Literature Lesson Idea Going to School Olympics

Prepare

- Download and copy “Going-to-School Olympics” by Dennis Richard Andersen and Amy Glaser Gage

Materials

- “Going-to-School Olympics” by Dennis Richard Andersen and Amy Glaser Gage

Explore

1. Have a volunteer read the poem aloud. What physical activities is the speaker doing on the way to school and at school? (Skipping, zipping, striding, gliding, swinging, flinging, racing, chasing, jumping, pumping, dashing, flashing homework) Ask students to describe what they visualize the speaker is doing as you read each phrase aloud.

Point out that people participate in many physical activities each day that they may not think of as activities that help improve their physical fitness. What activities do you do that you may not think of as exercise but can help keep you physically fit? Encourage discussion. Students may mention walking or riding their bicycles to school, walking a dog, riding bicycles or in-line skating in their neighborhoods, climbing stairs and helping with yardwork or housework. Adults also participate in daily physical activities that they may not think of as exercise. What are some of these? (Housework, gardening, strolling or carrying children, walking to catch a bus or train)

2. What does the speaker of the poem mean by "winning the gold"? (Winning a gold medal, signifying first prize, in the Olympics) Point out that the speaker is comparing his or her daily physical activities to a formal athletic event, the Olympics. Encourage discussion of the Olympics. What are the two major kinds of Olympic Games? (Summer and winter) How often are the Olympics held? (Generally, every four years) What Olympic events have you seen on television? Encourage discussion. Students may mention Summer Olympic events such as swimming, gymnastics and track and field, and Winter Olympic events such as skating, skiing and ice hockey. Ask students to describe the events and to speculate about what might be involved in learning to do each activity well enough to be in the Olympics.

3. On a sheet of chart paper, draw a continuum line. On the left side of the line, write “Walking around the block.” On the right side, write “Olympics—figure skating.” Point out that these represent two extremes of physical activity, from everyday exercise that almost everyone can do, to an activity that takes special talent, lessons and much practice. Have students come to the chart and write additional physical activities that fit between the two extremes on the continuum.