It’s a Wild Ride | Learning That Works
Phase One: Social Studies Activities

Social studies classes start with an Internet Scavenger Hunt to familiarize students with Web sites that have data on roller coasters. Students discuss different ways information is categorized so it easily accessible.

Internet research is the focus of the social studies curriculum for this unit. Research is central to the field of social studies, and now more than ever, students need to develop effective online search strategies. Students begin by searching the Internet without any instruction other than to find the answers to the scavenger hunt.

The scavenger hunt has students find information in math, science, language arts, and social studies topics. It requires them to selectively read through Web pages and use contextual clues to find information. Students find as many answers as they can within a time limit. The teacher then facilitates a discussion about the answers discovered and reviews each site with the students, pointing out tips on how to navigate through different Web site designs.

Internet Scavenger Hunt
Working in pairs at the computer, students visit each of the Web sites below and answer as many questions as they can during a one-hour session in the lab.

Web Site 1: http://www.learner.org/exhibits/parkphysics/coaster/*
- Where the first American roller coaster was and what year was it created?
- Explain how the two types of energy work in a roller coaster.
- What are the different types of wheels on a roller coaster?
- What was the nation's first theme park?
- What was the first tubular steel coaster called?
- What is momentum?
- What is velocity?

Web Site 2: http://www.ultimaterollercoaster.com/*
- What is the tallest and fastest roller coaster in the world?
- How fast does it go?
- Where is the Supreme Scream located?
- What amusement park has the Freefall?
- What roller coaster has the longest drop?
- What roller coaster is the longest in the world?

Web Site 3: http://www.themedattraction.com*
- Name 10 careers in the theme park industry.
- What is guideline #7?
- Define the following words according to this Web site: iron rides, amusement park, theme park, and dark ride.
It’s a Wild Ride: A Roller Coaster Design Project

- When was the first steel roller coaster built and by what company? Where is this company located?
- Name five ride manufacturers.

Web Site 4: http://www.search.eb.com/coasters*

- What was used as the “car” on the first roller coaster called “Flying Mountains”?
- How many years did it take to create locking wheels and cabled cars?
- Where was the “American Predecessor” of the roller coaster built?
- In 1873, how long was the ride “Mauch Chunk Switchback” on Mt. Pisgah? How much did it cost?
- By the end of the 19th century, the roller coaster industry was turned upside down. Explain what this meant.
- Describe one fact from the 1920’s, 30’s, 70’s, and 2000.