

Top Ten Reads

Scenario:

The librarians of Tulare County want to run an ad campaign to encourage more kids to read books. They have decided on the slogan, “Top Ten Reads,” and have hired your team to help them decide on the books they will feature in the advertising campaign. The campaign is focused on students, aged seven to ten. Your group is to do the research and then make a multimedia presentation to the librarians. They want a variety of books so that kids with varying interests will find books they will want to read. You will need to include a short review of each book highlighting why you recommend the book.

Possible topics to cover (these are only suggestions and are not a requirement for a superior presentation):

1. What have students at your school read recently?
2. What type of books are students at your school interested in reading?
3. What books do other library organizations recommend?
4. What books are being sold at the commercial bookstores and do they have recommendations?
5. What books of interest to kids do local librarians recommend and why?
6. What is special about each book you recommend (such as the plot, the way it is written, illustrations, characterization, theme, etc.)?
7. Who would be most interested in the book?

Possible Sources

School and county librarians, commercial bookstores, children’s authors, book reviewers for newspapers, students at your school

ERS Portal sources: Facts on File, United Streaming, California Streaming, World Book Online, Associate Press Extensive Photo Archive and Thinkfinity: <http://www.erslibrary.org>

Internet websites:

American Library Association

<http://www.ala.org/ala/alsc/alscresources/summerreading/recsummerreading/recommendedreading.htm>

Reading is Fundamental <http://www.rif.org/>

100 Favorite Children’s Books:

<http://kids.nypl.org/reading/recommended2.cfm?ListID=60>

Bibliography

Be sure to have a printed bibliography to hand to the judges before you begin your presentation. You are encouraged to cite all of your sources including graphics. A simple web tool to organize your bibliography can be found at <http://citationmachine.net/>.

After the Rush

Scenario:

If you don't get rich mining for gold in California, what are ten great career opportunities to consider? It's 1855 and California is experiencing a lot of financial and political turmoil. Part of the issue is that thousands of miners that came to seek their fortune panning for gold are now broke and out of work. One possible solution to help the miners is to provide them with career guidance. You run a career guidance agency and you have the unique idea of getting the government to hire your firm to do career counseling with the miners. You should include in your presentation your top ten career recommendations, background on the miners, and the turmoil that will happen if the problem is not addressed.

Possible topics to cover (these are only suggestions and are not a requirement for a superior presentation):

1. List the career opportunities in California during this era.
2. What background do the miners come from prior to coming to California?
3. Discuss the issue of migrants and the vigilante movement.
4. How will the miners' previous work experience affect what careers you recommend for them?
5. How would a miner's country of origin and religious affiliation affect their career choices?
6. What are some selling points about California that would encourage miners to stay rather than return to their former homes?
7. What kind of training would each career require?
8. Does the new career require money to get started?
9. Will the new career require the miner to move to a specific part of the state?
10. How will the careers you recommend benefit California?

Possible Sources

History textbook, historians, librarians, museums, online sources for California Gold Rush + economy, alternative occupations, life, etc.

The World Rushed In, by J.S. Holliday

ERS Portal sources: Facts on File, United Streaming, California Streaming, World Book Online, Associate Press Extensive Photo Archive and Thinkfinity: <http://www.erslibrary.org>

Internet websites:

The Sacramento Bee: <http://www.calgoldrush.com/mainframe.html>

PBS, The Gold Rush: http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/goldrush/peoplevents/p_wilson.html

PBS Kids: The Gold Rush: http://pbskids.org/wayback/goldrush/peopletoknow_armour.html

Wikipedia, Levi Strauss: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Levi_Strauss

Library of Congress, America's Story: http://www.americaslibrary.gov/cgi-bin/page.cgi/jb/reform/gold_1

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The Power of Ten

Scenario:

The California Department of Education has issued a Request for Proposals to develop materials to help students learn the concept of the powers of 10 and its many applications in the world around us, from the very small to the very large. The committee chairperson has emphasized that they want interesting, engaging materials that use up-to-date technology appealing to fifth grade students. Your team is a group of university mathematicians who have formed a consulting firm and would like to win this contract. The chairperson reminds you that they are looking for new, original materials and that most such materials on the Internet are copyrighted. You may bring a real object as a starting point for the scale of smaller and larger.

Possible topics to cover (these are only suggestions and are not a requirement for a superior presentation):

1. What technology could be used to make the materials?
2. What images would be appealing to students and demonstrate the applications clearly?
3. What practical use could these materials address?
4. Give some examples of how your materials would make your current math book easier to understand.
5. Where could these materials find application outside of a fifth grade mathematics lesson?
For example, scale:
 - a. sub-atomic particles to the universe
 - b. a fifth grader's allowance to the national budget
6. What jobs might use the powers of 10?

Possible Sources

Newspapers, scientists, mathematicians, library books, videos, encyclopedias, science textbooks
ERS Portal sources: Facts on File, United Streaming, California Streaming, World Book Online, Associate Press Extensive Photo Archive and Thinkfinity: <http://www.erslibrary.org>

Internet websites:

Florida State University: Science, Optics and You

<http://micro.magnet.fsu.edu/primer/java/scienceopticsu/powersof10/>

Eames Office <http://www.powersof10.com/index.php?mod=education>

Wikipedia: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Large_numbers

Wikipedia: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Small_number

Wikipedia: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Order_of_magnitude

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X Versus 10

Scenario:

The ancient Romans were an advanced culture for their time but their system for mathematics, by today's standard, was based on an inefficient model, namely, Roman numerals. In later centuries, the Hindu-Arabic system for numerals was adopted world-wide and is the foundation for modern mathematics. As modern mathematics experts, your mission is to select a time in Roman history and travel back to convince them that they should shift to Hindu-Arabic numeral system. You will be making a presentation to the rulers of the time period you select. In doing your presentation, it would be wise to keep in mind the Roman culture, political structure, and commerce.

Possible topics to cover (these are only suggestions and are not a requirement for a superior presentation):

1. Provide a brief history of the use of Roman numerals including modern day usage.
2. What are the Roman numerals and how did the Romans do math?
3. What limitations does the Roman numeral system pose in doing mathematics?
4. How did the Romans deal with fractions, decimals, and zeros?
5. How did the Romans go about commerce with the Roman numeral system?
6. Include examples of mathematical computation from your current math textbook to demonstrate the differences between the two numeric systems.
7. What key points will entice the Romans to switch systems?
8. What resistance might you expect in switching systems?
9. Include some Roman-world examples comparing the two systems, such as commerce or architecture.
10. How did the Hindu-Arabic system evolve to become commonly adopted by the modern societies?

Possible Sources

Math textbook, history textbook, historians, mathematicians, online resources, library
ERS Portal sources: Facts on File, United Streaming, California Streaming, World Book Online, Associate Press Extensive Photo Archive and Thinkfinity: <http://www.erslibrary.org>

Internet websites:

Paul Lewis, BBC: <http://www.paullewis.co.uk/>

Wikipedia, Roman Numerals

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roman_numerals

Wikipedia, Hindu-Arabic numeral system

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hindu-Arabic_numeral_system

Roman Numerals

<http://mathforum.org/dr.math/faq/faq.roman.html>

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“X” Marks the Spot

Scenario:

A new history show, “X Marks the Spot,” highlights the travels of historic world explorers and the interesting locations they have traveled. The show’s producers, who know little about history, need help selecting explorers who will be interesting to their viewers. As historians, your job is to select an explorer that you think would be interesting and do a promotional presentation to the producers. It will be important that you provide the main historical facts about your explorer, as well as interesting facts that may not be in your classroom history book. It is recommended that you have some way they can visualize the journey.

Possible topics to cover (these are only suggestions and are not a requirement for a superior presentation):

1. What was the background of both your explorer and the country that financed their exploration?
2. What would the explorers have known about their destination(s) prior to undertaking their journey?
3. What types of navigational tools were used?
4. Describe the civilizations the explorer encountered; were these civilizations different from their own?
5. What was the goal of their exploration and to what degree was the exploration successful?
6. What dangers did the explorer face?
7. How did their exploration change the country they came from?
8. How did their exploration change the other parts of the world?
9. Compare and contrast one explorer with another.
10. Summarize what makes your explorer significant in history and interesting to viewers.

Possible Sources

History Text Book, Historians, Librarians, Biographies of Explorers

ERS Portal sources: Facts on File, United Streaming, California Streaming, World Book Online, Associate Press Extensive Photo Archive and Thinkfinity: <http://www.erslibrary.org>

Internet websites:

The Mariners’ Museum, Biographies of Explorers

<http://www.mariner.org/educationalad/ageofex/biographies.php>

The Metropolitan Museum of Art:Europe and the Age of Exploration

http://www.metmuseum.org/TOAH/hd/expl/hd_expl.htm

Wikipedia, Age of Discovery http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Age_of_Exploration

Marine Navigation in the Age of Exploration

<http://www.seattleartmuseum.org/exhibit/interactives/spain/launchWin.htm>

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Ten Fingers, Ten Toes

Scenario:

As a result of a disturbance in the space-time continuum, your team, a group of scientists from the National Institute of Standards and Technology, has landed in Central Virginia, not far from Monticello, Thomas Jefferson's home. It is the year 1789. Jefferson is about to make his proposal to Congress advocating a decimal system of weights and measures. You know that Congress will not act on his report and realize that you have an opportunity to change the course of history. With your modern knowledge, advise him on how to improve his presentation. He is a busy man but respects your knowledge and expertise. He grants you ten minutes to make your case.

Possible topics to cover (these are only suggestions and are not a requirement for a superior presentation):

1. What does "decimal" mean?
2. Why is Jefferson preparing a report to Congress instead of another branch of government or scientific body?
3. What were the weaknesses of his proposed system?
4. How could his system be improved?
5. What would be the benefits of adopting the International System of Units?
6. How could Jefferson get Congress to act on it?
7. What problems have resulted from having two systems in use now?
8. What is the vocabulary associated with switching to the metric system?

Possible Sources

Newspapers, scientists, mathematicians, library books, videos, encyclopedias, science textbooks
ERS Portal sources: Facts on File, United Streaming, California Streaming, World Book Online, Associate Press Extensive Photo Archive and Thinkfinity: <http://www.erslibrary.org>

Internet websites:

MSN Encarta: http://encarta.msn.com/encyclopedia_761561345/Metric_System.html
http://encarta.msn.com/encyclopedia_761571220/International_System_of_Units.html
University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill:
<http://www.unc.edu/~rowlett/units/usmetric.html>
National Institute of Standards and Technology: <http://www.nist.gov/>
CNN: <http://www.cnn.com/TECH/space/9909/30/mars.metric.02/>
U.S. Metric Association: <http://lamar.colostate.edu/~hillger/>
Wikipedia: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Metrication_in_the_United_States

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X-treme Olympics

Scenario:

Due to the popularity of the Snowboarding event in the Winter Olympics, the International Olympic Committee is considering the addition of an X-treme sport in the 2008 Summer Olympic Games. Your team represents EXPN, the extreme sports arm of the Entertainment and Sports Programming Network. The Committee recognizes EXPN as an authority in this area of sport and requests that you present three X-treme sports and recommend one for inclusion. Keep in mind the country/city hosting the next Olympics: Beijing, China. The Committee Chairperson identifies possible topics to cover (listed below) and asks that you address those that, in your professional opinion, are most important for the Committee and fans of the Olympics to understand. He reminds you that they have a full agenda and you have only ten minutes for your presentation.

Possible topics to cover (these are only suggestions and are not a requirement for a superior presentation):

1. What is an extreme sport?
2. Why was snowboarding such a success in the Winter Olympics?
3. Do the Summer X Games provide a model for inclusion in the Summer Olympics?
4. How will judging and scoring be done?
5. How do your chosen sports rise to the level of athletics and competition exemplified by the modern Olympics?
6. Who would you cite as possible competitors at the Olympic level in your chosen sports?
7. Why are you recommending these sports?
8. What type of facility would the sport require?

Possible Sources

Newspapers, magazines, library books, videos, encyclopedias

ERS Portal sources: Facts on File, United Streaming, California Streaming, World Book Online, Associate Press Extensive Photo Archive and Thinkfinity: <http://www.erslibrary.org>

Internet websites:

Beijing Olympic Website

<http://en.beijing2008.cn/>

XTREME SPORTSCENTER

<http://www.tqnyc.org/NYC030417/html/snowboardhistory.html>

Wikipedia

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Extreme_sports

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