



LESSON: Exploring the Himalayas

Episode: "Nat the Yak"

Franny travels to Tibet, where she meets a young girl named Rinchen and her herd of yaks. Rinchen must find a way to keep her herd together. When Franny meets Nat, a talkative young yak, she convinces him to take the other yaks back into the herd. In *Franny's Treasures*, the audience learns about traditional clothing worn around the world.

Learning Objectives/Skills

Children will:

- * understand different terrains, specifically mountains vs. flat lands.
- * be able to describe living in a house/apartment vs. living in a tent.
- * be able to describe how the temperature influences the types of clothing a person wears.
- * learn how animals contribute to daily life.

Grade
PreK - 2nd Grade

Subject
Social Studies, Earth Science,
Art & Culture

National Standards
Arts: NA-VA.K-4.1,
NA-T.K-4.1;
Geography: NSS-G.K-12.1,
NSS-G.K-12.2, NSS-G.K-12.4;
Science: NS.K-4.1, NS.K-4.4

Approx. Times
30-40 minutes
(Plus 15-20 minutes prep)

Overview

The Himalayan mountain range is home to some of the highest mountains in the world. Traditional life in this mountainous area can be incredibly different than life in a city. Some people who live in the Himalayan mountains are called nomads. They do not live in houses, but in tents that they can pack up and move around throughout the year. These tents range from strong, interwoven wooden structures covered in layers of fabrics and animal hides, like the yurts (huts) of the Mongolian nomads, to thin structures made from woven yak hair in the regions of Tibet. Nomads move purposefully

throughout the year, finding the best places for their livestock to graze, and meet in certain locations every year to trade and purchase supplies. The climate varies in the Himalayas and is often quite severe. The unpredictable weather includes monsoons, floods, high winds, and snowstorms. To accommodate this diverse climate, nomads often dress in several warm layers of bright woven fabrics, which often have intricate geometric designs.

In these activities, children will create mountains using clay and paper, and discuss what it might be like to live in the mountains. They will learn about nomadic peoples and how their yaks provide wool, milk, and often help them carry heavy things. The children will make yak puppets and take turns "herding" them around the room or playground.



LESSON: Exploring the Himalayas

Materials

Classroom materials:

- Globe or world map
- Glue sticks
- Scissors
- Tape
- Stapler
- Markers or crayons
- Yak pictures
- Photos of the Himalayas: nomads, nomad tents (Himalayan and Mongolian), people in traditional Tibetan dress, Himalayan mountains, and Mount Everest
- Craft sticks
- String

Each child will need:

- Heavy paper, card stock, or paper plates
- Clay or playdough (blue, brown, and green)
- Yak puppet template photocopied onto card stock
- Craft stick
- Yarn

Prep

Activity 1:

- Assemble the following materials: globe or world map, string, scissors, pictures of the Himalayas, pictures of Mount Everest.

Activity 2:

- Assemble the following material for a classroom: markers or crayons, tape, glue sticks, and scissors (if children are old enough to handle them).
- Pass out four sheets of paper per child.



LESSON: Exploring the Himalayas

Prep (continued)

Activity 3:

- Assemble the following materials: photos of the Himalayas, nomads, nomad Tents (Himalayan and Mongolian), and people in traditional Tibetan dress.

Activity 4:

- Assemble the following materials: yak pictures.

Activity 5:

- Assemble the following materials: glue sticks, stapler, scissors, tape, markers or crayons, yak puppet template, yak pictures, craft sticks, paper, and pencils. (For smaller hands, you may need to pre-cut the yak puppets out of the template, and cut strands of yarn for easier gluing.)





LESSON: Exploring the Himalayas

Activity 1 - The Mountains of the Himalayas

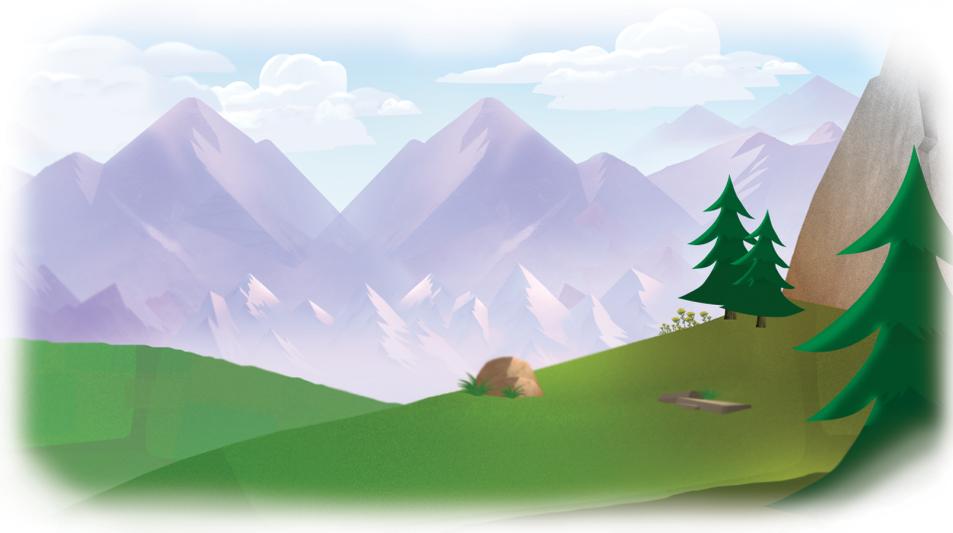
1. Lead the children in a discussion about where they live. Ask them the following questions:
 - *What does your house look like?*
 - *What city do you live in?*
 - *What state do you live in?*
2. Ask the children if they have ever used a map or a globe to find out where they live. Point to Asia on the map or globe. Explain that Asia is a large area of the world and home to the Himalayas, an area with the largest mountains in the world.
3. Ask the children if they understand what mountains are. Show them a picture of the Himalayan mountain range. Ask the children what they notice about the picture.
 - *Are mountains tall? Or are they short?*
 - *How is a mountain different than flat land?*
 - *How big is a mountain?*
4. Show them a picture of Mount Everest and explain that Mount Everest is the tallest mountain in the world (over 29,000 feet). Ask:
 - *Who is taller: Your mom or you? The school building or you? A mountain or you?*
5. Use a piece of string to measure the height of a child.
6. Use another piece of string to measure the height of an adult.
7. Use another string to measure the height of the room.
8. Compare the three strings. Ask the children:
 - *How much string would it take to measure a mountain?*



LESSON: Exploring the Himalayas

Activity 2 - Making Mountains

1. Using a piece of cardstock (or heavy paper or a paper plate), ask the children to draw lakes in the middle or on the side of the paper.
2. Give the children clay (or playdough) in the following colors: blue, brown & green.
3. Prompt the children to mold the clay into mountains. Encourage the children to blend the colors of the clay to resemble the colors in the pictures of the Himalayas.
4. If a large group is doing this activity, you may want to connect each student's mountain together to create a mountain range.





LESSON: Exploring the Himalayas

Activity 3 - Who Lives in the Mountains?

1. Explain to the children that some people live and travel around the mountains all year long. They are called "nomads." Instead of having a house made of wood or bricks, they live in tents. Ask the children:
 - *What would it be like to live in a tent?*
 - *What would happen if it snowed?*
 - *What things would you need to make sure that you are protected?*
2. On a piece of paper, draw or make a list of all of the things you think would be important to have if you lived in a tent.
3. Show a picture of nomads (and their clothing).
4. Discuss the differences between what the nomads are wearing and what the students are wearing. Ask:
 - *What kind of clothing are the nomads wearing?*
 - *Based on their clothing, do you think it's cold or warm there?*





LESSON: Exploring the Himalayas

Activity 4 - Yaks

1. Explain to the children that yaks are special animals that live in Central Asia and Tibet. They are incredibly important to people who live in this area because they help carry heavy loads of supplies, provide milk and butter, and have hair that can be spun into yarn to make clothes and blankets.
2. Show children a picture of a yak. Ask children what they notice about the yak:
 - *How is it different from a dog?*
 - *Does it have long or short hair?*
 - *What color is the yak?*
3. Yaks are incredibly hairy. They can have two long horns and can be gray, brown, or black. Many yaks wear bells so that their owners can keep track of them.



LESSON: Exploring the Himalayas

Activity 5 - Yak Puppet

1. Invite the children to cut out the yak template (pre-cut for younger children).
2. Prompt the students to color the body and horns of the yak.
3. Assist the children in cutting long strings of yarn and gluing them onto the yak.
4. Help the children staple or glue a craft stick to the middle of the yak.





LESSON: Exploring the Himalayas

Activity 6 - Yak Herding

1. The nomads who live in the Himalayas take care of yaks all year long. They herd the yaks, or move them to places where there is more grass for them to eat.
2. Ask the children to line up with the yaks they made in Activity 5.
3. Choose someone to be the herder and lead the yaks from one place to another (*this is a great playground activity*).
4. Help the children staple or glue a craft stick to the middle of the yak.

Follow up discussion:

Ask the children:

- How are animals used to help people?
- What animals give us the milk that we drink?
- What animals give us wool or hair that we spin into clothing?
- What other animals are herded?



LESSON: Exploring the Himalayas

Literacy Connections

- ***Go Track a Yak***, by Tony Johnston
- ***Homes in Many Cultures***, by Heather Adamson
- ***Where is Tibet?: A Story in Tibetan and English***, by Gina Halpern

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