SCHOLASTIC

Teaching Guide and Poster

Grades 4–6

Understanding U.S. Geography and Weather

FREE Lessons and Activities in Language Arts and Geography

Inside you'll find standards-based lessons and reproducible worksheets that build:

- Map skills
- Understanding of U.S. geography and natural diversity
- Reading comprehension
- Persuasive writing skills

Great U.S. map inside! It includes:

- Physical features
- Climate averages
- Weather facts

Important information for families inside!

- How to create a family emergency plan
- Important items that should be in an emergency kit
- Emergency contact chart template

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Dear Educator,

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security is working together with state and local government and private sector partners to prepare the nation and the nation's schools for emergencies of all kinds. As we have encouraged families and school administrators to prepare for emergencies, we have often been asked if there is information appropriate to share with children. We have created *Ready Kids* in response to these requests.

Ready Kids is part of the *Ready* campaign, a common sense framework designed to promote learning about emergency preparedness. *Ready Kids* is a family-friendly resource for teachers and parents to help facilitate discussions about emergency preparedness. In addition to these in-school activity sheets produced by Scholastic Inc., the program includes a Web site that features age-appropriate, step-by-step instructions on what families can do to be better prepared and the role kids can play.

Thank you for the role you play in our children's lives. I hope that you will play an equally active role in educating your students and their families about how they can prepare for emergencies. Please visit www.ready.gov and click on *Ready Kids* to learn more.

Sincerely,

Michael Chertoff
Secretary of Homeland Security

How to use this program:

1. Copy the lessons and reproducible worksheets inside this Teaching Guide.
2. Display the Classroom Poster.
3. Use these lessons and reproducible worksheets to reinforce key curriculum concepts while discussing emergency preparedness.
4. Copy and send home the enclosed Family Pages.

National Standards and Benchmarks

		Lesson 1	Lesson 2	Lesson 3
LANGUAGE ARTS: Reading				
Uses the general skills and strategies of the reading process	Grades 3–5: Establishes and adjusts purposes for reading		•	•
	Grades 3–5: Reflects on what has been learned after reading and formulates ideas, opinions, and personal responses to texts		•	•
Uses reading skills and strategies to understand and interpret a variety of informational texts	Grades 3–5: Uses reading skills and strategies to understand a variety of informational texts	•	•	
	Grades 3–5: Knows the defining characteristics of a variety of informational texts		•	•
LANGUAGE ARTS: Writing				
Uses the general skills and strategies of the writing process	Grades 3–5: Drafting and Revising: Uses strategies to draft and revise written work		•	
	Grades 3–5: Uses strategies to write for a variety of purposes	•	•	•
	Grades 3–5: Writes expository compositions		•	
	Grade 6: Drafting and Revising: Uses a variety of strategies to draft and revise written work		•	
	Grade 6: Writes expository compositions		•	
LANGUAGE ARTS: Listening and Speaking				
Uses listening and speaking strategies for different purposes	Grades 3–5: Contributes to group discussions	•	•	•
	Grades 3–5: Listens to classmates and adults	•	•	•
	Grades 3–5: Responds to questions and comments	•	•	•
	Grade 6: Asks questions to seek elaboration and clarification of ideas	•	•	•
SOCIAL STUDIES				
People, Places, and Environment	**Middle Grades**			
	Elaborate mental maps of locales, regions, and the world that demonstrate understanding of relative location, direction, size, and shape	•	•	•
	Create, interpret, use, and distinguish various representations of the earth, such as maps, globes, and photographs	•	•	•
	Use appropriate resources, data sources, and geographic tools to generate, manipulate, and interpret information	•	•	•
	Describe physical system changes such as seasons, climate, and weather and the water cycle and identify geographic patterns associated with them.	•	•	•
Individual Development and Identity	**Middle Grades**			
	Describe personal connections to place—as associated with community, nation, and world	•	•	•
GEOGRAPHY				
Understands the characteristics and uses of maps, globes, and other geographic tools and technologies	Grades 3–5: Knows the basic elements of maps and globes	•		•
	Grade 6: Uses thematic maps	•	•	•
Knows the location of places, geographic features, and patterns of the environment	Grades 3–5: Knows the approximate location of major continents, mountain ranges, and bodies of water on Earth	•	•	•
	Grade 6: Uses thematic maps	•	•	•
	Grade 6: Knows the relative location of, size of, and distances between places	•		•
Understands the concept of regions	Grades 3–5: Knows the characteristics of a variety of regions	•	•	•
	Grade 6: Understands criteria that give a region identity	•	•	•
Knows the physical processes that shape patterns on Earth's surface	Grades 3–5: Understands how physical processes help to shape features and patterns on Earth's surface	•	•	•
	Grade 6: Knows the major processes that shape patterns in the physical environment	•	•	•

Sources: National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE), National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS), Geography Education Standards Project, and Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning (McREL).

Lesson Overviews for Teachers and Parents

The following lessons are designed to be taught in the classroom and can be reinforced at home by parents through the Family Reproducible Worksheets. These lessons work best when completed in order but are designed to be flexible if used individually. You can share the goals for each lesson with your students.

Lesson 1: Calling All Geographers

Goals: Students will use map-reading and critical-analysis skills to learn about the geographical and environmental diversity of the United States and the ways that geography can influence weather and other natural events.

Materials: **Calling All Geographers** Reproducible Worksheet 1, **Physical Map** Classroom Poster, pen/pencil

Directions:

1. Display the poster map. Have students identify the compass, legend (key), scale, and other map features.

2. Distribute **Calling All Geographers** Reproducible Worksheet 1. Separate students into pairs, and have each pair use the **Physical Map** Classroom Poster to complete the reproducible worksheet.

3. After students have completed the worksheet, review the answers together to check students' map-reading skills. *(Answers for Reproducible Worksheet 1: 1. Northeast and Southeast; 2. Minnesota, Wisconsin, Michigan, Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, Pennsylvania, New York; 3. Wyoming; 4. and 5. Answers will vary; 6. Average temperatures of 70–80 degrees. No, on average Death Valley only receives 0–8 inches of rainfall each year; 7. Very rainy weather; 8. The Great Lakes and cold winters; 9. Flat, windy areas and the Rocky Mountains.)*

4. Review geography and climate, and explain that geographical features and climate influence weather and other natural events. Use the map to explain that when those events become severe, they can create common weather conditions such as blizzards, hurricanes, tornadoes, and earthquakes.

5. Discuss how the conditions above can become an "emergency" (e.g., when a strong earthquake occurs in a populated area, it can cause buildings to fall, trees to be uprooted, and drivers to have accidents). Then, define "emergency" (an unexpected and usually serious situation or crisis) and "emergency preparedness" with students. Together, describe natural emergencies that are common where you live. Confirm information or correct as needed.

6. Invite students to visit the *Ready Kids* section of **www.ready.gov** with their parents to learn some simple strategies that families can use to prepare for emergencies.

Lesson 2: Ready for Any Weather

Goals: Students will use reading, writing, and critical analysis to identify everyday skills that could be useful during an emergency.

Materials: **Ready for Any Weather** Reproducible Worksheet 2, **Physical Map** Classroom Poster, pen/pencil

Directions:

1. Distribute **Ready for Any Weather** Reproducible Worksheet 2. Read the story aloud to students, or have them read it with a partner.

2. Check comprehension by reviewing the beginning, middle, and ending of the story. Have students answer the questions on the reproducible. Review and discuss the answers as a class. *(Possible answers: 1. Dad is a careful planner; 2. He checked his backpack for important items, reviewed his map, and told Mom where they were headed; 3. Warm clothes (sweatshirts), food, and water; 4. Yes, Dad knew that Hector Hummingbird was on his way.)*

3. Group students in pairs for more discussion about what they can learn from the hiking adventure. Help students recognize that being organized, following directions, and communicating well can help in an emergency.

4. Find your home state on the classroom map and review its geographic features and climate. Ask: *What would Dad need to bring with him on a hike if he lived in your state? What kinds of unexpected weather events might he experience if he lived near you?*

5. Challenge each pair of students to develop a story about Dad and his family, imagining that they live in your state and are responding to another unexpected event. Discuss the stories and any lessons that students have learned.

Lesson 3: Skills to Practice

Goals: Students will use listening, communication, and critical-writing skills to apply what they have learned to write personal responses to questions and discuss readiness skills.

Materials: **Certificate of Readiness** Reproducible Worksheet 3, **Prepare and Practice** Family Reproducible Worksheet, **Physical Map** Classroom Poster, **Get Ready Crossword Puzzle** Family Reproducible Worksheet, pen/pencil

Directions:

1. Find your home state on the map and review the information about your region as a class. Discuss how geography and climate influence the weather in your state.

2. Review the story from Lesson 2 with students again. Then have students write down three skills that Dad and his family used.

3. Instruct students to open their notebooks and respond in writing to the following guided questions regarding safety, readiness skills, and lingering concerns students might have about emergencies.

- *What kinds of skills can people practice that will help them to be ready for any emergency?*
- *Which skills do you think you have, and why?*
- *Why is it important to practice these skills?*

4. Invite students to summarize the personal skills in the last two questions.

5. Write "Concerns" on the board and have students share their concerns; write them on the board. Ask fellow students to respond, adding your own remarks about the skills emphasized in "The Hiking Adventure" story to guide a discussion about which concerns are reasonable. Have students help you make a "Key Ideas" column next to the "Concerns" column, and fill in with ideas about the best approach to emergency preparedness. Congratulate students on their preparedness work by giving each student a personalized copy of **Certificate of Readiness** Reproducible Worksheet 3.

6. Send home **Get Ready Crossword Puzzle** Family Reproducible Worksheet and **Prepare and Practice** Family Reproducible Worksheet for students to share with their parents or guardians.

Calling All Geographers

Reproducible Worksheet 1

Name: _____

Use your map, geography, and thinking skills to answer the following questions. Write your answers on the lines below.

1 Where are the Appalachian Mountains? How do you know?

_____

2 Which states border the Great Lakes?

_____

3 Glaciers still cover the landscape in the Grand Tetons (in the Rocky Mountains). Using the physical and temperature map, can you guess which state is home to the Grand Tetons?

_____

4 If your family were driving from your home to the Mississippi River, in which direction would you travel? Which states would you travel through?

_____

5 Imagine taking a car trip from your home to see the Rocky Mountains. In which direction would you travel? What geographic features would you see along the way?

_____

6 What types of temperatures would you experience in Death Valley National Park in California's Mojave Desert? Would you bring a raincoat?

_____

7 If you were visiting Everglades National Park in Florida, what types of precipitation would you expect to experience?

_____

8 What geographical, temperature, and/or precipitation factors contribute to blizzards in the Northeast?

_____

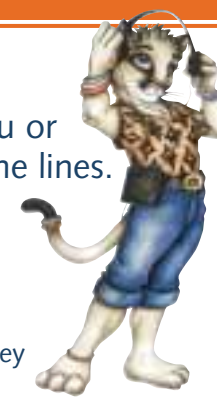
9 What geographical, temperature, and/or precipitation factors contribute to tornadoes in the central United States?

_____

In your classroom you are learning that the United States has a wide variety of physical features and weather events, some of which can be severe. Talk with your family about what you've learned. To learn more about preparing for severe weather, visit www.ready.gov with your parents, and click on *Ready Kids* for information that you can use to prepare together.

Ready for Any Weather

Reproducible Worksheet 2



Name: _____

This is a story about some forest characters who are not so different from you or me. Read the story, then think about the questions. Write your answers on the lines.

The Hiking Adventure

The sky was sunny and bright. "Hey, Dad! Can we go for a hike today?" Rory asked, excited.

"Sure!" Dad exclaimed. "But first, we should tell Mom where we're headed, and then we have to get organized." Dad reached into a closet and pulled out his sturdy green and gold backpack. Together, they looked inside and found lots of useful items—a small first aid kit, a flashlight, and some extra batteries. Rory put paper and markers into her own backpack. Dad carefully reviewed his favorite map of the forest, and Mom peeked her head around the corner and asked, "Don't you need these?" She held up two bottles of water, some granola bars, and a pair of sweatshirts. Dad smiled and said, "Thanks, Purrcilla," and packed these important items, too.

It was turning out to be a great afternoon, but things can change in a moment—and they did. The sky grew black and the air got cold. *Brrr!* Rory was glad she had a sweatshirt. Dad looked at the sky and saw that a big storm was brewing. "Look over here, Rory," he said. "Let's take some shelter until the storm passes." They ducked inside a shallow cave just in time. Then the rain came pelting down!

"Oh, no, Mom will be worried!" said Rory. Dad smiled and told her not to worry; Mom and Dad had made a plan in case something like this happened. Hector Hummingbird, Dad's best friend, would be coming to find them any minute! Suddenly, in front of them were two shining eyes. It was Hector Hummingbird!

"There you are! Purrcilla asked me to fly out to find you!" tweeted Hector.

"We're just fine," laughed Dad. "But thanks for checking on us! Once the rain stops, you can take a message back to let Purrcilla know that we're okay."

"That sounds great," said Hector, as he shook out his wet feathers. Snug and dry in the opening of the cave, Dad, Rory, and Hector shared a snack and some water. Everyone was tired, but they were safe.

Questions:

1 Describe Dad, the main character.

_____

_____

_____

2 What did Dad mean when he said, "We have to get organized"?

_____

_____

_____

3 What important items did Mom remind Dad and Rory to bring?

_____

_____

_____

_____

4 Do you think that before this hike Mom and Dad talked about how to stay in touch during an emergency?

_____

_____

About the Characters:

DAD (Rex) is a forest explorer who loves taking his family on adventures! An all-around athlete, he stays in great shape by climbing rocks and trees, swimming across rivers, and running through the forest and plains.

MOM (Purrcilla) is friendly and energetic, and will defend her family at a moment's notice. Her wisdom and common sense come in handy when her family has questions.

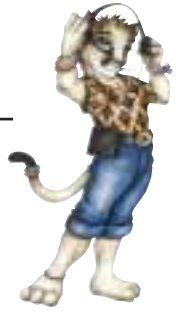
RORY is learning how to plan ahead so that she can handle any situation calmly and with confidence.

HECTOR HUMMINGBIRD, Dad's best friend, is dependable and true. He is known by other forest creatures as the one to go to when a message needs to be communicated quickly!

Visit www.ready.gov and click on *Ready Kids* to find out even more about how your family can prepare for emergencies.

Certificate of Readiness

_____ is officially **READY** for the unexpected.



Ready Kids congratulates you!
You have completed the activities in this program to help you prepare for unexpected situations!

Excellent Job!

If there is an emergency, you will be ready.

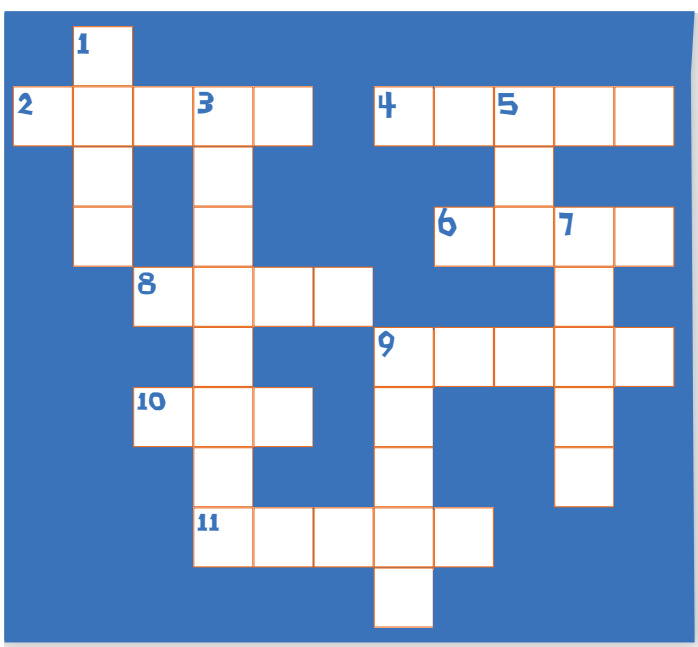
Homeland Security

Get Ready Crossword Puzzle

Family Reproducible Worksheet

Dear Family,

To prepare for emergencies, families can collect items that might be useful and put them in an emergency supply kit. Go to www.ready.gov and click on *Ready Kids* to find out how your family can prepare for unexpected situations. Then complete this crossword puzzle to give you an idea of what kinds of things should be part of your family's emergency supply kit.



Clues

ACROSS:

2. _ _ _ _ _ light: A handy tool to have if the lights go out!

4. Every person needs one gallon of this per day!

6. This comfortable piece of furniture should not be part of a family's supply kit.

8. Furry family members that should be part of your preparedness plan.

9. Some people have a _ _ _ _ _ between meals if they are hungry.

10. You might find water, a flashlight, or a whistle in an emergency supply _ _ _.

11. Fun items that families can play together.

DOWN:

1. Families can create a communication _ _ _ _ so that they know where to meet and who to call during an emergency.

3. _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ bag: Great for napping or keeping warm.

5. Every family member should carry a contact list with at least _ _ _ different phone numbers that will allow you to keep in touch during an emergency.

7. It's important to get the _ _ _ _ _ about different kinds of emergencies, so that you know what to expect.

9. Keep an extra pair of these in your supply kit to keep your feet dry!

Visit www.ready.gov and click on *Ready Kids* for a family scavenger hunt to create your family's emergency supply kit!

EMERGENCY CONTACT INFORMATION

It's important to be able to contact your family if there is an unexpected event. Fill in the following information and keep a copy on the refrigerator, in your car, and in your child's backpack.

Parents'/Guardians' Contact Names: _____

Telephone numbers: _____

Out-of-State Contact Name: _____

Telephone number: _____

Neighborhood Meeting Place: _____

Telephone number: _____

Dial 9-1-1 for Emergencies!

Crossword Puzzle Answers:
Across: 2. flash; 4. water; 6. sofa; 8. pets; 9. snack; 10. kit; 11. games.
Down: 1. plan; 3. sleeping; 5. two; 7. facts; 9. shoes

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Prepare And Practice Family Activity

Family Reproducible Worksheet

By taking a few simple steps ahead of time—creating an emergency supply kit, making a family emergency plan, and learning about different kinds of disasters—families can be better prepared for emergencies. To make an emergency supply kit and plan that meets the unique needs of your family, discuss the following scenarios as a family, making notes on the lines provided.

Scenario 1: Imagine that your family needs to evacuate your home on foot (such as in the case of fire).

1 Where would you go? How long would it take to get there?

2 How would you get there?

Scenario 2: Imagine that your family needs to leave your neighborhood, town, or city quickly (such as in the case of a weather emergency).

1 Where would you go? How long would it take to get there?

2 What mode of transportation would you use?

3 What items should you have on hand to make your trip easier (e.g., map with marked route, change of clothes, extra fuel, food and water)?

4 Where is an alternate place you could go, if necessary?

Scenario 3: Imagine that an emergency happens in the middle of the school day.

1 What is the plan at your children's schools?

2 What is your family's plan for getting in touch with each other and/or meeting each other?

3 Where does each family member carry a list of emergency contact phone numbers (book bag, briefcase, wallet)?

Emergency Supply Kit

THINGS TO THINK ABOUT:

1. What items in your emergency kit require batteries, chargers, or other supplementary items?

2. Does a member of your family require daily medicine? If this medicine requires refrigeration, do you know how to keep it cold during an emergency?

3. Do you live in a cold weather climate and need to put extra coats or blankets in your kit?

4. Do you have an infant in your family that needs diapers and/or formula?

5. Do you have all the things you need for your pet (e.g., food and water) in your kit?

6. What important family documents should you have on hand (e.g., identification, insurance forms, etc.)?

Emergency Plans

THINGS TO THINK ABOUT:

1. Is your family aware of the school's communication plans in the event of an emergency?

2. Does everyone in your family have the phone number for an out-of-town contact that can relay messages during an emergency?

3. Have you selected meeting places inside and outside of your neighborhood?

4. If you have pets, what is your plan for making sure that they are safe during an emergency? Where would they go if you needed to evacuate?

Go to the *Ready Kids* section of www.ready.gov to create your own Family Communication Plan and Emergency Supply Kit.

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