

‘The Ridge’

Enquiry Question(s)

Should Danny MacAskill have been stopped from making his latest video ?

or

What makes the Cuillin Hills an extreme environment ?

or

What makes the Cuillin Hills a special place ?

or

How did the geology of Skye create the Cuillins (and allow Danny to cycle on them?)

Still from video

“I’ve always wondered if it would be possible for me to ride my mountain bike up there” –
Danny MacAskill

In his video released in early October 2014, Danny decides to **cycle** in the **Cuillin Hills** on his home island of Skye, and follow parts of the famous **Cuillin Ridge**. He rows across from Elgol and into Loch Coruisk, from where he makes his way up to the ridge, climbs the Inaccessible Pinnacle, and then descends the path from Coire Lagan to end at Glen Brittle beach.

He risks his life in what might be his most impressive video yet, filmed by a drone and GoPro cameras, and with some heart-stopping moments as he travels through the mountain scenery, and along narrow paths with sheer drops on one or more sides.

But should he have been allowed to make the film?

Should this landscape be off limits to any vehicles to preserve the peace and quiet?

Will this encourage others to take their bikes up the mountains and try something similar, and put themselves at risk?

Read the comments in the speech bubbles below and arrange them into an argument for and against.

More speech bubbles to come – feel free to suggest one and who might be saying it...

He is an inspiration

Just imagine if he had crashed into a group of walkers on one of those paths ?

He does a great job for the local tourist board. I guess there'll be lots of people who didn't know how beautiful these mountains are.

He puts himself at risk .

He could have needed mountain rescue -think of the costs!

He proves something to himself.

What was the point? A bloke on a bike, no dramas.

It's one big advert for the bike makers..

He's just eroding the land-another way, not feet but tyres!

A class debate could ensue, with groups preparing to argue their case.

Could use Glenmore Lodge advice on hillwalking to see what is suggested when mountain biking or hillwalking in Scotland. There are some neat little videos to get key points across with regards to safety here: Hillwalking - Hints and tips:

<http://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLrqtph4KNo5cRaql02O8D8J4Xf1o2PXN>

May be a useful prompt for pupils who are unaware of the unique challenges posed by mountain environments.

'Stakeholders'

Identify some appropriate stakeholders using some of the resources listed at the end of the document, particularly the newspaper and other website articles.

Climbers

Naturalists

Scottish conservation bodies

Local tourist board

Red Bull : sponsors

The rider himself.

The film makers

Local guides bio

Local hotels, campsites and b+bs

National Tourist Board.

Going to make use of this source: UK Climbing Forum

<http://www.ukclimbing.com/forums/t.php?t=599509>

How do other people 'use' the ridge?

Running - finlay wild breaking the record speed ascent in 2013.

<http://www.ukclimbing.com/news/item.php?id=68429>

Winter mountaineering - Steve ashworth - <http://www.ukclimbing.com/news/item.php?id=67336>

Also in above link, there is mention of a local guiding company. Example of how the ridge is an important part of the local economy -

Questions to discuss - does this fit the normal impression of the types of jobs in rural areas?
Is the ridge another resource that should be used to provide jobs and employment?

Is this <http://project360.mammut.ch/#!route/1> - go pro ascent of the Eiger north face something that could be done on the cuillin to open it up to more people? Would this help people understand the mountain environment and improve awareness of the ridges geography?

Pupils could write an argument for and against this sort of technology in the mountain environment

Literacy Work

Write a short comment on the following points of view about why Danny should have been stopped – what is *your* opinion on them?

- a) Encouraging other people to take risks
- b) Could have injured someone coming the other way on the path

- c) Could have hurt himself and the mountain rescue teams would then have had to come and rescue him
- d) Noise and disturbance – squeaking brakes
- e) The sound of the drone in the peaceful mountains
- f) Eroding paths
- g) Damaging wire fence

h] Could encourage others to damage the mountain environment.

- building on the last point you could use the example of the Three peaks challenge that results in added pressure on Ben Nevis, Scafell Pike and Snowdon. British Mountaineering Council report with some good quotes here on the impact of people on the local community and environment.
<https://www.thebmc.co.uk/three-peaks-challenge-controlling-the-chaos-in-wasdale>

Extended task: do pupils think this is likely to happen to the Cuillin's, or does there location, size and inaccessibility compared with the Three Peaks mean that this is not an issue?

i His responsibility to family & friends.

j] Impacts on local flora & fauna

What were the advantages ?

Introduced people to this amazing landscape

Provided employment, including the guides at Skye Adventure

<http://skyeadventure.tumblr.com/>

Help the bike maker & Sponsors. [money & jobs]

Help the riders reputation.

Help the drone & the film makers reputation.

Show what a human can achieve.

There was also one final question, which was pointed out by a student when I showed it in lessons:

“What about his boat ?

and how did he get home? [my question]

Another idea for Literacy work is poetry see below.

Another idea is Myth Legend & Story telling.

Local myth says that the Cuillins were created by the Sun god who burnt the ground so much that great blisters appeared and that to this day they have not cooled down enough for snow to settle.

There are 3 theories as to how The Cuillins got their name:

1]From Gaelic hero Cuchulainn,who learnt martial arts from a warrior woman, Scathach.

2]It comes from the Gaelic for holly or Defender.

3] It comes from the Norse word Kjollen or kneel shaped [most likely given Skye's Viking heritage].

All this gives students chances to write creatively about how they think the landscape was formed and/or named.

Place names are an interesting area to develop.

Location filming guide

The film apparently took ten days to make, and the crew had a difficult job with the landscape, although they were very lucky with the weather in the end. The film doesn't show those days when they were less lucky. There were also plenty of ropes used, although you can't see many in the film, and there were also some times when Danny's tricks didn't work first time.

Where was the film made, and what features are shown ?

Use the **Digimap for Schools** Grid Reference tool, or a suitable OS map to identify the locations where the filming took place.

An ESRI **ArcGIS StoryMap** could also be produced using the StoryMap templates that are now available.

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cuillin> provides the names of most of the main peaks, including ones that Danny visited in the film

<i>Time code</i>	<i>Location & GR</i>	<i>Comments</i>
	Loch na Cuilce	Approach to Loch Coruisk, and one way to access the ridge.
	Loch Coruisk	
	Glen Scavaig	
	Sgurr Dearg	
	Inaccessible Pinnacle	
	Coire Lagan	

	Sgurr mhic Choinich Collie's Ledge	
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Feel free to add some that you spot...

You can visit the Loch on the boat Bella Jane in the tourist season: <http://www.bellajane.co.uk/> - have done it myself and it's recommended - alternatively walk in from Elgol via Camasunary - have done that too, although one time Conor got a bit wet....

Once they have been added in, the file can be used to create a GOOGLE EARTH Kml file, and perhaps a flyover of some of the features that Danny visited.

Spot the feature

Useful for those who are exploring some of the **features** that might be found in mountains, or be the result of upland glaciation.

The video features a range of features which are the result of **weathering**, as well as those shaped **by ice**. Surface water in the form of streams and waterfalls can also be seen in the film.

<i>Time code</i>	<i>Feature (& GR)</i>	Description of the feature and how it was formed
	Arete	
	Corrie	
	Weathered rocks	
	Scree slope	
	Ice smoothed rocks - corrie lip	

Imagine Wagner's "Ride of the Valkyries" frozen in stone and hung up like a colossal screen against the sky. It seems as if Nature, when she hurled The Cuillin up into the light of the sun, said, "Their scarred ravines shall lead up to towering spires of rock – unlike any other rock so they will never look the same for very long, now blue, now grey, now silver ... but... always drenched in mystery and terrors

HV Morton, In Praise of Scotland

I love this! Sound & Vision are included like in the film.

Feel free to add some that you spot.

A Waypoint file of summits on the ridge here: <http://www.cuillinridge.co.uk/2009/gps.html>

Geology

One of the areas that we focus on with our unit on **Adventure Landscapes** is geology, where we look at the geology that creates the landscape.

BGS Map viewer: <http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html>

Danny rides on screes and weathered rock for most of the film.

Even when sat on the beach at the end he is sat on weathered rock.

How were the paths that Danny rides on created ?

When did people first start climbing in the Cuillins ?

Who first climbed the Inaccessible Pinnacle, and when ?

Images

Coming soon, some images from when I climbed the In Pinn (and other areas of Skye featured in the film)

Can you include photos/prints of early climbers on The Cuillins? eg Pilkington & Nicolson

Video Link

YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xQ_IQS3VKjA

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#TheRidge is the brand new film from Danny Macaskill... For the first time in one of his films Danny climbs aboard a mountain bike and returns to his native home of the Isle of Skye in Scotland to take on a death-defying ride along the notorious Cuillin Ridgeline.

Explore mountain biking in Scotland here: <http://www.visitscotland.com/see-do/a...>

Five Ten - <http://www.fiveten.com>

ENVE Composites - <http://www.ENVE.com>

Santa Cruz Bicycles - <http://www.santacruzbicycles.com>

A Film by Cut Media - www.CutMedia.com

Music:

Blackbird

by Martyn Bennett

Taken from the album GRIT

Courtesy of Real World Records

More support

There was also a BBC Scotland programme made about the filming of the video.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b04kntlk>



Shown Friday (the 10th of October) and available on iPlayer for 29 days after that...

There are some trailers to view on that page which show how they made the film and what they had to endure to create it.

There's an article with the director of the film here:

<http://www.cutmedia.com/the-ridge-and-breathe/> - which also has some information on how they managed to film some of the sequences

BBC iPlayer link for MAKING OF documentary

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episode/b04kntlk/danny-macaskill-riding-the-ridge>

Other Danny videos

Feel free to add some of your favourites e.g. Way Back Home

Newspaper article(s) on the filming giving opinions and possible text

The Independent:

<http://www.independent.co.uk/sport/cycling/video-stunt-bmx-rider-danny-macaskill-takes-death-defying-ride-along-the-992metre-drop-of-the-cuillin-ridge-9770564.html>

Other links from blogs too perhaps and mountain magazines

Also comments from YouTube are not to be used 'raw' but do provide some points of view to consider...

Also check the hashtag for the film #TheRidge which is active at the moment with plenty of comments and links to images and other materials.

Music

As with all Danny MacAskill videos, the music is an important part of developing the 'mood'. Students commented on this when I showed them the video: that it "wouldn't have been as good without the music".

And finally, check out some of **Martyn Bennett's** other music. He is a wonderful musician who sadly died young.

There are plenty of his pieces of music such as 'The Cuillin' which relate to these mountains and other parts of Skye.

The task could be set to suggest other soundtrack music, I could imagine everything from classical to rap via electronica or world. The students are music savvy so let them think about what they see and suggest alternative soundtracks.
Or for that matter an alternative commentary.

Taking it further

Write a letter to Danny MacAskill suggesting another awesome landscape that he should make a film in. Why would it be a good place to make a film, and what tricks could he do there ?

This is where the urban Red Bull bike boys in Manchester come in!

They were on top of crazy Street furniture & it's the perfect foil to Glacial Scotland.

<http://www.redbull.com/uk/en/motorsports/offroad/events/1331600145430/red-bull-city-trial-manchester-2014>

<http://www.manchestereveningnews.co.uk/whats-on/whats-on-news/pictures-video-red-bull-city-7882890>

<http://www.redbull.com/uk/en/bike/stories/1331682318502/red-bull-rampage-2014-finals-action-highlights>

Red Bull TV - Great videos in great environments-beats ITV ...

Use the ClassTools Fakebook resource to create a Facebook page for the film.

<https://www.facebook.com/DannyMacAskill> - real Facebook page

Also the ClassTools Twister resource to create some tweets from Danny MacAskill

Tweet Danny and see if you get a reply.

The Cuillins were once up for sale, as they are apparently 'owned' by the head of the MacLeod clan.

Can / should anyone really 'own' a mountain range ?

How should the Cuillins be protected but still be there to be enjoyed. [Could research Yellowstone N.P. or other areas for answers]

Make your own model of the Cuillins.

How are the steep slopes in the Cuillins shown on OS Maps - some mapskills on relief and how it is shown.

Things to potentially add as extra resources

Books

'The Cuillins' – a rather wonderful book of photographs by Gordon Stainforth (he's created others too)

Mission: Explore John Muir – download the free PDF and plan some cycle related missions to try

OS Sheets of the Cuillin Hills or maps produced using Digimap for Schools

I've made a few different maps, one showing some of the locations that are visited.

Another literacy angle is poetry, about the Landscape & Danny in it, there are poems to inspire like these two, could give the students licence to thrill & write their own.

<http://www.scottishpoetrylibrary.org.uk/poetry/poems/lone-st-marys-silent-lake#poem>

An Sneachda mun a' Chuilitheann / The Snow in the Cuillin

Tha fuachd mu do chridhe
Mar an sneachd mun a' Chuilitheann
Ach gu bheil e air tòiseachadh
Air leaghadh is leaghadh
A-nisd agus an Giblean againn,
Your heart is cold
like the snow in the Cuillin
except that it's started
bit by bit to melt
now that April's here

Agus tha dòchas agam
Gum fàs na clachan
A tha na bhun
'S a tha tuiteam beag air bheag
Far aodann sgaoilte nan creag
Nam beum
A sginneas air feadh na beinne
and I hope the rocks at the base
which are falling bit by bit
from the loosened rock face
become an explosion of stone
resounding through the mountain.

Rody Gorman

'By lone St. Mary's silent lake'

By lone St. Mary's silent lake:
Thou know'st it well,—nor fen nor sedge
Pollute the pure lake's crystal edge;
Abrupt and sheer, the mountains sink
At once upon the level brink;
And just a trace of silver sand
Marks where the water meets the land.
Far in the mirror, bright and blue,
Each hill's huge outline you may view;
Shaggy with heath, but lonely bare,
Nor tree, nor bush, nor brake, is there,
Save where, of land, yon slender line
Bears thwart the lake the scatter'd pine.
Yet even this nakedness has power,
And aids the feeling of the hour:
Nor thicket, dell, nor copse you spy,
Where living thing concealed might lie;
Nor point, retiring, hides a dell,
Where swain, or woodman lone, might dwell;
There's nothing left to fancy's guess,
You see that all is loneliness:
And silence aids—though the steep hills
Send to the lake a thousand rills; Jo
In summer tide, so soft they weep,
The sound but lulls the ear asleep;
Your horse's hoof-tread sounds too rude,
So stilly is the solitude.

Sir Walter Scott

Geology

Geology Maps

BGS App or web map viewer <http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html>

Gabbro

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