

Spearfish Canyon 1938

Teaching Tip

Tourism Promotion: Then & Now

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Tourism is big business in South Dakota and it has been for a long time. The following information from the South Dakota Department of Tourism illustrates this point.

- Tourism-related activity generated 19.41% of all state and local tax revenue in 2013, or \$295 million.
- The travel and tourism industry supported nearly 28,000 jobs in 2013, which means 1 out of 11 jobs in South Dakota depends on travel and tourism.
- \$892: The additional amount of taxes each S.D. household would have to pay if tourism didn't exist.
- For every \$1 spent on marketing, South Dakota receives \$5 back in tax revenues. ([More](#))



Women holding "tame" coyote pups. (Still from the film)

During this activity your students will compare and contrast a South Dakota promotional film from 1938 to modern South Dakota tourism videos. Then your students will write a promotional Tweet and Facebook entry encouraging their family/friends to visit a destination in South Dakota.

Process:

Day 1 (30min-45min)

- Introduce the activity by showing the "Spearfish Canyon 1938" video (Formats: [DLL](#) / [Watch PBS](#)) and the photos on the following [website](#). In 1938, the Burlington Northern Railroad produced and distributed the film in an effort to draw people to the Black Hills. The film would likely have been shown in movie theaters in advance of the featured program. (The film includes many situations that may have been encouraged at the time, but seem dangerous/humorous now.)
- Watch current promotional videos on the South Dakota Department of Tourism [YouTube](#) site. A few direct links are provided below:
 - [5 minute video](#)
 - [1 minute spot](#)
 - [30 sec spot](#)

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- Compare and contrast the video from 1938 to the modern Department of Tourism videos. Possible topics for discussion:
 - Safety concerns (Possible discussion: The 1938 video verbally encouraged dangerous activities; do the modern videos also encourage dangerous activities? If so, how do they encourage the activities differently and /or the same?)
 - Production format: The 1938 video is slower with complete narration compared to the current, fast paced, music/technology driven format. Do we expect this type of format now? Which is more appealing/entertaining.
 - Do they appeal to families, independence or both?
 - Are they effective?
 - More...



Girl climbing face of a mountain with a rope (Still from the film)

Day 2 (30min – 45min)

- Have the students select a location in South Dakota they have visited or would like to visit. They should research the location using the Internet. Personal photos or photos from trustworthy sites ([South Dakota State Government Flickr pages](#)) should be included.
- The students should design a promotional Tweet and Facebook entry encouraging their family/friends to visit the destination. (The Tweets and Facebook entries do not have to be entered onto the actual sites, unless you have the capabilities at your school.) Example [Facebook entries](#) on the Department of Tourism site.
- Share the results with the entire class.

Taking it to the Next Level:

- Open Enrollment: Produce a promotional video to encourage students to attend your school.