



## Teacher Guide



## Ask an Alaskan Living and Working in Alaska

## **Table of Contents**

	<b>Page</b>
Lesson Overview	3
Lesson Objectives	3
Background Information	4
Before the Distance Learning Program	4
During the Distance Learning Program	5
After the Distance Learning Program	5
Extensions	5

## **Lesson Overview**

When you think of Alaska, you might imagine seeing northern lights, climbing the tallest mountain in North America, or watching sled dogs race in the Iditarod. In this program, students have the chance to ask rangers from Denali National Park about the amazing places, events, and sights that make Alaska unique. They can also ask about daily life experiences that might be different from where you are from, such as living without plumbing, or starting a car or taking a ski at 30 degrees below zero. This learner-led program, students explore what it is like to live and work in rural Alaska.

This program flexible by design. If your class is studying specific topics such as the gold rush, adaptations of wildlife, habitats (specifically the tundra and taiga), or the history of the National Park Service, etc. please let us know in advance. We can tailor the program and add sections to reflect those subject matters and/or topics.

The last half of the program can be an in-depth dive into a specific subject/topic, or it can remain as an informal question and answer time. Standards are purposefully absent for this program; this allows for flexibility regarding what subject matter is covered.

## **Lesson Objectives**

*Students will be able to:*

1. Compare and contrast living conditions and animals of interior Alaska vs their home state.
2. Describe what it is like to live in interior Alaska.
3. Explain specific subject matter (determined by teacher) more in depth using Alaska themed topics.

## **Suggested Lesson Progression:**

Before Distance Learning Program

- 15-30 minutes: computer set up, pre-activity (student reading), and questions.

During Distance Learning Program

- 45-60 minutes: Zoom session

After Distance Learning Program

- 30-60 minutes: post-activity

## **Background Information**

Please read the Student Reading for background information on Denali. The reading is broken into sections regarding the wildlife, sled dogs, geology, vegetation, and history of Denali National Park and Preserve. A fact sheet and vocabulary are also included.

### **Alaska**

Visitors come to Alaska for many different reasons. However, the majority of them come during the summer to see the majestic scenery, Denali (North America's tallest mountain), glaciers, and wildlife. A hearty few make the adventure north during the winter to experience the long days of darkness and to witness the northern lights! Why people move to Alaska is a different question – ask your ranger to find out what inspired them to move to this challenging and beautiful place.

### **Denali National Park and Preserve**

This park was originally established as Mt. McKinley National Park in 1917 to protect wildlife and its habitat. At that time there were many people living and hunting in this area, and they needed food for themselves and their dog teams. The easiest source of meat was hunting Dall sheep.

Charles Sheldon, a hunter and naturalist, came to the Denali area in 1906 to study Dall sheep. Seeing the need to protect this area and the Dall sheep from commercial hunting, Sheldon lobbied Congress to set the area aside as a national park. Congress agreed with Sheldon and Mt. McKinley National Park was created in 1917. In 1980, through the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act, the park's name was changed and its acreage tripled. Denali National Park and Preserve now covers more than 6 million acres, or an area about the size of New Hampshire!

## **Before Distance Learning Program**

**Time:** 15-30 minutes

### **Materials**

#### **For each student**

- Pre-Activity - Student Reading (Optional)

#### **For the class**

- Computer setup for viewing Zoom conference session

### **Getting Ready**

1. **Check computer setup.** This is a good time to make sure that your computer setup and Zoom connection is functioning optimally. Check with a Denali Education staff member if you have any questions or would like to perform a pre-conference connection.
2. **Student reading.** Students are asked to complete a reading about Denali National Park and Preserve. Decide whether you want them to read this as homework, in class individually, or together as a class. You might choose to assign particular sections, rather than the whole document, depending on what subjects you are focusing on.
3. **Submit class questions.** Have students collectively identify three questions that they want to ask

the ranger at the end of the Zoom session. Please submit these questions to the Education Team at [Denali\\_education@NPS.gov](mailto:Denali_education@NPS.gov) at least 24 hours in advance of the Zoom session.

## **During the Distance Learning Program**

**Time:** 45-60 minutes

### **Getting Ready**

1. **Student volunteers.** Students will interact with a ranger during the program. Keep this in mind and be ready to identify the selected students.
2. **Establish Zoom connection.** Expect an email with a connection link at least 15 minutes prior to the program.

### **Procedure**

1. **Orient your students.** Before connecting via Zoom, show students the set-up and go over any standards of behavior that students should follow during the session. Remind them that the education staff may not be able to see and hear everyone in the classroom, so they should look to you as an intermediary when they want to make a comment or ask a question.
2. **Connect with Denali.** At the designated time, click on the zoom link to connect with the education staff. The program may last 45-60 minutes, depending on student input and questions.
3. **Let the communication begin!** Please be available to the education staff during the entire length of the program. At the end of the program be ready to help facilitate questions.
4. **After the program.** Take some time after the program for students to discuss and provide feedback about their experience. Let them know that if they have further questions for the education staff, they can contact us at [Denali\\_education@nps.gov](mailto:Denali_education@nps.gov)

## **After the Distance Learning Program**

### **Post Activity**

**Time:** 30-60 minutes

### **Procedure**

- **Draw or write a story.** Have the students draw a picture or write a story about what it is like to live in interior Alaska.

### **Extensions**

- **Create a Venn diagram:** Compare and contrast what it's like to live in interior Alaska vs their home state. How is life both similar and different from where they live?
- **Draw or Write/Reflection:** Students can draw or write reflections on how life in interior Alaska is similar to and different from life in their home state.