



# CANADIAN OLYMPIC ACTIVITY CHALLENGE



## ALPINE SKIING

Humans have been skiing for thousands of years as a method of transportation, but the sport of alpine skiing began in Norway in 1850. It wasn't until 1936 that alpine or downhill skiing was first seen in the Olympic Winter Games.

This is not a sport for the faint at heart. The athlete races down a snow-covered hill on skis reaching record speeds of 156 kilometres per hour. That's a hefty speeding ticket waiting to happen!

There are five different events in alpine skiing: downhill, Super-G, giant slalom, slalom, alpine combined, and team event. The race starts at the top of the hill in the start gate, then the athlete races down the hill between poles called gates. The skier is disqualified if they miss a gate.

The speed events are a test of how fast the athlete can go down the hill. This includes the downhill, and the Super-G where the skier must ski through widely spaced gates.

The technical events test how fast a skier can navigate through narrowly spaced gates. A giant slalom course includes panels on the gates with long sweeping turns. A slalom course is set with a single pole for each turn, directing the athlete to make the shortest turn of all events. The gates used for technical events are flexible, and bend if a skier hits them. However, hitting a gate is a skill that if not done correctly, will slow you down.

Canada has been extremely successful in alpine skiing events, capturing 12 Olympic medals and multiple World Championship and World Cup podium finishes.

Learn more about Alpine Skiing at [alpinecanada.org](http://alpinecanada.org)



# ALPINE SKIING TRIVIA

## HIGHLIGHTS



Lucile Wheeler

- Parts of skis found in Russia have been dated to 7000 BC. Skis were used for transportation and hunting.
- Lucile Wheeler won Canada's first Olympic downhill skiing medal at Cortina d'Ampezzo 1956. Anne Heggtveit won Canada's first alpine gold four years later.
- Races can be very close, so they are timed to the 1/100th of a second.

## FEATURED ATHLETE



### ERIK GUAY

OLYMPIAN, SOCHI 2014

The 35-year-old Erik Guay has been racing down snow-covered mountains for over 30 years. He shows no signs of slowing down, having just won the 2017 World Super-G Championships. Despite his recurring knee injuries, Erik always comes back stronger and hungrier for success. Will PyeongChang 2018 be the year that this three-time Olympian wins' Olympic gold?

Learn more about Erik Guay at [www.olympique.ca](http://www.olympique.ca).

# ALPINE SKIING


# ACTIVITIES


Described below are alpine skiing daily physical activities that can be used in the classroom and gym. Have fun!

## HEAD TO HEAD RACING

At the PyeongChang 2018 Olympic Winter Games, the team event will make its Olympic debut. The new event features two female and two male athletes from each country. Each skier faces off against another skier of the same gender from the other team. They race through giant slalom gates (slalom distance), and the winner of the race earns their team one point. The skiers race on similar courses that are beside each other (red course and blue course), and the spectators can see which skier is winning the race. The team with the most points wins, and faces off against another winning team. The competition starts with 16 teams, and continues elimination bracket style until the two most winning teams race for gold and silver.

 **Participants:** teams of 4

 **Space:** gym or playground

 **Equipment:** pylons or red and blue paper/cardboard markers

### SET UP:

Mark out a red and blue course with pylons or paper markers. The markers should be about 1.5 meters apart and offset by about 1 meter. Designate a start/finish line.

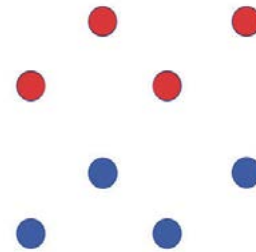
### ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION:

- Have students line up in teams behind the start/finish line. There should be two teams racing, one racing the red course and one racing the blue course. Other teams sit out this round.
- At the start, the first student of each team runs through the course, doing a full loop around each marker (360° turn). When they get to the last marker, they do two full turns around the marker and then complete the course back to the start/finish line.
- When they return, they tag their team's first member. This continues until all members of the team have had a chance to complete the course.
- The winning team faces off against one of the teams that hasn't run the course yet. The winner of that race, competes against a team that hasn't run yet. This continues until all teams have had at least two chances to race.

### ACTIVITY EXTENSIONS:

- Vary the movement patterns to add intensity or make it easier depending on the age of the students.
- Change the course to adopt a ski cross theme. Include small hurdles or other obstacles that must be jumped.
- Create a mini-heat with two children racing head to head through the courses to determine the fastest winner. Start variation for this event would be to have the children start on their stomach facing the course and on the signal "go" they pop up and explode towards the first marker or gate.


Start/Finish



# TUCK AND TURN RELAYS

When downhill skiers race, they try to hold their bodies in a 'tuck' position. This helps them move through the air with less drag, helping them go fast. Their legs are bent at a 90° angle, and their chest is down to their quads. They hold their head up with their eyes looking forward. Holding their poles so that they are pointing behind them and their hands are in front of their face. They make turns from this position by shifting their weight from one foot to the other. This game helps you practice the tuck and builds the leg strength skiers need to make turns at speeds over 140km/hour.

 **Participants:** teams of 4-10 students

 **Space:** gym

 **Equipment:** masking tape



Marie-Michèle Gagnon

## SET UP:

Mark out a course for each team by taping two 3-4-meter-long lines on the gym floor. The lines should be 50-70cm apart. Designate a line on the gym floor as the start/finish line.

## ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION:

- Have students line up in teams behind the start/finish line.
- At the start, the first student of each team hops back and forth between the lines on their right foot until they have covered the entire distance of the tape.
- When they reach the end of the tape, they should land on both feet and hold a tuck for a count of 3 seconds.
- Once tuck is complete, the student hops back on their left foot to the start/finish line. They then tag the next student on their team.
- This continues until all team members have had a chance to complete the course.


## ACTIVITY EXTENSIONS:


- Have the students alternate right and left leg on each hop.
- Students crouch in the tuck position for a second after each hop.
- Have the students hold one or both arms against their body


# SLALOM RELAYS

---

Both slalom and giant slalom events require that skiers race between the course markers called 'gates'. The skiers want to come as close to the gates as possible, but hitting them can hurt and slow down their time. Also, they are disqualified if they miss a gate.

 **Participants:** teams of 4-10 students

 **Space:** gym, field, or playground

 **Equipment:** 6-8 pylons per team, 2 sticks or poles for each team

## SET UP:

Place the pylons approximately 2 meters apart and at an offset of about a meter to mark out a 'slalom' course for each team. Designate a start/finish line using gym floor or playing field markings or by setting out lines using pylons.

## ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION:

- Have students line up in teams behind the start/finish line. Give the starting student the sticks or poles.
- At the start, students run around the gates (pylons), keeping their poles out in front, from the first to last marker. The poles must be pointed downward.
- The students go around the final pylon, and then run back through the pylons from the other direction.
- The starting student gives the poles to the second student on their team, who repeats the course. This continues until all team members have had a chance to run through the course.

## ACTIVITY EXTENSIONS:

- Helmets and goggles can be added for effect.
- Vary the course design to simulate slalom and giant slalom disciplines. The gates in the slalom are much closer together than those in the giant slalom.

---

# BRINGING IT TO THE CLASSROOM

---

During the 1970s and early 1980s, the Canadian skiers were known as the Crazy Canucks. Use the Internet to research the Crazy Canucks, and write a paragraph describing who they were and why they were called "crazy".

## INSTANT ACTIVITY:

Only have a minute of classroom time to get up and be active? This activity will get the heart pumping. Bench Jump Overs build the power that alpine skiers need to make tight turns as they race down a mountain.

Stand on one side of a bench (or chair) facing forward. With your hands, grab the bench for support. With your feet together, jump over the bench from one side to the other. Continue to hop from side to side. How many can you do in one minute?