
World Olympics

Preparing Students for a
Multicultural and Multireligious World

A CURRICULUM DEVELOPED BY TANENBAUM FOR GRADES K-6



Imagine: a more peaceful world that respects difference.
We are committed to making that vision a reality.

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Unit IV – Learning About Being an Athlete

Olympic Diversity

This unit introduces children to the diversity of athletes and builds skills that prevent stereotyping.

Lesson One – Put Me in Coach, I’m Ready to Play!

Children explore assumptions we make about people based on appearance.

Lesson Two – Who is an Athlete?

Children further explore their stereotypes about athletes.

Lesson Three – Open Mind Portraits

Children read about the Jamaican Bobsled Team and explore ideas of who is good at sports.

Open Mind Portraits

Unit 4, Lesson 3

Objectives: Students will read about the Jamaican Bobsled team that competes in the Winter Olympics as they continue to examine stereotypes of athletes.

Skills: Preventing Prejudice, Awareness of Stereotypes

Grades: 3-6

Recommended Resources: *Heroes and Baseball Saved Us* by Ken Mochizuki; *Cool Runnings* (1993), a Disney movie.

Materials:

- Information about the Jamaican Bobsled Team (included at the end of this lesson)
- 2 Copies of the “Open Mind Portrait” per child
- Pencils
- Paper
- Multicultural Crayons or Markers

Preparation:

Make 2 copies of the “Open Mind Portraits” per student. If you are unable to make copies, have the students create the worksheet themselves, using blank paper and pencils. Have students draw or trace the outline of a person’s head and then add lines inside to represent what the person is thinking. Students will need two of these sheets each for this activity.

PROCEDURE

Step One: Ask students to pair up and share with each other: *What are some things you are good at? What do you do to practice?*

Step Two: Have students split up into small groups and review the information about Jamaica included at the end of this lesson. Now have students imagine they are going on a trip to Jamaica. Have them brainstorm sports they might play when they visited Jamaica and draw it as part of their open mind portrait (see preparation section if you are unable to make copies of the sheet for each child).

Step Three: Ask students if they know what a “bobsled” is. If students don’t know, explain to them that a bobsled is a big sled that can be steered and that runs on a track. You can show them the pictures included at the end of the lesson.

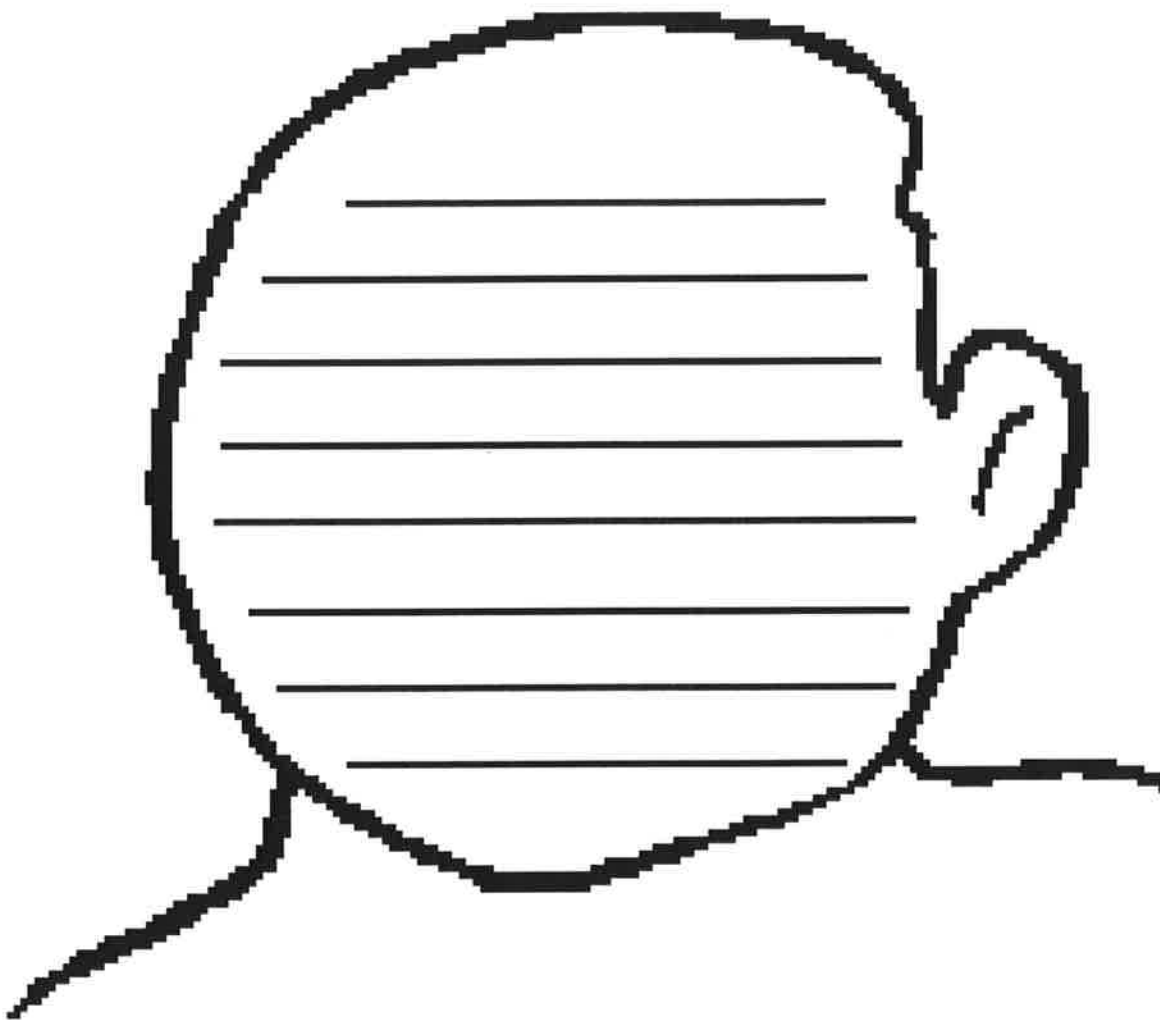
Step Four: Read aloud the information on the Jamaican Bobsled team that is included at the end of this lesson. Older students may read independently.

Discuss the following questions:

Were you surprised to hear about the Jamaican Bobsled team? Why or why not? What inspired the Jamaican Bobsled team to try the sport? What other "tropical" countries have participated in the Winter Olympics?

Follow-Up:

Have students research the 1936 Berlin Olympics and the achievements of many athletes, including Jesse Owens, that challenged racial stereotypes.



OPEN MIND PORTRAIT

Jamaican Bobsled Team

Jamaica is an island nation situated in the Caribbean Sea. It is the third largest island in the Caribbean. The climate in Jamaica is tropical, with hot and humid weather, although higher inland regions have a more temperate climate. Some regions on the south coast are relatively dry areas.

Bobsleigh/Bobsledding is a winter sport invented in Switzerland in the late 1860s in which teams sled down narrow, twisting tracks made from ice. The various types of sleds were adapted from delivery sleds and toboggans. The activity was naturally adapted into a form of competition. To protect people in the streets from the high-speed sleds, a 'half-pipe' track (i.e. a track with high, curved walls) was configured around 1870. In the United States and Canada the sport is known as **bobsled**.¹



¹ Information from: http://www.eurosport.com/bobsleigh/torino/2006/sport_sto804966.shtml, <http://www.jamaicans.com>, <http://www.jamaicanbobsled.com>, <http://www.answers.com/topic/tropical-nations-at-the-winter-olympics> (as of 2012), <http://bleacherreport.com/articles/1927933-jamaican-bobsled-team-qualifies-for-2014-sochi-winter-olympics>, "Jamaica." Encyclopædia Britannica. 2007. Encyclopædia Britannica Online. 5 Mar. 2007 <http://search.eb.com/eb/article-9117384> (as of 2012); "bobsledding." Encyclopædia Britannica. 2007. Encyclopædia Britannica Online. 5 Mar. 2007 <http://search.eb.com/eb/article-9015821> (as of 2012)

Jamaican Bobsled Team



Given Jamaica's tropical climate, it may be surprising to know that it has a national bobsledding team. The Jamaican Bobsled Team gained fame during the 1988 Winter Olympic Games in Calgary. Since then the team has competed often in the Winter Olympics and have their eyes focused on bringing back a medal to Jamaica.

The Jamaican Bobsled team is said to have begun when a bet was made between two friends. Jamaica had a strong track-and-field team in the Olympics, and some very good sprinters, and these strengths

could be transferred to bobsledding.

In the first games (1988) the team had many technical difficulties, injuries and crashes. In the second games (1992) the team had drastically improved. They had practiced hard for four years and were confident and focused. In the four-man event, the Jamaican team came in 14th - ahead of the US, French, Russian and Italian teams. In the two-man event they beat the Swedish national champions and came in 10th.

Despite financial challenges and other setbacks, the team has continued to persevere and find success. In 2000 they took the gold at the World Push Championships in Monte Carlo in three events, and posted the fastest start time at the World Cup. After failing to qualify for the 2006 and 2010 Olympics, their persistence finally paid off when they made it to the Sochi 2014 Games.

In addition to Jamaica, there are other tropical countries and territories that participate in Winter sports, including the bobsled. Some of them are: Mexico, Trinidad and Tobago, the Netherlands Antilles, Brazil, Cameroon, Puerto Rico, Thailand, Venezuela, the U.S. Virgin Islands, Costa Rica, Ethiopia, India, and Madagascar.¹

1 Image from: <http://www.infobarrel.com/media/image/12049.jpg>