Iditarod Race Unit
Basic Design by John Manley at jmanley@esu10.org for Mushhusky Assemblies.

Objectives:
Apply research skills using the internet, encyclopedias, and magazines.
Study maps and develop map skills.
Apply mathematical skills.
Develop artistic skills.
Exercise organizational and critical thinking skills.

Musher Folder:
Students are assigned an Iditarod musher to research and monitor during the Iditarod Race (which starts the 1st Saturday in March). Students design Iditarod Folders to store and organize the information on their mushers. Additional information added to the folders could include:

Iditarod Maps	Iditarod History	Alaska History
Sledding History	Sled Dog History	Alaska's Various Cultures
Iditarod Photos	Iditarod Articles	Training for the Race
Weather Information	Previous Race Champions	Wild Trail Encounters
Iditarod Race Rules	Sledding Equipment	Keep a Daily Journal
Current Race Results	Controversial Issues (PETA)	Effects of cold on the body
Natural Phenomena (Aurora Borealis)	Dog Care	Alaska Native Food

Students use their creativity to organize, design, and decorate their folders. Once the folders are completed, students display and share their folders. If the teacher wants a grade, folders can be graded based on effort, following directions, mechanics, research, neatness and creativity.

Anticipatory Set:
Pre-race activities could include covering Iditarod and Alaska History. Covering the route of the Iditarod, its checkpoints, the Alaska Geography and Climate. Books and videos covering the Iditarod and dog sledding are also useful in raising student interest.

Daily Race Activities:
Once the race begins, daily race updates are shared with the students (iditarod.com; cabelas.com). Students chart their mushers' daily progress on a map of the Iditarod Trail. Mathematical skill can be applied by calculating distances between checkpoints, and finding the average distance covered and speed traveled by a dog-team or the dog-teams. A brief sharing and question time each day is effective. Students can share the progress of their mushers, race incidents, news stories, and the condition of the dogs. Students usually have many questions regarding the race and its rules, the mushers, and their dog-teams.

The Red Lantern:
Daily updates and map charting continue until the end of the race when the last musher (the Red Lantern musher) crosses the finish line in Nome. End of the race activities could include a classroom awards ceremony to the top twenty finishers and the Red Lantern Musher. A classroom Iditarod party could include the showing of a movie such as Balto, Snow Dogs, Iron Will, or Eight Below.

Learn about Iditaread from www.Iditarod.com.
Check out this web site: www.oregontrail.net/~thesmiths/iditarod/iditoutl.html