TeachersFirst READING TREKS

A Ticket Around the World

Teacher Guide

Access Reading Trek Map

Grade Level & Content Areas

Ages: 5–8
Grades: K–5 (read-aloud), 3–5 (independent)
Reading Level: 5th grade
Lexile: 840L
Guided Reading Level: O
Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA): 40

Content Areas: English/language arts, reading, informational text, and social studies (including culture, identity, geography, and global connections).

Synopsis of Book

A Ticket Around the World by Natalia Diaz and Melissa Owens, illustrated by Kim Smith, is an engaging informational picture book that introduces young readers to cultures and daily life around the world. The book follows a young boy as he visits friends in 13 countries across six continents. At each stop, readers learn about the country's geography, languages, foods, traditions, landmarks, wildlife, and celebrations. The book combines nonfiction geography and cultural studies with a narrative travel format that helps students compare similarities and differences among countries. Each country's two-page spread includes maps, colorful illustrations, and accessible facts that support early global awareness and multicultural understanding.

Standards

Common Core State Standards for K–5

Reading: Literature

- Key Ideas and Details
- Craft and Structure
- Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

Speaking and Listening

- Comprehension and Collaboration
- Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas

Writing

- Text Types and Purposes
- Research to Build and Present Knowledge

National Curriculum Standards for Social Studies

- Theme 1: CULTURE
- Theme 3: PEOPLE, PLACES, AND ENVIRONMENTS
- Theme 4: INDIVIDUAL DEVELOPMENT AND IDENTITY
- Theme 9: GLOBAL CONNECTIONS

National Core Arts Standards for Visual Arts

- CREATING
- RESPONDING

Social Justice Standards

- Identity
- Diversity

Using a TeachersFirst® Reading Trek to Explore This Book

TeachersFirst Reading Treks create a virtual field trip of resources about a piece of literature or a text using the My Maps feature of Google Maps. To motivate and enrich student reading, teachers and students can reference this visual collection of web resources and images as they relate to the contents of a book.

TeachersFirst has done the hard work for you! Use the activities in this teacher guide and the accompanying Reading Trek map as you and your students explore this book. And if you feel inspired, you (or your students) can create your own Reading Trek about this or another book!

Using This Reading Trek in Class

Below is a list of ideas for using this Reading Trek in your educational setting.

Working with the Map:

1. Introduce the book to the whole class on an interactive whiteboard using the Reading Trek map, highlighting its various layers.
2. At each map location, discuss what you would need to pack if you were to take a trip to each destination. Students can draw or cut out pictures of appropriate clothing, gear, or supplies for different climates and activities at each stop.
3. For each location, imagine you are writing a postcard home. Write a short message from that place describing what you see, hear, or feel.
4. Read the information on a pin and imagine you are there. Write a short sentence about what you see, hear, or smell at that place.
5. Choose a pin that looks interesting and explain why you would like to visit it. Draw a small picture or write a sentence about it. For a digital option, try Google Drawings (TeachersFirst review).
6. After exploring all the locations together, have students vote on their favorite place from the trip. Create a class graph or chart showing which locations were most popular and discuss why students chose them. For a digital option, take a poll using Vevox (TeachersFirst review).
7. As each country is introduced in the book, open the corresponding pin together as a class so students can see real photos and videos alongside Kim Smith's illustrations. Ask: *"What did the illustrator get right? What differences do you notice? What surprised you?"*

Extension Activities:

1. Have students choose a location from the map and draw themselves participating in an everyday activity shown in the book or documented in a reliable source. They can label details about the setting, climate, clothing, or activities in that place.
2. Create digital passports in Canva (TeachersFirst review) or Google Slides (TeachersFirst review) with virtual stamps for each country visited.
3. Create a classroom “travel vlog” using a tool such as Clipchamp (TeachersFirst review), with students sharing facts and reflections about each location.
4. Create a digital travel journal using Book Creator (TeachersFirst review). Include drawings, feelings, or what you learned during the trip.
5. Students can research a location from the map using resources such as National Geographic Kids (TeachersFirst review). Use a green screen app to record “students presenting from a background image of the location they researched.”
6. Students can create a simple Venn diagram or chart comparing their own home/community to one of the places from the book. They identify similarities and differences (weather, animals, buildings, activities). For a digital option, try Canva’s Venn Diagram Creator (TeachersFirst review).

7. Research animals from each location and create digital fact cards using Google Slides (TeachersFirst review).
8. Students examine Kim Smith's bold, flat illustration style by studying the book's pictures and discussing what they notice about her use of color and shape. Using Google Drawings (TeachersFirst review) and teacher guidance, have students recreate a character or landmark from a country featured in the book in Kim Smith's style, filling in shapes with bright, solid colors.

Helpful Resources

From TeachersFirst:

- TeachersFirst CurriConnects Book List - Maps
- TeachersFirst Review of Google My Maps
- OK2Ask: Building Background Knowledge with Reading Treks
- OK2Ask: Engage & Inspire with Reading Treks

Other Resources:

- National Geographic Kids country pages
- Ducksters – Geography for Kids
- Kids World Travel Guide
- School Teaching Books Activities