

WildernessClassroom.org

Greetings Fellow Explorers,

This introductory guide is designed to help you navigate The Wilderness Classroom website, generate student interest, and demonstrate how to implement activities from the curriculum guide into your classroom.

Our online learning adventures are designed to empower students through knowledge, inquiry, discovery, and adventure.

Our goal is to help students improve basic academic skills like reading, writing, and math, while developing a strong conservation ethic. We accomplish this with your help by introducing students to the plants, animals, and people of some of the wildest places on earth and demonstrating to students that the choices they make, the food they eat, the products they buy, and the resources they consume all impact the environment on a global level.

We realize it's a challenge to break from the daily classroom routine and try something new. However, we think that when properly applied, learning adventures are as rewarding for you as they are for your students.

Keep Exploring!

Dave and Amy Freeman



Program Overview



The Wilderness Classroom helps students explore the world around them, as they ask questions and solve problems. Online learning adventures encourage a deeper sense of cultural and environmental awareness among students and help students draw connections between their daily lives and the lives of people across the globe. Throughout the process students are using and improving important skills like: reading, vocabulary, communication, critical thinking, problem solving, collecting data, and graphing.

During The North American Odyssey your students' job is to help our team learn about North America's oceans, lakes, rivers and every unique ecosystem the team visits. The goal of the North American Odyssey is to

empower people to make changes in their lives, which will positively impact the planet and combat global climate change.

Stage 1: Pacific Northwest

April 22 - July, 2010 (1,400 miles by kayak)

Stage 2: Yukon

July - October, 2010 (1,747 miles hiking/canoeing)

Stage 3: Canadian North

January, 2010 - April, 2011 (900 miles by dogsled)

Stage 4: Voyageur's Highway

June - October, 2011 (2,800 miles by canoe)

Stage 5: Great Lakes

May - July, 2012 (1,300 miles by kayak)

Stage 6: Atlantic Ocean

July, 2012 - April, 2013 (3,600 miles by kayak)

Winter in the Boreal Forest January-March 2012

Spend the winter with Dave, Amy, and dozens of sled dogs as they explore the Boreal Forest. The North American Odyssey team is spending the winter dogsledding near Ely, Minnesota. Immerse your students in the winter woods of the north. Learn about the animals and the ecosystem of the Boreal Forest.



The land is covered in a blanket of snow and temperatures plunge below zero. Tracks of wolf, snowshoe hare, and moose indicate their activity. Below the snow, mice and voles remain active in a maze of tunnels. At night, the Aurora Borealis blaze in the sky above.

Life with sled dogs is never dull. Every day throughout the winter, they tirelessly pull dogsleds with energy and enthusiasm. A new sled dog's profile will be posted each week in addition to the regular website content. Mystery Photos, Animal Info, Podcasts, Notes from the Trail, Video Clips, a Photo Gallery, and more, will bring the sights and sounds of the Boreal Forest into hundreds of classrooms, educating students about this immense forest ecozone. Standards-aligned lesson plans will help teachers seamlessly integrate our online expeditions with their existing curriculum.



Stage 5 Overview

The Great Lakes

April 15- July 1, 2012

Dave and Amy will begin paddling through the Great Lakes this April. They are paddling 1,300 miles from Grand Portage, Minnesota to Montreal, Quebec. Join them as they explore the cold, clear waters of Lake Superior and beyond.



The Great Lakes are the largest system of surface freshwater on Earth, containing about 20% of the world's freshwater supply. They provide drinking water for about 40 million people. A variety of habitats surround the Great Lakes, including forests, marshes, wetlands, and dune communities. With more than 3,500 species of plants and animals to observe, the website content from this stage of the North American Odyssey will be filled with interesting and educational information.

New content will be posted to the Wilderness Classroom website daily throughout the adventure, from April 15 to July 1. Mystery Photos, Animal Info, Podcasts, Notes from the Trail, Video Clips, a Photo Gallery, and more, will bring the sights and sounds of the Great Lakes into hundreds of classrooms, educating students about this important freshwater ecosystem. Students will make important decisions for the team with the weekly Dave's Dilemma and Cast YOUR Vote. Standards-aligned lesson plans will help teachers seamlessly integrate our online expeditions with their existing curriculum.



Using WildernessClassroom.org

Expedition Updates

During the adventure, the Expedition Team will be in direct contact with your classroom through online polls, email correspondence, and videoconference. Students will make decisions that directly impact the adventure, while resolving the ecological, ethical, and personal dilemmas the team faces.

Throughout Dave and Amy Freeman's 11,700 mile trek across North America, they will post information to the Internet and communicate with students, using satellite technology. Dave and Amy stay connected with a growing network of over 65,000 elementary and middle school students—and teachers—who help make decisions while learning about some of the world's wildest places and improving students' basic academic skills like reading and math.

Update Features

Notes From the Trail – Journal entries, with photos written about daily life on the trail. Updated on Mondays.

Video Clips – A multimedia approach to discovering the rainforest. The videos and player are directly embedded into the web site using Flash technology. Updated Monday – Friday.

Cast Your Vote – Decide where the team goes, what they study, how they find shelter, or what they eat by making your voice heard at the polls. A new poll will be posted on Mondays so that students can vote throughout the week.

Mystery Photo – Students can use their investigative skills to solve a mystery. Clues are provided as well as a page describing the photo and its relevance to the adventure. Updated Monday – Friday.

Podcast – Each week, an Audio Update will be posted that contains interesting information from the trail about the weekly topic of study. Updated on Wednesdays.

Dave's Dilemma – Empower students to make decisions for the team, the adventure, and the world by submitting answers using short answer format, encouraging persuasive or expository writing.

Interactive Map – Each day, the team will post its location on this Google satellite map to help students track their progress. This is great for mapping exercises.

Email the Team - The team loves getting email from students. Submit the form and the team will personally respond to well-written, well-developed questions from students.

Daily Data – Each day, the team will record weather data, distance traveled, as well as data related to the weekly topic of study.

Student Response Worksheets – Guided reading assessments for the week's updates. Comprehension questions from Notes from the trail are grade-specific (Early and Late Elementary).

Using WildernessClassroom.org

Teacher Resources

Sign Up!	Getting Started	Lesson Plans
Registration only takes a minute. Then, you have access to all online content—for free! Tell your friends!	A brief introduction to the benefits and goals of participating in an online learning adventure.	Our database of lesson plans, background information, worksheets, and activities based around our expedition updates. Each activity and lesson plan is specifically designed for grades 3-8.

Kid's Zone -Not just for kids!

Wilderness Library	Adventure Archives	Email the Team
A vast resource for learning about plants, animals, people, and other topics students are likely to encounter during our online expeditions.	Take your students on a trek across the Amazon or board a research vessel in the Bahamas to study marine ecosystems. Our adventure archives are full videos, photos, scientific data and more from our previous online expeditions.	The team loves getting email from students. Submit the form and the team will personally respond to well-written, well-developed questions from students.

Submit your Work	Glossary
Students can fill out a simple online form and publish their own mystery photos as well as information about plants and animals they research to the website. This is a great way to take your students research projects to the next level!	The glossary is a great tool for improving vocabulary. Terms related to the expedition and places they encounter are already in the glossary. This is also another place where students can submit their work. If they have a relevant word for the glossary, they can submit their word and a brief definition.

Teaching Tips

Using Learning Adventures in YOUR Classroom

For nine years, The Wilderness Classroom has been developing and refining its approach toward online education. We've found that the students and teachers who benefit most from its content are those who use it on a regular basis.

Not every school's technology is the same. Some schools have computer labs with the most up-to-date software, hardware, and resources. However, we know that most of the schools that use our program have limited computer access, and limited time as well. After careful planning with teachers who have participated in previous online expeditions, we've come up with some strategies to help you implement The North American Odyssey.

The students at Grand Portage Elementary School have participated in all 10 of our online learning adventures! ►



Investigate the web site!

The more you know about where to go and what's there, the better you can answer your students' questions and keep students focused. Pre-read the updates so that you can anticipate student questions and needs.

Print the Updates

Many of the Wilderness Classroom activities can be completed without a computer. Use the Notes From the Trail as a guided reading exercise. Reproduce Dilemmas on the chalkboard.

Use an LCD projector

Many of our participating teachers had never used an LCD projector before bringing an online learning adventure into their classroom. However, it is the perfect tool to focus a large group of students onto a teacher or student-directed activity. Guided-reading activities, group discussions and investigations, and chat sessions are perfect for the LCD projector.

Read the Unit Introductions

As a whole group, read the introduction to each unit. Think about the unit's role and importance in the overall adventure.

Rotating Reporters

Assign a student or group of students to gather information from the most recent update and report back to the class. This works very well in an incentive-work program.

Small Group Reporting

If you only have one computer available, divide students into groups. One group can report on the Notes From the Trail, while another group reports on the podcast. One group may be plotting the team's progress on a map, while others might compare the weather and temperature in the team's location to your school's weather data in a graph format. Rotate these tasks each week.

Teaching Tips

Managing Time

15 Minutes per Day	30 Minutes - 1 Hour per Day	1 - 2 Hours per Day
<p>Use The Wilderness Classroom during homeroom, attendance taking, and other “sponge-time” activities.</p> <p>Allow students to explore the website if they finish work early or as a reward.</p> <p>Select a student reporter to read or share information from the Notes from the Trail.</p> <p>Listen to a Podcast.</p> <p>Guess the Mystery Photo.</p> <p>Use this week’s Notes From the Trail as a guided-reading activity.</p> <p>Discuss one of Dave’s Dilemmas or the weekly Cast Your Vote. Then vote and post your class’s ideas and responses.</p> <p>E-mail Dave and Amy a classroom-generated question.</p> <p>View a Video Clip as a class.</p> <p>Calculate the distance traveled during the week.</p>	<p>Use cooperative groups to read the update. Assign or let groups choose to read Notes From the Trail, listen to the most recent Podcast, or read and discuss Dave’s Dilemma. Have each group present their findings to the class.</p> <p>Explore each week’s Expedition Update and allow students to work in pairs or small groups to fill in their Discovery Log.</p> <p>Complete a whole class Discovery Log.</p> <p>Create a weekly K-W-L chart.</p> <p>Complete each update’s Student Response worksheet.</p> <p>Attend a Chat Session with the Expedition Team.</p> <p>Write an extended response to Dave’s Dilemma.</p> <p>Generate a list of questions to submit to the team.</p> <p>Keep a graph of the weather and the team’s mileage.</p>	<p>Submit an extended response to the Daily Dilemma via email.</p> <p>Have students keep a weekly Discovery Log. At the end of the week, discuss and create a poster of the class’ findings.</p> <p>Make connections between what the team is seeing this week compared to the week before.</p> <p>Discuss the possible outcomes of each Cast Your Vote choice. Make a pro/con list and decide the best option.</p> <p>Let students create an Animal of the Week bulletin board using the Kid Zone Library for information and photos. Use other resources as well.</p> <p>Have students research a plant, animal, or other topics associated with the adventure and submit via email.</p> <p>Turn your classroom into a virtual ecosystem the team is traveling through, allowing students to control the design.</p>
<p>Everyday Throughout the Day</p>	<p>Because Wilderness Classroom addresses a range of curriculum areas, the program can be woven into your activities throughout the day.</p> <p>Language Arts: Use Wilderness Classroom’s updates and the activities in the curriculum guide to integrate Expedition Updates into your reading time.</p> <p>Math: The Daily Data provides plenty of opportunities to use real statistics and figures to explore math functions and concepts.</p>	

Teaching Tips

Update Feature Schedule

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Notes From the Trail	x				
Dave's Dilemma	x				
Dog of the Week	x				
Animal of the Day	x		x		x
Cast YOUR Vote!	x			Voting Ends	
Interactive Map	x	x	x	x	x
Pod Cast			x		
Daily Data	x	x	x	x	x
Mystery Photo		x		x	
Student Response Worksheets	x				

Teaching Tips

Video Conferencing, Commenting, and other interaction

Direct communication between students and the expedition team is one of the best ways engage your students in the North American Odyssey. Following a few basic guidelines will help insure a high quality experience for everyone involved.

Video Conferencing

You can set up a videoconference with Dave and Amy! They generally use Skype, which is a free audio/video conferencing service. Videoconferences are scheduled for days when Amy and Dave are visiting towns along their route, where they have access to high-speed Internet at a school, library, or business. Send an email to dave@wildernessclassroom.org to set up a videoconference with your class! They will also try to set aside a few hours each week when they are available to Skype and post their availability on the website.

Guidelines:

- **Have your class join the chat/video conference from a single computer attached to an LCD projector or large monitor.**
- **Come up with a list of questions as a class that you would like to ask Dave and Amy in advance.**

Emailing

If your students have questions for Dave and Amy please use the email the team page in the Kid Zone to submit your questions. They love answering questions, but have limited computer time, so please have your class brainstorm questions all together or in small groups. Please send one to five questions at a time. Please make sure questions use proper spelling and grammar and that you include your email address so that we can respond.

Teaching Tips

Video Chats, Commenting, and Interaction

Commenting

Comments are a great way for your students to respond to Dave's Dilemmas and help Dave and Amy make decisions about where they should go and what they should study. Dave and Amy need your students' feedback. They encourage you and your students to post suggestions, thoughts, additional information, and words of encouragement often.

Commenting can be a great way for students to practice their reading, writing, critical thinking, and communication skills. It is important that your class follow the guidelines below when providing feedback.

Commenting guidelines:

- **Use proper grammar, complete sentences, and correct spelling when commenting.**
- **All comments are moderated, so please be patient. It will take up to 24 hours for your comment to be approved and available for everyone to see.**
- **Follow Internet safety guidelines and do not have students reveal their full names.**
- **Work as a class or in small groups to craft thoughtful suggestions and responses.**
- **Build connections by responding to other classroom's comments.**
- **Do not post questions that do not pertain directly to the topic of the article you are commenting on. If students have general questions they should use the email the team page in the Kid Zone to send their question to Dave and Amy.**
- **Register your class at www.disqus.com and have students log in and leave comments using your classroom DISQUS username and password. This is free, takes less than a minute, and will enrich your class's commenting experience exponentially.**

Voting

Students are encouraged to vote on a variety of polls that help determine where the team goes, what they study, and much more. Students will get the most out of the voting process if you discuss the polls as a class or in small groups and debate the options. Your students are in the driver's seat, their ability to make sound decisions is critical and these polls will engage students in a whole new level of communication and learning.

Frequently Asked Questions

How much does it cost?

Participation in our online expeditions is free. Log on to www.WildernessClassroom.org to sign up. Follow the team, help them make decisions, and learn about some of the world's wildest places!

How do I participate with Wilderness Classroom?

Access to WildernessClassroom.org is free to all registered users. The Wilderness Classroom does offer school assemblies, teacher workshops, and teacher in-services for schools in the United States. Please contact Dave at 312-505-9973 or dave@wildernessclassroom.org for more details.

What grades is the Wilderness Classroom curriculum targeted toward?

The Wilderness Classroom's complete curriculum is written according to 3rd – 8th grade Illinois learning standards. However, classrooms from preschool through high school can participate.

What academic subjects are covered?

The Wilderness Classroom lesson plans contain a complete inter-disciplinary curriculum. Language Arts, Science, Social Science, Math, and Arts are all incorporated.

I'm an educator, but not in the traditional classroom setting. Can I participate?

Of course! Teachers and educators from nearly every educational setting have participated in Wilderness Classroom's online learning adventures.

We also encourage families to register. Parents and children can read updates and browse the Wilderness Classroom website more thoroughly than time often permits in class.

What software do I need to access the Wilderness Classroom web site?

The Wilderness Classroom website is available to any computer that has Internet access. You will need a current version of Flash for our videos and Podcasts. Our interactive maps require Internet Explorer 6.0 or higher for Windows, Firefox 3.0 or higher for Mac/Windows, or Safari 1.2.4 for Mac.

School Assemblies

School Assemblies are an integral part in connecting students to the North American Odyssey. During the past eight years, we've found that assemblies are the most effective way to retain student interest throughout the adventure because of the personal connection made to the adventurers. Dave and Amy become school role models because they take a strong interest in developing a personalized relationship with your school's students and faculty. Presentations help motivate students to become active learners because they know their decisions will directly influence the expedition.



Wilderness Classroom Director, Dave Freeman, helps a 4th grade student shoot a blow dart gun at a target across the room during a school assembly about the Amazon Rainforest.

Assemblies Include:

Interactive multimedia presentations highlight the wilderness waterways and unique ecosystems from around the world. Dave and Amy present on a variety of topics and will craft a program to fit your school's interests.

Assemblies are customized to your school's needs and audience. Dave and Amy can speak in front of one classroom or the entire school.

Hands-on experience with equipment used in the field

Introduction to biodiversity and ecosystems

Information on becoming active, globally-responsible citizens

Registration

Please contact Dave Freeman to set up a time and date for your school's assembly:

Phone: 312-505-9973

Email: dave@wildernessclassroom.org

Cost:

\$500 per school assembly

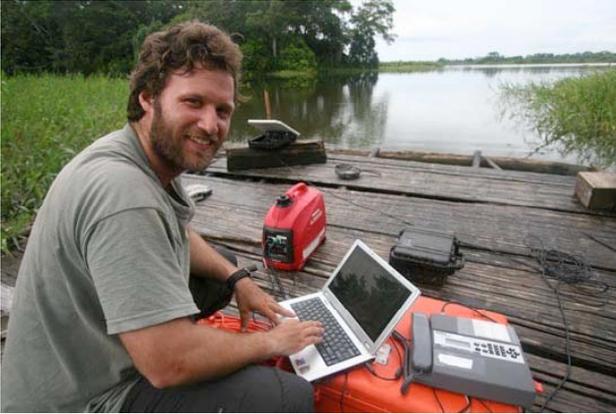


School Assemblies last between 45 and 60 minutes, given your school's needs.

Teacher In-Services

Technology In-Services are a great way for groups of teachers to find out the best way to utilize all of the features of the Wilderness Classroom website.

In-Services Include:



Dave Freeman on the trail in Pacaya-Samiria Bio-Reserve in Peru, 2005

Hands-on instruction from Wilderness Classroom curriculum developers, web-programmers, and Expedition Team Members

Training on Wilderness Classroom's website and teaching tips to fit your classroom's needs, abilities, and content area.

Relaxed and personal instruction that works at your level of technology integration – from simple to advanced.

An easy way for more teachers from your school to participate in the learning adventure, which often creates a whole-school thematic unit.

In-Services are conducted before or after the school day in your school's computer lab or library. Encourage as many teachers from your school to attend the in-services.

Registration

Please contact Dave Freeman to set up a time and date for your school's teacher-training:

Phone: 312-505-9973

Email: dave@wildernessclassroom.org

The Wilderness Classroom is a certified Illinois CPDU provider.