

# School Playgrounds Around the World

## Grade Cluster - 3-5

### NETS-S - 2 - Communication and Collaboration

#### Quick Look:

A group of students want to know about the kind of playgrounds that kids at other schools have to play on. They wondered if the location and environment had any impact on their playground designs. Students create a global project to find the answer to the question, "What are school playgrounds like in other places and how does the environment impact the structures and design of their playground?"

#### Scenario:

Students were looking at the latest national Geographic Magazine when they stumbled across a very different looking playground. They wondered why it was built the way it was and how the different pieces of equipment were used. One student noted that it looked very hot and dry there. They began discussing their playground and wondering what kids in other schools had for playgrounds. They wondered what a playground might be like in a hot, dry climate, a wet climate or a cold, snowy climate.

We were just beginning a study of children in other cultures and this was a great topic for a global studies project. We decided to create an Internet project to answer the question of, "What playgrounds are like at other schools around our country or even the world?" Students spent several sessions discussing playgrounds, their design, size, structures, locations, and what impact the climate might have on a playground's design and equipment. They decide to invite nine classrooms to join them in learning about each other's playgrounds. Thus began the project "School Playgrounds Around the World." (2c)

The students begin by writing a description of their project and then submitting it to Global Schools Network. We create a Tweet on my Twitter account to help spread the word of the project. The goal of the project is to find out how the climate and the environment impact the design and structure of a school's playgrounds. The classrooms analyze the data collected, create charts and graphs from the information, and work together on a Google Presentation that highlights each school's playground. Students use the information they learn about playgrounds to design a new playground for their school. All the classes have access to the same information, so each participating classroom can use the information the way it works best for them. (2a, 2b, 2c,2d) Throughout the project all the work completed by the groups is posted on the class blog, so the parents, community members and participating schools can follow the progress of the project.

The students know they need to get information about the participating schools so they work in small groups using a graphic organizer to create a list of questions to ask the participants. Using the electronic white board to share their questions, the class votes on the questions they will ask. (For example, name of school and address, grade level,

number of students in the class, teacher's email address, kinds of equipment on playground, how is the playground used, playground size, etc.) They also create a list of questions related to the environment and climate where the school is located. They specifically want to know what impact the environment has on the design of the playground. (6a, 6b)

Project descriptions are developed (contact resources, create presentations, data collectors.) and students choose the group he/she wants to be in. The groups begin their assigned tasks. All groups meet weekly to share the work they have been doing, to discuss and solve problems and revise the plan if needed. The following groups are formed.

The “Communications” group is responsible for communicating with the teacher and students in the other classrooms. They use [email](#) to keep everyone informed on the progress of the project. They notify the groups when the shared documents are ready for everyone to use, ask questions of the participants and respond to the other classes’ questions. The teachers work with this group to set up several "Skype Days". On these prearranged days the classrooms communicate together using [Skype](#). (2b, 6b)

The "Forms Creator" group creates a [Google Forms](#) shared document that participating classrooms fill out, based on the questions the students developed. The "Forms" group is in charge of collecting the information and pictures that schools send about their playgrounds, and organize the information into a book using a publishing program. The book is published in [issuu](#) and is titled [Playgrounds of the World](#). (2a)

The "[Google Presentation](#)" group is in charge of making sure that the participating schools complete their slides for the presentation. The slides include the name and address of the school and the class, playground pictures and description and facts about their environment. The group designs the slides representing our school. They use the [digital camera](#) to take pictures of our playground and write the text for the slides. (2a, 2d)

The “[Google Earth](#)” group locates each participating school on [Google Earth](#), identifies the school and puts in a picture of that school’s playground. The “.klm” file is shared with the participating schools. (2c, 6b)

The "Reporters" group analyzes all the playground data. They use the Venn diagram format from a [graphic organizer](#) to compare and contrast their playground with those of the other schools. The work they create is shared with the class through a [Google Presentation](#), and is posted on the class [blog](#) and print outs of the information are posted in the classroom. (2b)

After analyzing all the playground information, the "Design a Playground" group leads a class discussion on what a new playground for their school might look like and the kinds of equipment that would be on the playground. The “Design” group uses [Google SketchUp](#) to design one or two new playgrounds for their school. Their final designs and a short narrative describing their new playgrounds are published on the class [blog](#). The designs are printed out in color and are displayed in the classroom and the front hall of the school. The information is shared with the School Playground Parent Committee. (2a, 2b, 2c)

All the playground designs created by the participating classrooms are shared in a [Google Docs](#) file and the file is uploaded to [issuu](#) to create a book, titled [Playground Designs](#). The link to the book is shared with all the participants and is put on individual class *blogs* for sharing with parents. (2a, 2d)

Students realize they can extend this project by having schools submit a school location and a playground picture and they add this information to the [Google Earth](#) map they have created. They use [Twitter](#) to let the world know about the project. (2c)

**Student Standards** – The following NETS-S are noted in the Scenario:

2. Communication and Collaboration –A, B, C, D
6. Technology Operations and Concepts- A, B

**Teacher Standards** –Teachers who teach this unit address the following NETS-T:

1. Facilitate and Inspire Student Learning and Creativity- A, B, C, D
2. Design and Develop Digital-Age Learning Experiences and Assessments- A, C
3. Model Digital-Age Work and Learning- A, B
4. Promote and Model Digital Citizenship and Responsibility- D
5. Engage in Professional Growth and Leadership-A

## Content Grade Expectations

The scenario writer has identified the following content grade expectations that s/he felt might be assessed in this scenario. In most of these scenarios, there may well be opportunities to assess other or additional content grade expectations across a variety of disciplines. If you are interested in developing a unit or lessons based on the following scenario, and you don't see any grade expectations in your content area, we encourage you to capture the ideas presented in the scenario and make it your own by adding components that address the grade expectations you are most interested in assessing.

### H&SS 3-4:1 Students initiate an inquiry by...

- Asking relevant and focusing questions based on what they have seen, what they have read, what they have listened to, and/or what they have researched.

### H&SS 3-4:2 Students develop a hypothesis, thesis, or research statement by...

- Using prior knowledge to predict results or proposing a choice about a possible action.

### H&SS 3-4:3 Students design research by...

- Identifying resources for finding answers to their questions.
- Identifying tasks and how they will be completed, including a plan for citing sources.
- Planning how to organize information so it can be shared

**H&SS 3-4:5 Students develop reasonable explanations that support the research statement by...**

- Organizing and displaying information in a manner appropriate to the research statement through tables, graphs, maps, dioramas, charts, narratives, and/or posters.
- Classifying information and justifying groupings based upon observations, prior knowledge, and/or research.

**H&SS 3-4:14 Civics, Government and Society**

Students act as citizens by...

- Demonstrating positive interaction with group members.
- Identifying problems, planning and implementing solutions in the classroom, school or community.

**Mathematics Grade Expectations: Grades 3, 4, 5**

**Standard 7.9: Data, Statistics, and Probability Concepts**

- M4: 23 Interprets a given representation (line plots, tables, bar graphs, pictographs, or circle graphs) to answer questions related to the data, to analyze the data to formulate or justify conclusions, to make predictions, or to solve problems.

**S3-4:1 Students demonstrate their understanding of SCIENTIFIC QUESTIONING by...**

- Identifying at least one variable that affects a system and using that variable to generate an experimental question that includes a cause and effect relationship.