



Activities for *Super Grandpa*

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Adapted from lesson plans by Christina Nugent,
Presidential Award-Winner for Excellence in Teaching of Mathematics

A. Linking Geography

Where is Sweden? What are its neighboring countries? Does the physical shape of Sweden lend itself to a week-long bicycle race? If so, why? What countries besides Sweden comprise “Scandinavia”? (Norway, Denmark, Finland and Iceland.) How is the climate in Scandinavia? In what season did the race likely take place?

B. Social Studies Points for Discussion

1. When you hear the word “grandpa,” what do you think of? Why would everyone in Sweden call the cyclist “Grandpa?” Why would you call someone a term like “Grandma” or “Uncle” even if you are not really related?
2. The word “stereotype” refers to an overly simplified image of people based on their gender, age, race, religion and so forth. Stereotypes tend to be incorrect and are almost always damaging. In this story what is the stereotype, or prejudice, regarding old people? How did this stereotype affect the main character? How did his actions “shatter the stereotype,” as described in the Author’s Note at the end?

C. Making Math Connections

1. In this story, the Tour of Sweden race covers 1700 kilometers. Why does most of the rest of the world count kilometers whereas in the U.S. we measure distance in miles? How many meters are in a “kilo-meter”? How many kilometers in a mile? (1.61) If Gustaf rode a total of 1600 miles in around 11 days, covering the same distance each day, how many miles per day did he ride?
2. What if Gustaf did not ride the same amount each day? What is a combination of miles he could have ridden? (Work out one example with the class.) [Note: this could be done for the entire 1,600 miles, including the distance he rode to reach the starting line; or it can be done only for the 1,000 miles of the race proper.]
3. Have students work in groups to figure out as many combinations of the number of miles he could have ridden a day.

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4. Closure: Have students present the different combinations they came up with. Discuss the reasonableness of their combinations. Discuss the strategies they used to solve the problem.

D. Extensions

1. Allow students to read the book and formulate some of their own questions based on the book. How many miles did he ride each day? About how fast did he ride? How much sleep did he get altogether? Even though the answers to some of these questions might not be exact, students can estimate answers or take reasonable guesses and justify their estimates.

Read Millions to Measure by the same author. Why do you think the United States does not use the metric system? Do you think we should switch? Why or why not?