, social studies, and physical education. (DB)

**FACE OF AMERICA  
CHARACTER EDUCATION CURRICULUM**

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# TEACHER OVERVIEW FOR FACE OF AMERICA CHARACTER EDUCATION CURRICULUM



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# FACE OF AMERICA



The Face of America began in May 2000 with a 22-day journey across the United States. Two amazing teams of diverse athletes started in separate cities, with a common goal to cycle across the country by trail and meet in an historic event under the St. Louis Gateway Arch. The teams represented a full-range of capabilities and life experiences — old and young, champion and novice, disabled and able-bodied riders from a variety of ethnic backgrounds.



Participants not only reflected the “faces” of America but they also wanted to change the face of America. What began with a symbolic journey to our country’s heartland continues, in part, through this curriculum. At the heart of this classroom program is the Face of America mission to bridge and build communities through sports, advancing the notion that our nation can become stronger and more united by working together, valuing diversity and embracing a common goal.

## FOCUS OF THE CURRICULUM



The Face of America Classroom Program provides you with extensive lesson plans on three themes: **achievement**, **stereotypes** and **strategies for healthy minds and healthy bodies**. Each lesson plan can serve as its own unit on a theme, while all three lesson plans can also work in unison with one another. Additionally, each of them emphasizes skill building while weaving in character education such as empathy, goal setting and interpersonal relationships in a way that complements specific goals and objectives for language arts classrooms, including writing, research and literary analysis. At the same time, the curriculum includes specific modifications on each theme for social studies teachers, health teachers and physical education teachers.



# FACETS OF THE CURRICULUM

★ ★ ★ In order to make the Face of America Classroom Program both easy and effective to use, each lesson plan follows the same format. You will quickly be able to determine the focus of each lesson plan and its appropriateness for your use. The format provides you with:

- the lesson plan's central objective
- the skills promoted and developed
- the estimated time required for the lesson plan
- a full activity in a transparency-ready form for use on an overhead or as a handout
- background information and suggestions to better prepare you for the lesson
- specific links to the Face of America Web site for use with the activity
- writing prompts modeled after standardized tests
- links to the lesson plan's development of character education
- links to national curriculum standards

Plus, as mentioned, each lesson plan provides teachers in other subject areas with specific suggestions on how to modify an activity to meet their goals and objectives.



## FINDING THE CURRICULUM

★ ★ ★ All of the materials for the Face of America Classroom Program are available for free at the World T.E.A.M. Sports Web site, located at <http://www.worldteamsports.org>. You can simply click on a lesson's title and objective to view it in its entirety. You will be able to print out all of the materials for closer inspection and for use in your classroom. Also, any references to specific material to be used in the lesson plan is just a click away. This includes primary source information from the riders on the Face of America journey, additional background information on a lesson plan's theme and links to national standards.

# FOCUS OF WORLD T.E.A.M. SPORTS



World T.E.A.M. (The Exceptional Athlete Matters) Sports (WTS) is a group of individuals, with and without disabilities, who, through once-in-a-lifetime-events, come together as partners to challenge convention, themselves and close-mindedness to improve the world. WTS believes the power of learning comes through participation: creative programs and events that provide opportunities for everyone, with each team member contributing his or her unique skills and talents. WTS' events demonstrate once you draw on these collective talents, a powerful team emerges. As disparate groups of people join together in sports, attitudes change and differences disappear, uniting humanity under one common vision. Through this process, we very quickly learn, we all ride the same road.

Since formally opening the doors in 1993, World T.E.A.M. Sports has become a leader in the international sports and recreation community as an innovative and dynamic sports charity. WTS teams have climbed mountains in Africa, bicycled across the Gobi Desert, run marathons across some of the world's most grueling terrain, covered the distance of Vietnam on bicycles and handcycles, and in WTS' most ambitious domestic event, Face of America, crossed the United States with two teams in a multi-sports event. WTS' last three global projects resulted in documentary films and the most recent, Vietnam Long Time Coming, won the 1998 Emmy Award for Best Program Achievement.



# FACE OF AMERICA CHARACTER EDUCATION CURRICULUM

**ACHIEVEMENT:** "It's not what happens to you in life, it's how you deal with it."



**Overview of the activity:** This lesson plan will lead students in a game that examines achievements they have made during their lifetime. They will use the Face of America map as a way to chart their achievements and the obstacles they had to overcome in order to achieve the things they did. After an examination of these achievements and obstacles, students will gain an understanding of and appreciation for their past accomplishments as they outline their aspirations for the future.





## Lesson Plan Background and Preparation

*Objective of Activity:* In the format of a game, students will work to understand what kinds of achievements they have made in their lives and to set goals for the future.

*Subject:* Language Arts

*Skills developed through this Activity:* self assessment in a positive frame of mind; analysis of cause and effect; prioritizing; working constructively in a team environment; setting realistic goals; problem solving.

*Time Required:* 90 minutes

*Materials:* large paper and markers for each group, a map of the U.S. and a printout of the Face of America route for each group

*Preparation:* To help you prepare for discussing disabilities and the disabled, you can go to <http://www.worldteamsports.org/> to review some frequently asked questions (FAQs) on this topic and access information on disabilities issues through a list of web sites. Students are likely to have some preconceived notions about disabilities and the disabled which may or may not be true. As students model their game on Face of America, they may have questions about disabilities and the disabled. You, the FAQs, and the activity can help students come to a better understanding of the topic.

*Links to character education:* Effective character education relies on students' being self-aware. This activity promotes self-assessment. The activity also has students working in groups, recognizing the value of perseverance and generally understanding the importance of setting goals.

### *Introductory Activity:*

Open the class by asking students what the word "achievement" means. Ask for examples of achievements. After the discussion, introduce students to Face of America, explaining that two amazing teams of diverse athletes started in separate cities, with a common goal to cycle across the country by trail and meet in an historic event under the St. Louis Gateway Arch. In particular, point out that the teams represented a full-range of capabilities and life experiences — old and young, champion and novice, disabled and able-bodied riders from a variety of ethnic backgrounds.

Then have students read both the online biographies and the online journal entries to familiarize themselves with at least some of the Face of America participants. Students will benefit from seeing examples of achievements made by others and appreciate the obstacles that one often needs to overcome. The team members' common relationship to the goal of athletic achievement will serve as an excellent example for the students to understand the importance of setting difficult (but attainable!) goals in their own lives.



# A GAME CALLED A-CHIEVE



What comes to mind when you think of achieving something? Do you think only about monumental feats like those of Vera Uliantzeff, who has overcome her battle with cancer and regularly runs marathons and bikes over 3,000 miles a year? Or do you think about people like Matthew Phillips, born with cerebral palsy, who established a foundation to raise funds for Alzheimer's research? These Face of America participants have taken small steps to accomplish great things. And as you can imagine, they've had to overcome some obstacles on the way. Though your achievements may not seem so amazing or your obstacles so great, you have undoubtedly achieved A LOT of things in your lifetime. Now it's time to look at them.

You and your group are going to trace some of your achievements from birth until the present as you trace the route that Face of America teams followed across the country on their way to making history and meeting in St. Louis.

*Are you game?*

**Step One:** Look at the map of the Face of America journey, and as a group, decide if you want to follow the route of the East Coast Team or the West Coast Team.

- ★ Each day of the journey will represent a "move" on each group member's part. And in order to move, each player must share an achievement that he/she accomplished. Each move should represent an achievement that occurred *after* the move before it.

**Step Two:** As a group, decide how big a time frame you want to cover. For example, do you want the achievements to cover your entire life? The past year? Something else?

- ★ The Face of America journey covered 22 days, so you'll have to cover that many achievements.

**Step Three:** Separately from one another, think about and write down some of your achievements. Also think about the obstacles you had to overcome to achieve them.

- ★ When you share each of your achievements during the game, each group member will ask you a question about it. These questions should provide them even more of an idea of why the achievement was important to you. For example: What else was going on in your life at the time? Was it easy or difficult to achieve?

**Step Four:** Play the game. When you present your achievement to the other players, tell them how you would rank your achievement against some of the other achievements. (For the first one, you will be unable to do this.) You should rank it in two ways: One is how you would have ranked it at the time, and the other is how you rank it now. And don't forget: Everyone should ask questions.

- ★ You'll see on the Face of America map that the participants went farther on some days than on others, but that doesn't mean that they accomplished less on those days. Similarly, your achievements and/or your obstacles may not seem like they were that great, but if you know better, say so!

**Step Five:** At the end of the game, write yourself a letter (you don't need to show it to anyone else). Choose a time in the future, anywhere from 6 months to 60 years, and write to your future self about what you hope you have achieved by that point in your life.



# ADDITIONAL SUGGESTIONS



*General suggestions:* Ideally, students should work in small teams in order to understand how the team members' individual experiences can be beneficial to the group. It is important that the game be inspiring but not competitive; i.e., you don't want it to be looked at in terms of who has accomplished more valuable things in their lives.

And in order to help students stay away from being competitive, it is an opportunity to talk about the relative nature of achievement. That is, what may seem like a huge accomplishment for some may seem like no big deal to others. That does not mean, however, that it is not an achievement. Grades can be a way to introduce that idea to students. For some students, a "B" is a cause for celebration, while for others it causes crisis.

Finally, the letter to self is an excellent mini activity, especially if you can mail it to students sometime in the future. For that to work, though, students will have to write to their future selves in six months or a year — the length of time until you mail it to them.

*Extensions of the Activity:* Students can analyze the number and kinds of achievements they made at different points in their lives. Students can create visual images to illustrate various achievements, perhaps using the images to make a comic strip of their progress. They can interview family members about things that they achieved in their lives that they may not remember. Finally, students can find out about someone who has accomplished something that is relevant to a goal the student hopes to accomplish. Similarly, they can learn about the accomplishments that a person with disabilities has made in his/her life.

*Literary Analysis:* Students can use the game they create to analyze the achievements of literary characters. Similarly, students can look at achievements of specific authors. Or, if you are reading biographies, they can use the information in a biography to play the game.



# NCTE AND IRA STANDARDS FOR THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

1. Students read a wide range of print and nonprint texts to build an understanding of texts, of themselves, and of the cultures of the United States and the world; to acquire new information; to respond to the needs and demands of society and the workplace; and for personal fulfillment. Among these texts are fiction and nonfiction, classic and contemporary works.
3. Students apply a wide range of strategies to comprehend, interpret, evaluate, and appreciate texts. They draw on their prior experience, their interactions with other readers and writers, their knowledge of word meaning and of other texts, their word identification strategies, and their understanding of textual features (e.g., sound-letter correspondence, sentence structure, context, graphics).
4. Students adjust their use of spoken, written, and visual language (e.g., conventions, style, vocabulary) to communicate effectively with a variety of audiences and for different purposes.
5. Students employ a wide range of strategies as they write and use different writing process elements appropriately to communicate with different audiences for a variety of purposes.
6. Students apply knowledge of language structure, language conventions (e.g., spelling and punctuation), media techniques, figurative language, and genre to create, critique, and discuss print and nonprint texts.
7. Students conduct research on issues and interests by generating ideas and questions, and by posing problems. They gather, evaluate, and synthesize data from a variety of sources (e.g., print and nonprint texts, artifacts, people) to communicate their discoveries in ways that suit their purpose and audience.
9. Students develop an understanding of and respect for diversity in language use, patterns, and dialects across cultures, ethnic groups, geographic regions, and social roles.
11. Students participate as knowledgeable, reflective, creative, and critical members of a variety of literacy communities.
12. Students use spoken, written, and visual language to accomplish their own purposes (e.g., for learning, enjoyment, persuasion, and the exchange of information).

## McREL Language Arts Standards and Benchmarks

### Writing

- Standard 1:* Uses the general skills and strategies of the writing process  
1.1, 1.5, 1.8 – 1.11, 1.14
- Standard 2:* Uses the stylistic and rhetorical aspects of writing  
2.1 – 2.4
- Standard 3:* Uses grammatical and mechanical conventions in written compositions  
3.1 - 3.12
- Standard 4:* Gathers and uses information for research purposes  
4.1

### Reading

- Standard 5:* Uses the general skills and strategies of the reading process  
5.4 – 5.6
- Standard 6:* Uses reading skills and strategies to understand and interpret a variety of literary texts  
6.1, 6.7 – 6.9, 6.11
- Standard 7:* Uses reading skills and strategies to understand and interpret a variety of informational texts  
7.1 – 7.7

### Listening and Speaking

- Standard 8:* Uses listening and speaking strategies for different purposes  
8.1 – 8.8, 8.10

### Media

- Standard 10:* Understands the characteristics and components of the media  
10.2, 10.6

# FACE OF AMERICA CHARACTER EDUCATION CURRICULUM STRATEGIES: Healthy minds, healthy bodies



**Overview of the activity:** In groups, students will examine some of their rituals or procedures that promote physical and/or emotional well-being. They may include stretching before working out, training in a sport, meditating or simpler day-to-day routines like walking, climbing stairs or writing in a diary. They will then choose one ritual and break it down in detail as if they were going to teach someone with different abilities or knowledge how to do this activity — it might be a person with a disability, an able-bodied person, a younger sibling, a literary character or a person from another place.



## ★ ★ ★ Lesson Plan Background and Preparation

*Objective of activity:* Students will work in groups to analyze what kinds of things people do to increase/maintain health. In the end, students will figure out how they would teach a health procedure to someone else.

*Subject:* Language Arts

*Time Required:* 90 minutes

*Materials Required:* large paper and markers for each group

*Preparation:* To help you prepare for discussing disabilities and the disabled, you can go to <http://www.worldteamsports.org/> to review some frequently asked questions (FAQs) on this topic and access information on disabilities issues through a list of web sites. Students are likely to have some preconceived notions about disabilities and the disabled which may or may not be true. By reviewing this (and by having your students engage in the activity), you can help dispel some of the misconceptions. And important to this activity is to help distinguish that having a disability *does not* equate to being unhealthy.

*Skills developed through activity:* analysis of cause/effect relationships; compare contrast; prioritizing; analysis of audience; problem solving; working in the abstract; explanatory/descriptive writing/speaking.

*Links to character education:* Students will look closely at cause and effect relationships, as well as payoff for hard work. Understanding these elements is key to setting goals, and setting goals is a key component of character education.

*Introductory activity:* Have students read the journal entries from Face of America participants. By reading thoughts from the team, students will gain an understanding of the accessibility of good health, regardless of one's physical conditions. Students will be motivated by the endurance of team members and be encouraged to reevaluate their thoughts on what it means to be strong and healthy. Overall, through reading the reflections of Face of America participants, students will better recognize the importance of reflecting on their own health habits. And by having students explore these reflections, you will provide a natural launching pad for their reflections on their own health habits/procedures.

### *Opening exercise*

As a class, have students brainstorm some of the things that they do that promote fitness. Chances are that they'll start off with some of the obvious forms of exercise like running or playing a sport. However, on their own or with your guidance, they can come to realize that there are things they do in the course of a day which also promote fitness.

Additionally, you should use the opportunity to talk about some of the things that students eat that promote or harm their health. And during the discussion, it is probably a good idea to distinguish between "diet — what one eats" and "diet — what one goes on in order to lose weight."



# STRATEGIES: What are some of yours?



*Eat your greens... Brush your teeth after eating sweets... Stretch before you exercise... Exercise regularly... Take the stairs instead of the escalator...*

We have been learning about health all our lives. Health is not just important to “nagging” mothers or barking PE coaches — maintaining health is important to all of us. In fact, many of us do things that keep us healthy or make us better. At the same time, many of us realize that we could probably be doing more to be healthy.

Regardless of what you do (or don't do), it's probably not the same as what your friends do or what other family members do. We enjoy different things, and we have different needs. As a result, we have our own unique health strategies and procedures.

Face of America demonstrates how some very determined people have health habits that many others would envy. How many of us could bike across half of the country, much less use a handcycle or a wheelchair to do it? Though their strategies for staying healthy may be different from our own, we can still learn a lot from them. The same can be said of you — there are some things that you can teach others. What are your strategies? Let's find out.

## **Listing them out ...**

On your own, make a list of the kinds of things you do that help you to be healthy — these can be things that make you physically healthy, mentally healthy or both. (After all, there's usually a connection, right?) They can be very ordinary things or extraordinary things, athletic activities or mental activities. What about foods you have learned to prepare? Are you taking any classes that teach you things that are good for your mind or body?

## **Narrowing in ...**

Share your list of strategies and procedures with your group. If any items on your list are confusing to others, explain them briefly. Each group member should then choose one item from the list and tell two reasons why they think it is a strategy or procedure that is worth detailing. Vote based on the sales pitch made by your group members.

## **What do you really do?**

There is now at least one representative in a group who will know how to do the activity at hand. The job of the group is to figure out how to draw out all the details so that you could describe it to anyone. For now, focus on one audience member and decide for whom you would like to create your description. Think about teaching a sibling, an alien or a person with different abilities from your own.

## **Sloooowly**

Act out your activity in slow motion. First do it alone and then ask the others to imitate you. The group should ask the demonstrator questions to make sure it's being done correctly. Consider the following questions and have the note taker detail all relevant information:

- ★ When do you do this activity?
- ★ How does it feel? How do you know when you are doing it right?
- ★ What are the various parts of the body that are used during and/or benefit from this activity? Why? How?
- ★ What might limit someone from doing this? Can you think of alternative ways of doing it?

## **(De)scribe it**

Together, break the activity down into a list of steps — as many steps as you can think of. Decide how you'd explain these steps to someone else. How would you do it in person? What if you could use only words and pictures?



# STRATEGIES: ALTERNATIVE SUGGESTIONS



*Alternative plan:* If you do not have enough time to develop this activity fully, it can be done with an entire class. You will lead the class in picking one strategy to teach to someone else. Together, you and your students can decide on the audience and on how to teach the strategy to that audience. By leading the activity from start to finish, you will ensure that students stay on task, which should mean that the activity can be completed in less time.

*Extensions of the activity:* You can use this activity as an opportunity to use video equipment and film a lesson on the health strategy/procedure. Students can act as though they're creating an educational public service announcement/commercial. Even doing the activity in this way, students should figure out their audience. Or, absent access to video equipment, students may create a storyboard or instruction manual to illustrate their strategy. Additionally, you might have students interview someone who is an expert on health issues — for instance, a PE coach, a parent who likes to cook, a guidance counselor — about strategies that they recommend.

*Writing Prompt:* Cindy Stefanko, of the Face of America ride, states: "Athletics is an avenue to feeling capable, talented and motivated. Disabled or not, many people lack the confidence for these qualities. I hope to be a part of bringing this side of the individual out so that they might see the world through a whole different view. When cancer struck me at age 17, I had many hardships to face and difficulties to overcome. My involvement in athletics was my guide to survival through my diagnosis." Is there something like athletics in your life, or the life of someone you know, that has this kind of power? Explain.

*Literary Analysis:* The "audience" for the explanation can be a literary character. What kind of special/additional information would the literary character need? That is, what about his/her setting (time and place) would affect his/her understanding of the strategy/procedure?



1. Students read a wide range of print and nonprint texts to build an understanding of texts, of themselves, and of the cultures of the United States and the world; to acquire new information; to respond to the needs and demands of society and the workplace; and for personal fulfillment. Among these texts are fiction and nonfiction, classic and contemporary works.
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- Standard 3:* Uses grammatical and mechanical conventions in written compositions  
3.2 - 3.7
- Standard 4:* Gathers and uses information for research purposes  
4.1

### Reading

- Standard 5:* Uses the general skills and strategies of the reading process  
5.1, 5.4 - 5.6
- Standard 6:* Uses reading skills and strategies to understand and interpret a variety of literary texts  
6.1, 6.7 - 6.9, 6.11
- Standard 7:* Uses reading skills and strategies to understand and interpret a variety of informational texts  
7.1 - 7.7

### Listening and Speaking

- Standard 8:* Uses listening and speaking strategies for different purposes  
8.1 - 8.8, 8.11

# FACE OF AMERICA CHARACTER EDUCATION CURRICULUM

## STEREOTYPES: Making space for people with disabilities



**Overview of the activity:** Students will analyze stereotypes in the media and pop culture, particularly how media stereotypes of individuals with disabilities affect people's views of those with disabilities. Students will then be assigned to work in groups to "write in" a person with a disability to one of their favorite shows. In order to do this, students will need to learn about at least one Face of America participant, to give a general description of the show and figure out what kind of non-stereotypical character the person will play. Additionally, students will have to analyze how having a character with a disability would affect the other characters on the show.

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## ★ ★ ★ Lesson Plan Background and Preparation

*Objective of activity:* Students will analyze stereotypes in the media, particularly television and create an alternative version of a show (or work of literature), changing it to include a person with disabilities.

*Subject:* Language Arts

*Skills developed through this activity:* Students will analyze cause and effect relationships by analyzing commercial media and its effects; develop skills of empathy by having a better understanding of people who may be different from themselves; learn about representations of people with disabilities; increase their knowledge of how people interrelate; develop writing skills.

*Time Required:* 90 minutes

*Materials Required:* Blackboard or large paper and marker, extra paper, access to the Internet/printouts from the Internet

*Preparation:* To help you prepare for discussing disabilities and the disabled, you can go to <http://www.worldteamsports.org/> to review some frequently asked questions (FAQs) on this topic and access information on disabilities issues through a list of web sites. Students are likely to have some preconceived notions about disabilities and the disabled which may or may not be true. By reviewing this (and by having your students engage in the activity), you can help dispel some of the misconceptions.

*Links to character education:* The focus of this activity — to develop skills of empathy and to analyze stereotypes — is a key to character education. This activity in particular gives students the opportunity to work in a group atmosphere, part of which will introduce students to different perspectives and views of stereotypes.

*Introductory activity:* Have students learn about at least one of the Face of America participants (online or on printouts) via their bios and their online diaries. Through this process, students will benefit from becoming more familiar with people who may be different from themselves. They will see these people in a non-stereotypical way and begin to picture what it means to carry these more complex perceptions of people into their own lives. In reading more on the thoughts of team members, students can also learn about the important relationships between people and about the human need to rely on each other for help from time to time.

*Warm up activity (20 minutes):*

Ask students where they get their information — any kind of information. List answers on the board. (Chances are good that they will list television as an important source of information.)

Ask students to pretend that they are aliens coming from another planet and they don't know anything about the United States or the people here except what they have seen on television.

★ What are general impressions of what we are like/how we live?

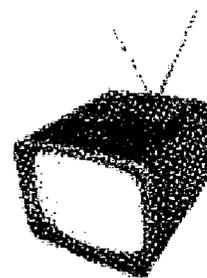
After a short discussion of TV's misperceptions, turn the questions to TV's portrayal of those with disabilities.

★ How does TV portray people with disabilities?

★ How does this portrayal differ with that of what they learned from reading about Face of America?

★ Is TV's portrayal fair?

Finally, discuss the meaning of the word *stereotype* with students.

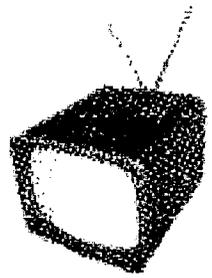


# TELEVISION UPDATE!



How often do you watch television and say: "These people are not like the people I know"? And have you said, "I can make a better show than this"? Now, here's your chance!

You are the producers and you are being asked to make improvements on a show you already know and like. Hey, everything could use a little touch up, right? You will improve your show by including a real person in it. This person may not look like the typical movie star, but he or she has accomplished amazing things and is a great role model for viewers. Your ideas are sure to win you an Emmy Award!



## What's your show?

Your group should brainstorm a list of up to ten favorite shows. After reviewing the list, each of you should nominate your top choice and give two reasons why this show would be good to work with. Then, based on the sales pitches you have heard, each of you should vote to narrow the choice down to one show.

## Pin it down

Together, you should agree on a short description of the show. This is like a topic sentence in a paragraph and should give people an idea of the overall theme that the show deals with. For instance, you might say that the *X-Files* deals with two FBI agents' quest to discover the truth about alien life.

## Introducing...

In order for your new character to fit into the show you have chosen, you need to understand the format of the show as it is. Make a list of the main characters. Name at least two things that you know about them from watching the show. For instance, in *Friends*, Ross is a paleontologist who has been married three times.

## Casting

From the list below, choose which person you'd like to place in the show you have chosen. You'll need to fictionalize them to some extent because this may be all the information you have, but try not to let stereotypes sneak into your story. Read their bios online and then vote for your favorite. In the process, you can discuss the portrayal of Stevie on *Malcolm in the Middle* — he uses a wheelchair. Do you think the show does a good job in making him seem real?

★ Sidiki Conde

★ Matthew Phillips

★ Erik Weihenmayer

★ Sarah Billmeier

★ My Lien Nguyen

★ Amerson Dayea

★ Sarah Will

★ Aktanay Kwazdran

## Writing them in

Imagine that you are bringing your new character into the show. Discuss how you would introduce the characters on the show to their new friend/neighbor. What would you tell them? This new person will need a role in the show. Will he or she become Rachel's boss on *Friends*? Will he or she teach her how to ski? What will the person do for a living? How will he or she interact with the other members of the show? How will the lives of the other members change?

## Script Department

Once you have agreed on the role of this character, write a scene in which your new character interacts with some of the regulars on the show. Share it with your classmates.

# ADDITIONAL SUGGESTIONS



## *Alternative plan:*

If students struggle with inserting a character into a show (or if the process requires too much time), as a class you can create a new show that features all or some of the Face of America participants. Perhaps the show mirrors their experiences on the 22-day journey across the country.

## *Extensions of the activity:*

Through the analysis of media, students are likely to conclude that the portrayal of people with disabilities is stereotypical. As a result, students can come up with a campaign using creative ideas to draw attention to this issue. Additionally, students may interview a person with abilities different from their own to learn that these stereotypes are often false.

## *Literary Analysis*

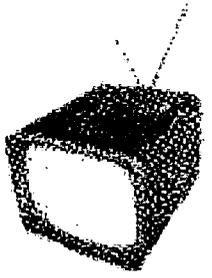
In addition to or instead of a TV show, you can have students insert or change a character in a work of literature. How would a new character affect the plot of a story? How would the other characters react? Or, if adding a new character is too difficult, students can add a new dimension, i.e., a disability to one of the existing characters.

## *Writing Prompt:*

Have students consider the following quotation from Molly Robertshaw, East Coast Team cyclist. "Each and every day that the team progresses, I am gradually becoming enlightened and increasingly aware of the fact that each of us are human spirits that deserve the same treatment no matter what container we come in." What does this mean? Have you had an experience where meeting new people changes your mind about an assumption you held? Do you agree with Molly that we all deserve the same treatment?

## *Post Activity Discussion Questions/Assessment:*

- Why are people with disabilities not well represented on TV?
- How could TV producers learn from Face of America about how to present characters more realistically? From your new show?
- What did you learn from Face of America?
- What did you learn from your experience in the activity?
- Did you have any stereotypes about those with disabilities before the activity?
- If your show were made, what do you think audience members would learn about some of the stereotypes they may have?



# NCTE AND IRA STANDARDS FOR THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

1. Students read a wide range of print and nonprint texts to build an understanding of texts, of themselves, and of the cultures of the United States and the world; to acquire new information; to respond to the needs and demands of society and the workplace; and for personal fulfillment. Among these texts are fiction and nonfiction, classic and contemporary works.
3. Students apply a wide range of strategies to comprehend, interpret, evaluate, and appreciate texts. They draw on their prior experience, their interactions with other readers and writers, their knowledge of word meaning and of other texts, their word identification strategies, and their understanding of textual features (e.g., sound-letter correspondence, sentence structure, context, graphics).
4. Students adjust their use of spoken, written, and visual language (e.g., conventions, style, vocabulary) to communicate effectively with a variety of audiences and for different purposes.
5. Students employ a wide range of strategies as they write and use different writing process elements appropriately to communicate with different audiences for a variety of purposes.
6. Students apply knowledge of language structure, language conventions (e.g., spelling and punctuation), media techniques, figurative language, and genre to create, critique, and discuss print and nonprint texts.
7. Students conduct research on issues and interests by generating ideas and questions, and by posing problems. They gather, evaluate, and synthesize data from a variety of sources (e.g., print and nonprint texts, artifacts, people) to communicate their discoveries in ways that suit their purpose and audience.
8. Students use a variety of technological and information resources (e.g., libraries, databases, computer networks, video) to gather and synthesize information and to create and communicate knowledge.
9. Students develop an understanding of and respect for diversity in language use, patterns, and dialects across cultures, ethnic groups, geographic regions, and social roles.
11. Students participate as knowledgeable, reflective, creative, and critical members of a variety of literacy communities.
12. Students use spoken, written, and visual language to accomplish their own purposes (e.g., for learning, enjoyment, persuasion, and the exchange of information).

## McREL Language Arts Standards and Benchmarks

### Writing

- Standard 1:* Uses the general skills and strategies of the writing process  
1.1, 1.4, 1.5, 1.7 - 1.9, 1.12
- Standard 2:* Uses the stylistic and rhetorical aspects of writing  
2.1 - 2.4
- Standard 3:* Uses grammatical and mechanical conventions in written compositions  
3.1 - 3.12
- Standard 4:* Gathers and uses information for research purposes  
4.1, 4.4 - 4.6

### Reading

- Standard 5:* Uses the general skills and strategies of the reading process  
5.1, 5.3 - 5.6
- Standard 6:* Uses reading skills and strategies to understand and interpret a variety of literary texts  
6.1 - 6.5, 6.7 - 6.11
- Standard 7:* Uses reading skills and strategies to understand and interpret a variety of informational texts  
7.1 - 7.7

### Listening and Speaking

- Standard 8:* Uses listening and speaking strategies for different purposes  
8.1 - 8.8, 8.10, 8.11

### Viewing

- Standard 9:* Uses viewing skills and strategies to understand and interpret visual media  
9.1 - 9.9

### Media

- Standard 10:* Understands the characteristics and components of the media  
10.1 - 10.3, 10.6, 10.7

# FACE OF AMERICA CHARACTER EDUCATION CURRICULUM LESSON PLAN MODIFICATIONS



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## ★ ★ ★ 1. Achievement — “It’s not what happens to you in life, it’s how you deal with it.”

*Objective of Activity:* Students will set specific health goals that apply to physical and emotional health, then they will keep track of their progress in a personal health log.

*Curriculum Standards/Skills:* analysis of cause/effect relationships; prioritizing goals and actions; self-reflection on goals and actions; compare/contrast; problem solving.

*Time Required:* 60 – 90 minutes for activity set up, Web site exploration, goal setting; time (in class or out of class) for daily/weekly log; 30 – 45 minutes for wrap up

*Background:* This activity is an opportunity for you to:

- connect good health as an achievement that requires goal setting
- link good health to both physical health and emotional/mental health
- distinguish between “diet” meaning “what one eats” and meaning “what one does to lose weight or maintain a certain weight”

This activity can be as broad or as narrow as you see fit. That is, it can look specifically at the many ways to exercise. These could include activities that are generally regarded as exercise — workout routines and/or sports practices. They should, however, include activities that are day-to-day that promote muscle and cardiovascular fitness and burn calories, e.g., walking up steps or doing family chores. Instead of exercise, your students can focus specifically on diet. Of course, they can also focus on both exercise and diet.

*Introduction:* As a class, read some of the Face of America participant bios ([www.worldteamsports.org](http://www.worldteamsports.org)), paying particular attention to their achievements. Then have students discuss the role that they think goal setting, physical and mental preparation and diet must have played in those achievements. After reading/discussing some of the bios have students read some of the journal entries, paying particular attention to participants’ reflections on their accomplishments and challenges. Before outlining the way in which you want students to focus their health logs, talk about the link between physical and emotional/mental health. Face of America helps demonstrate how people of various backgrounds and abilities have used sports to help build their esteem and their confidence, while helping them learn more about their own personal character.

*Suggestions:* You should begin by helping students set specific goals for themselves. Of course, these goals should relate to what you want the activity to emphasize. Then, help students set up a template/format for their logs. A log should state a student’s goal(s), and it should also include



- ★ ★ ★ things like: the time spent (exercising, preparing the food, etc.); the difficulty/ease of the activity; and the relationship to the original goal.

Your students will also benefit from a “wrap-up” session to share their experiences with achieving their goals. Students can talk about the ease or difficulty of reaching their goals, particularly whether or not it became easier as they went along.

*Post activity discussion questions/assessment:*

- Did you discover any activities that you were already doing that you hadn't realized promoted exercise?
- Did you find a relationship between physical health and emotional/mental health?
- How can achievements be relative — that is, why are some things easier to achieve for some people than they are for others?
- How important was it to have set a specific goal?
- Do you think you'll continue to keep a log?



## National Standards for Health Education

*Standard 1:* Students will comprehend concepts related to health promotion and disease prevention. Performance indicators for this standard center around identifying what good health is, recognizing health problems, and ways in which lifestyles, the environment, and public policies can promote health.

*Standard 3:* Students will demonstrate the ability to practice health-enhancing behaviors and reduce health risks. Performance indicators include identifying responsible and harmful behaviors, developing health-enhancing strategies and managing stress.

*Standard 4:* Students will analyze the influence of culture, media, technology, and other factors on health. Performance indicators are related to describing and analyzing how one's culture background, messages from media, technology, and one's friends influence health.

*Standard 6:* Students will demonstrate the ability to use goal-setting and decision making skills to enhance health. Performance indicators focus on setting reasonable and attainable goals and developing positive decision making skills.

*Standard 7:* Students will demonstrate the ability to advocate for personal, family and community health. Performance indicators relate to identifying community resources, accurately communicating health information and ideas, and working cooperatively to promote health.

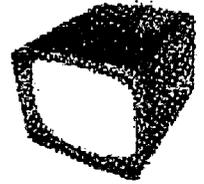
## MCREL Health Standards and Benchmarks

*Standard 3:* Understands the relationship of family to individual health 3.1

*Standard 7:* Knows how to maintain and promote personal health 7.2, 7.3



## 2. Stereotypes — Making space for people with disabilities



*Objective of Activity:* Through analyzing pop culture's (particularly television's) portrayal of health and the beauty associated with it, student groups will look at how pop culture perpetuates stereotypes associated with health/beauty and with having a disability. In the end, student groups will create two collages: one that uses pop culture's stereotypes of health/beauty, one of that uses images inspired by Face of America.

*Curriculum Standards/Skills:* analysis of cause/effect relationships; compare/contrast; brainstorming; working in groups; self-analysis; societal analysis.

*Time Required:* 60 – 90 minutes, including Web site exploration and presentation of ideas

*Background:* This activity is an opportunity for your students to look at the link between pop culture's stereotypes and their own expectations. Pop culture, particularly TV, is often filled with characters who fit certain stereotypes. (In fact, there is often a relationship between pop culture and the spreading of stereotypes.) The most obvious connection between stereotypes and health is in pop culture's portrayal of beauty. That is, there is often an accepted definition of beauty that is difficult for people to reach or maintain. This standard can affect how people eat and how they view themselves and others. There is a strong link between this high standard of beauty/health and physical and emotional health. However, the stereotypes also extend to what is physically and emotionally "normal." For example, are overweight men typically jovial, while overweight women are typically overbearing? Is it normal for men to be heavy, while not normal (or desirable) for women to be overweight?

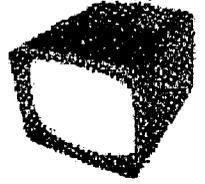
*Introduction:* Have students read about many of the Face of America participants, many of whom have a disability ([www.worldteamsports.org](http://www.worldteamsports.org)). By learning more about the participants, students may shatter many prevailing stereotypes, as they pertain to those with a disability, to what it means to be healthy and to what it means to be beautiful. As an introduction to the activity, discuss and analyze some of the stereotypes associated with people with disabilities. Then using the Web site, find the many examples that counter the stereotypes. This exercise should provide a natural bridge to talking about other stereotypes, particularly those associated with health and beauty.

*Suggestions:* As a class or in small groups, students should look at what some of the stereotypes are that exist in pop culture, particularly on TV. They should look at a number of characters who represent certain



stereotypes. What are the stereotypes? How are they stereotypes? Are there any characters who counter a stereotype?

Then, using magazines, newspapers, online photos and other images from pop culture, each group should put together two different collages. One collage should be the stereotypical view of healthy, beautiful and "normal." The other collage should illustrate the same ideas but in a much less stereotypical way. In the end, students should present their collages.



*Post activity discussion questions/assessment:*

- What is a stereotype? Where can you find them in pop culture?
- How does pop culture define beauty? health?
- How would Face of America participants define beauty? health?
- Why might pop culture definitions differ from those definitions offered by Face of America participants?
- What is a false stereotype associated with having a disability? How do you know it to be false?

### **National Standard for Health Education**

*Standard 4:* Students will analyze the influence of culture, media, technology, and other factors on health. Performance indicators are related to describing and analyzing how one's cultural background, messages from media, technology, and one's friends influence health.

### **MCREL Health Standards and Benchmarks**

*Standard 2:* Knows environmental and external factors that affect individual and community health 2.1, 2.2



### 3. Strategies — Healthy minds, healthy bodies

*Objective of Activity:* Students will work in groups to analyze what kinds of things we do to increase/maintain health. In the end, students will create a health manual or commercial to explain the health procedure.

*Curriculum Standards/Skills:* analysis of cause/effect relationships; compare contrast; prioritizing; analysis of audience; problem solving; working in the abstract; explanatory/descriptive writing/speaking.

*Time Required:* 90 minutes

*Background:* This activity is an opportunity for you to:

- link good health to both physical health and emotional/mental health
- reinforce the idea that having a disability does not equate to being unhealthy
- distinguish between “diet” meaning “what one eats” and meaning “what one does to lose weight or maintain a certain weight”

For this activity, students will examine some of their rituals or procedures that promote physical and/or emotional well-being. They may include playing a sport or having a hobby or daily activity that promotes exercise, stretching before working out, thinking about what to expect before engaging in an activity, reflecting on it afterwards, or preparing healthy meals.

*Introduction:* Have students read the bios and journal entries of Face of America participants ([www.worldteamsports.org](http://www.worldteamsports.org)). As a result, students will gain an understanding of the accessibility of good health, regardless of one’s physical conditions. Students will be motivated by the endurance of team members and be encouraged to reevaluate their thoughts on what it means to be strong and healthy. Overall, through reading these reflections, students will better recognize the importance of reflecting on their own health habits. And by having students explore these reflections, you will provide a natural launching pad for their reflecting on their own health habits/procedures.

*Suggestions:* Because students will choose one strategy and break it down in detail as if they were going to create a manual and/or a commercial on the procedure, you should discuss some of the different types of strategies/procedures for increasing and maintaining health. And in that discussion, you may want to talk about the ways in which health strategies/procedures can differ from one person to the next, depending on individual needs. (This idea will be reiterated when students share their own strategies.)

To complete the activity, students should brainstorm their own health

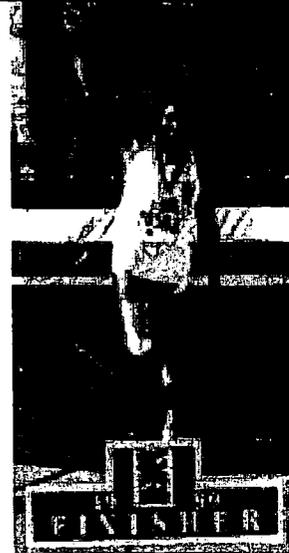




strategies, making sure to cover many different types, e.g., diet, physical activities and mental activities. Next, they should share all or some of these with their group. And then as a group, students should pick out one health strategy to break down into a step-by-step fashion. In the end, students should present these steps in a way that someone else could copy them.

*Post activity discussion questions/assessment:*

- How could others learn about being healthy from Face of America?
- How could others learn about being healthy from you?
- Why do some strategies work for some, but not for others? Give an example?
- How did you learn from others' strategies?



## National Standards for Health Education

*Standard 1:* Students will comprehend concepts related to health promotion and disease prevention. Performance indicators for this standard center around identifying what good health is, recognizing health problems, and ways in which lifestyles, the environment, the public policies can promote health.

*Standard 3:* Students will demonstrate the ability to practice health-enhancing behaviors and reduce health risks. Performance indicators include identifying responsible and harmful behaviors, developing health-enhancing strategies and managing stress.

*Standard 4:* Students will analyze the influence of culture, media, technology, and other factors on health. Performance indicators are related to describing and analyzing how one's culture, background, messages from media, technology, and one's friends influence health.

*Standard 6:* Students will demonstrate the ability to use goal-setting and decision making skills to enhance health. Performance indicators focus on setting reasonable and attainable goals and developing positive decision making skills.

## MCREL Health Standards and Benchmarks

*Standard 3:* Understands the relationship of family health to individual health 3.1

*Standard 6:* Understands essential concepts about nutrition and diet 6.1

*Standard 7:* Knows how to maintain and promote personal health 7.1-7.3



## 1. Achievement — “It’s not what happens to you in life, it’s how you deal with it.”

*Objective of Activity:* Students will examine how people who are important to your content area overcame obstacles. In the end, students will write from the perspective of someone from the setting that is important to your class.

*Curriculum Standards/Skills:* analysis of cause/effect relationships; compare/contrast; analysis of historic/geographic setting; analysis of priorities in a different setting; working in the abstract; working in groups.

*Time Required:* 60 – 90 minutes

*Background:* This activity can take two distinct directions — depending upon which is more appropriate to your content area. Students will have to imagine what it would be like in a geographic or historic setting, particularly as the setting would present obstacles to the people living there. It is also an activity that works well with either student groups or with individuals.

*Introduction:* Use information from the World T.E.A.M. Sports Web site ([www.worldteamsports.org](http://www.worldteamsports.org)) to model some of the achievements of many of the people who participated in it. In particular, the participant journals and bios demonstrate the way in which many of them were able to overcome some incredible obstacles in reaching their achievement. In exploring these journals and bios, you should also take the opportunity to discuss the way in which obstacles can differ from one another. That is, what may be an obstacle for some, isn’t necessarily an obstacle for others. Also, obstacles present different challenges for different people. This will serve as a good introduction to the way that obstacles are different in different settings — whether geographic or historic.

### *Suggestions:*

- For HISTORY classes, students will examine the setting and the people who are at the center of your class’s curriculum right now. Students can look at the overall setting and its people, or they can focus more specifically on a person and his/her setting. Students will look at how people overcame obstacles. History is full of people who have overcome great obstacles. (In fact, that is often why they are studied in history classes!) Students should write a diary-styled entry from the point of view of the historic figure or someone else from that time period. Students should write about what it was like to experience/witness the achievement of overcoming an obstacle and why it was such an achievement. Additionally, you can focus more specifically on how someone with a disability might have lived in such a time and place. What obstacles would they have had to overcome? (Be sure to talk about different disabilities.)





• For GEOGRAPHY classes, students will examine some of the obstacles that those who live in the place you are currently studying must overcome. Some of those obstacles may be identical to those that people in the US face, while others may be unique to the setting. This activity is a way for students to learn more about the people of a different culture and to recognize how people all over the world must work to overcome obstacles. Additionally, you can focus more specifically on some of the obstacles that someone with a disability might have to overcome in the setting. Be sure to talk about different disabilities. Have students write a journal entry as if they lived in this place, giving particular attention to overcoming obstacles.

*Post activity discussion questions/assessment:*

- How is overcoming obstacles a "universal" experience?
- How are obstacles different here than in the time/place we examined?
- How are they the same?
- What obstacles exist for individuals with disabilities?

## **Geography Standards and Benchmarks**

Environment and Society

*Standard 15:* Understands how physical systems affect human systems  
15.1, 15.2

Places and Regions

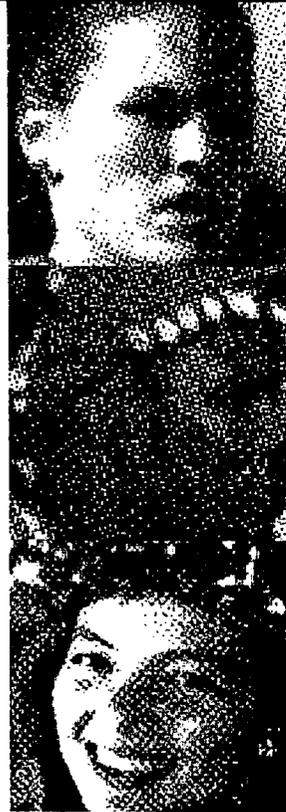
*Standard 4:* Understands the physical and human characteristics of place  
4.4

*Standard 6:* Understands that culture and experience influence people's perceptions of places and regions 6.3

## **Historical Understanding Standards and Benchmarks**

*Standard 1:* Understands and knows how to analyze chronological relationships and patterns 1.1, 1.4, 1.5

*Standard 2:* Understands the historical perspective 2.1





## 2. Stereotypes — Making space for people with disabilities

*Objective of Activity:* Students will "write in" a Face of America participant into the setting that is important to your class.

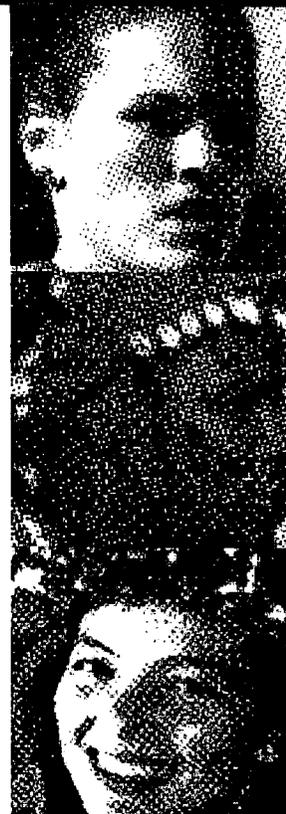
*Curriculum Standards/Skills:* analysis of cause/effect relationships; compare/contrast; brainstorming; working in groups; analysis of setting; working in the abstract.

*Time Required:* 60 – 90 minutes, including Web site exploration and presentation of ideas

*Background:* This activity is an abstract (but fun and interesting!) way to get students to analyze the people and the setting that is important to your class right now. And in that process, students will have to compare that historic/geographic setting and its people with their own setting. Plus, students often think of people of different settings in stereotypical ways. For example, the Masai in Africa do strange things to their lips, ears and necks; white Southerners during the Civil Rights Movement were all racist and against integration.

*Introduction:* Before beginning this activity, have students read participant bios and journal entries (found at [www.worldteamsports.org](http://www.worldteamsports.org)). You can use the information contained in them as a springboard to talking about stereotypes. (It is likely that students are aware of certain stereotypes as they apply to people who are disabled and/or people from different cultures.) The discussion of stereotypes can then move onto those that students associate with the people whom they are studying in class. And as you move in that direction, you'll be able to assess your students' understanding of the people and the setting that you want to focus on. As the class probes for stereotypes, you can gauge how much your students know.

*Suggestions:* Because of its abstract nature, this activity should be done as a class or in cooperative groups. However you decide to do it, students should work with the central question of how would a Face of America participant dress, talk, work, socialize in a different geographic/historic setting? Students should write a description for a number of the participants, modeled after the bios on the Web site. Students will likely have to use conjecture in order to place the participants in the setting because it's doubtful that they know (or can find) specific information on how someone with a disability was/is treated in the setting. Some of the easier areas for students to imagine are jobs. How would a disability affect a person's ability to perform some of the common jobs associated with that setting? Another area is transportation.





How would someone who is blind or someone who has no use of his/her legs get around? These questions will force students to think about the setting and its people in a very three-dimensional way.

*Post activity discussion questions/assessment:*

- What are some stereotypes that exist for people in the setting you've explored?
- Did thinking about adding someone to that setting force you to think differently about those people in that setting?
- How are obstacles for people with a disability different here and now than in the time/place you explored?

## **Geography Standards and Benchmarks**

### **Places and Regions**

*Standard 4:* Understands the physical and human characteristics of place  
4.1, 4.2, 4.6

*Standard 6:* Understands that culture and experience influence people's perceptions of places and regions 6.3

*Standard 15:* Understands how physical systems affect human systems  
15.1, 15.2

## **Historical Understanding Standards and Benchmarks**

*Standard 1:* Understands and knows how to analyze chronological relationships and patterns 1.1

*Standard 2:* Understands the historical perspective 2.1, 2.2, 2.6





## 3. Strategies — Healthy minds, healthy bodies

*Objective of Activity:* Students will write "A Day in the Life" entry that focuses on the diet and exercise of someone who is important to your content area. That is, it will be someone from a specific historic or geographic setting.

*Curriculum Standards/Skills:* analysis of cause/effect relationships; compare/contrast; explanatory/descriptive writing; analysis of historic/geographic setting; analysis of priorities in a different setting; working in the abstract; working in groups.

*Time Required:* 60 – 90 minutes

*Background:* In order to write about a day in the life of someone else, students will have to know what a typical day might consist of. This could be a day for someone (specific or general) in a different time period and maybe a different place. Or, it might be someone from a different culture and a different place. Students should at least know enough about some of the typical daily activities (that presumably promote exercise) and the diets of the people you choose to complete this activity.

*Introduction:* Have students read the online journal entries from some of the Face of America participants ([www.worldteamsports.org](http://www.worldteamsports.org)). By reading them, students will gain an understanding of the accessibility of good health, regardless of one's physical conditions. These aspects model the ability of humans to adapt to their situation. Often someone who has a disability cannot do things in the exact same way that an able-bodied person can. Understanding that ability to adapt is vital in understanding people who live in a different setting. How are they influenced by their environment and circumstances? In the end students will be more likely to understand how people throughout the world and throughout history have experienced the universal need to maintain their health. Students will see a connection between themselves and those in a different setting.

*Suggestions:* Before students write about a Day in the Life, have them list the things that they know about the setting and the people who live(d) there. In addition to their diet, what kinds of activities are typical? For example, are there daily activities that promote physical exertion and exercise? (Maybe the activity is not one that is/was considered exercise but is/was just part of day-to-day existence.) In some cases, it's important to include some activities/diets known to be harmful. This discussion is also an opportunity to talk about some of the differences among the people in the setting. Do the activities/diets differ between men and women? Young and old? Rich and poor? Ask students to explain why this is so. It is an excellent opportunity to assess your students' knowledge of the peo-





ple and the setting you choose.

Finally, have students write about a typical day from the perspective of someone living in that setting. Make sure that students realize that they should focus on those activities and foods that promote(d) and/or harm(ed) health. If possible, you can even assign students different profiles of the people (rich, poor, male, female) to use in their writing.

*Post activity discussion questions/assessment:*

- How is your person/Day in the Life different than the one you described? How is it similar?
- Do you think that people who live in your area are more active, less active or is it about the same as those who live(d) in the place you explored?
- Do you think that people who live in your area have a healthier diet, a less healthy diet or is it about the same as those who live(d) in the place you explored?



## **Geography Standards and Benchmarks**

Places and Regions

*Standard 4:* Understands the physical and human characteristics of place  
4.1, 4.2, 4.4

Environment and Society

*Standard 15:* Understands how physical systems affect human systems  
15.1, 15.2

## **Historical Understanding Standards and Benchmarks**

*Standard 1:* Understands and knows how to analyze chronological relationships and patterns 1.1, 1.5



## 1. Achievement — “It’s not what happens to you in life, it’s how you deal with it.”

*Objective of Activity:* Students will have to work together to cross an imaginary river with many physical obstacles to achieve their goal.

*Curriculum Standards/Skills:* problem solving; analysis of cause/effect relationships; working with others; prioritizing goals and actions; self-reflection on goals and actions; compare/contrast; recognizing different people’s different strengths.

*Time Required:* 30 - 60 minutes

*Background:* This activity has students cross an imaginary river without getting wet. This is an activity that you can do with the entire class. First set up two lines about 20 – 30 feet apart. These lines represent the river’s banks. Between the two lines at intervals that are the length of a long stride, place small boards that are about a foot long and a half-foot wide. (If you don’t have any boards, simply draw lines that represent the boards.) The boards are places in the river where students can step. Students must get the entire group from one side of the river to the other without ever touching the ground anywhere except on the banks or on the boards. This is an activity where those that can jump the farthest don’t necessarily add the most to the success of the team. The activity requires more problem solving ability than physical ability.

*Introduction:* If possible, use the Web site ([www.worldteamsports.org](http://www.worldteamsports.org)) to read the daily logs and journals of many of the participants in Face of America. Many of the participants, such as June Solomon, Jose Ramos and Pauline Chiou reflect on their aspirations for what they hope to achieve, as well as those achievements they are able to accomplish. Within those portions of the Web site, students will be able to find some specific mention of working with others, the value of having someone lift you up when you’re down, and the strength found in lifting someone up. Plus, the Web site can give you ideas about some situations to try to simulate in your class. For instance, how would they cross the river if they had use of only one leg? Of neither leg?

*Suggestions:* To make this activity even more effective, you can add some elements each time to make it more difficult (and to more closely simulate some of the obstacles that some of the participants in Face of America must overcome.) You can increase the distance between the boards and/or make the boards a little smaller. Additionally, you can have cups of water that represent nitroglycerin. The group must transport the cups from one side of the river to the other without spilling a drop. You can have them try to transport people who have no use of their legs. You can have students try to do the whole activity in silence, forcing them to communicate in other ways. You can blindfold some students who would likely require extra assistance in making the crossing.





Should communication break down with the entire class, you can divide the class in half. If you do this, you can have groups race against the clock, have one group watch and learn from the mistakes of the first group, or you can simply set up two sets of boards.

*Post activity discussion questions/assessment:*

- What was the hardest part about crossing the river on the first attempt? Why do you think that was the most difficult?
- Was it still the hardest part after you had done it and after you started adding new elements? If not, why?
- Has your attitude changed about a disabled person's ability to overcome obstacles and achieve what he/she sets out to do?



## **National Standards for Physical Education**

1. Demonstrates competency in many movement forms and proficiency in few movement forms.
2. Applies involvement concepts and principles to the learning and development of motor skills.
3. Exhibits a physically active lifestyle.
6. Demonstrates understanding and respect for differences among people in physical activity settings.
7. Understands that physical activity provides opportunities for enjoyment, challenge, self-expression, and social interaction.

## **MCREL Physical Education Standard and Benchmarks**

*Standard 2:* Uses movement concepts and principles in the development of motor skills 2.1, 2.3

*Standard 5:* Understands the social and personal responsibility associated with participation in physical activity 5.1, 5.3



## 2. Stereotypes — Making space for people with disabilities

*Objective of Activity:* Students will have to participate in a game, sport or activity that is appropriate to the class using their non-dominant hands and/or feet.

*Curriculum Standards/Skills:* analysis of cause/effect relationships; compare/contrast; self-analysis; societal analysis; problem solving; working in the abstract.

*Time Required:* 30-60 minutes

*Background:* This activity is a way for you to help students think about things from the point of view of someone who may have certain disabilities. That is, students may begin to realize that they take for granted some of the activities that they find easy. By forcing them to use their non-dominant hands, you might help students begin to shatter certain stereotypes that they have about the disabled. Students will experience firsthand that some things that are easy to do under regular circumstances are not so easy under more difficult ones.

*Introduction:* The Web site ([www.worldteamsports.org](http://www.worldteamsports.org)) provides details of people with certain disabilities who shatter many prevailing stereotypes. As an introduction to the activity, you should discuss and analyze some of the stereotypes associated with people with disabilities. And using the Web site, find the many examples that counter the stereotypes, such as Liza Cotter's journal entry. This exercise should provide a natural bridge to the firsthand experience of some of the limitations (the source of so many stereotypes) that some of the Face of America participants overcome.

*Suggestions:* It is very important to reinforce the point of the activity with students throughout. This will likely require you to stop the game more often than you would normally. Doing so will allow students to reflect more often on their experiences, and doing so will also allow you to curtail any potential teasing.

You can add other elements to the sport, game or activity in addition to (or instead of) the use of non-dominant hands/feet. You can try things blindfolded. (Make sure that you have a group of students who can "spot" those in blindfolds to make sure that they don't go where they're not supposed to.) You can have students play in complete silence or you can tie two people together.



# PHYSICAL EDUCATION



*Post activity discussion questions/assessment:*

- Was it harder or easier than you expected to play the game in a way that you wouldn't normally? Why?
- Do you think it would be easier the more you practiced playing that way? Why or why not?
- Do you look at someone with a disability any differently now?

## **National Standards for Physical Education**

1. Demonstrates competency in many movement forms and proficiency in few movement forms.
2. Applies involvement concepts and principles to the learning and development of motor skills.
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7. Understands that physical activity provides opportunities for enjoyment, challenge, self-expression, and social interaction.

## **MCREL Physical Education Standard and Benchmarks**

*Standard 2:* Uses movement concepts and principles in the development of motor skills 2.1, 2.3

*Standard 5:* Understands the social and personal responsibility associated with participation in physical activity 5.1, 5.3





## 3. STRATEGIES — Healthy minds, healthy bodies

*Objective of Activity:* Students will analyze the need for warming up — physically AND mentally — before any physical activity. This analysis will also link the importance of having a healthy mind and a healthy body.

*Curriculum Standards/Skills:* analysis of cause/effect relationships; compare/contrast; working with groups; explanatory/descriptive speaking

*Time Required:* 30 - 60 minutes

*Background:* This is an activity that can become part of any warm up period for classes. It will require some investment of time in the beginning to convince students of the need to warm up before an activity and to convince them of the relationship between being mentally ready and physically ready. In the end, they should recognize how important this warm up period is to their health.

The extra time is needed to break down different procedures that you and your students may use. The process of breaking them down into steps, explaining why each step is important/how it promotes greater health, gives students a greater understanding of the procedures. (Without the step-by-step breakdown, students are much less likely to know why they should warm up.)

Breaking down a process is also an excellent opportunity to talk about the importance of getting mentally ready. Many athletes use the physical warm up period as a time to focus their thoughts on what they hope to accomplish and why they want to accomplish it. Some even use visualization. Like so many things, building in a time for personal reflection promotes greater mental health, which in turn promotes greater physical health.

*Introduction:* If possible, have students read some of the daily logs and journals of the Face of America participants on the Web site ([www.worldteamsports.org](http://www.worldteamsports.org)). Their reflections help demonstrate a value in thinking about what you've done and what you hope to do. They help connect mental and physical fitness. Plus, by reading some participants' thoughts, students will see how people of many different abilities and backgrounds have been able to achieve healthy minds and healthy bodies.

*Suggestions:* Be sure to give students the opportunity to share some of the things they do to warm up — physically and/or mentally. Doing so will also promote the idea that each of us has a unique way of warming up. In the end, students will hopefully develop new health rituals that will extend well beyond PE class.





*Post activity discussion questions/assessment:*

- Why is warming up important?
- How can warming up mentally have an effect on performance?
- Can you do warm up activities outside of sport (PE class)? How?

## **National Standards for Physical Education**

1. Demonstrates competency in many movement forms and proficiency in few movement forms.
2. Applies involvement concepts and principles to the learning and development of motor skills.
3. Exhibits a physically active lifestyle.
6. Demonstrates understanding and respect for differences among people in physical activity settings.
7. Understands that physical activity provides opportunities for enjoyment, challenge, self-expression, and social interaction.

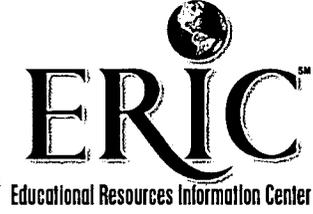
## **MCREL Physical Education Standard and Benchmarks**

*Standard 5: Understands the social and personal responsibility associated with participation in physical activity*  
5.1, 5.3





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<p>Organization/Address: <i>World T.E.A.M. Sports 2108 South Blvd., Suite 101 Charlotte, NC 28203</i></p>	<p>Telephone: <i>(704) 370-6076</i></p>	<p>Fax: <i>(704) 370-7750</i></p>
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