
Alpine Racing

Exhibit Title: Alpine Skiing

Core Connection



Fourth Grade Language Arts Standard 6: Vocabulary – Students learn and use grade level vocabulary to increase understanding and read fluently..

Fourth Grade Language Arts Standard 7: Comprehension – Students understand, interpret, and analyze narrative and informational grade level text.

Fourth Grade Language Arts Standard 8: Writing – Students write daily to communicate effectively for a variety of purposes and audiences.

Summary: Alpine skiing has developed into a popular sport and recreational activity. Alpine racing is especially exciting and includes five different events. Through the use of the following activities, students will understand the elements of, and the differences between, various Alpine events. Students will write a new article using the information and vocabulary they have learned in the lesson.

Lesson Learning Objectives:

1. Students will define vocabulary associated with Alpine skiing.
2. Students will read the information in this lesson and then compare the similarities and differences between downhill and slalom using a Venn diagram.
3. Students will imagine either a slalom or downhill race and write a news article it, using the information from the lesson articles and appropriate vocabulary. Students should be encouraged to use descriptive adjectives and adverbs as these races are very exciting.

Materials: copy of “Alpine Ski Racing” information page for each student
copy of Venn diagram for each student
writing paper

Time Approximate: 55 minutes

Instructions:

1. As a class, read and discuss the “Alpine Ski Racing” information page. Students should be encouraged to compare and contrast the various events.

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2. Students complete the Venn diagram.
 3. Brainstorm with class a list of descriptive adverbs and adjectives that could be used in a news article about a ski race.
 3. Students choose which of the two disciplines they want to use as a basis for their news article and write a short, descriptive article about a ski race.

Alpine Ski Racing

Alpine Skiing



Alpine ski racing is among the most exciting of all skiing events. It includes five men's events and five women's events: downhill, slalom, giant slalom, super-g, and combined. The rules are the same for men and women in these events, but the women's race **courses** are usually shorter than the men's. Alpine racing involves making fast turns through **gates** to get the fastest overall time down one or two runs of a race course. Today's Alpine racers wear helmets to prevent head injuries.. In all Alpine events, skiers are times to one hundredth of a second. Let's learn about each of these events.

Downhill



Downhill ski racing is the fastest Alpine event and can be very dangerous. Competitors get only one run and the skier with the fastest time wins. Racers wear skintight, elastic one-piece suits with padded forearms. They carry poles that are bent to fit around the body. Downhill racers fly down the mountain at 60-80 miles per hour. Some racers have been timed at almost 100 miles per hour! A few gates are used to control speed and give direction. Racers must go between the gates or they are **disqualified**.

Slalom



Slalom races are the shortest race but are considered to require the most **technical** skill. The course is made of close together turns, or gates, formed by **alternating** pairs of red and blue poles. Slalom tests the racers' balance, speed, and **agility** as they race through **breakaway** poles in the competition. Today's slalom racers wear plastic "armor" on their arms, legs, and hands that protects them from injury when they hit the poles. Each racer makes one run. The course is then reset on the same slope, but with the gates in different positions. Skiers qualifying for the second run race again on the same day. The winner is the skier with the fastest combined times of the two runs.

Giant Slalom

Giant slalom (GS) races are similar to slalom races, but there are fewer gates and the courses are longer. A giant slalom racer needs to make wider turns than the slalom skier to get through the course. Because of having to go through gates, giant slalom, like slalom, is considered a technical sport.

Super-G

Super-G is short for super giant slalom. This race is the closest to a downhill race, though the course for super-g is shorter than the downhill course. The skier with the fastest time in one run is the winner.

Combined Events

Combined events include one downhill run followed by two slalom runs on a single day. All of a racer's times are added together and the fastest total time determines the winner. The downhill and slalom races in a combined competition are run on different, shorter courses than the regular downhill and slalom races.

Comparing Downhill and Slalom Racing

Directions: Compare and contrast downhill and slalom ski racing on the Venn diagram. In the area marked “Both,” list the ways these two events are alike. Keep in mind the race courses, speed, style, and equipment.

