

# DEBATE CENTER - Kid Nation



**Kid Nation.** This is a show taking place in Bonanza City, New Mexico. Bonanza City was once a mining town in the late 1800s, yet it was deserted for many years! Someone then realized the town could be used for a new t.v. show that featured kids as the main participants. Forty kids, ages 8-15, from all over the United States, were chosen to build their own pioneer world for forty days. They had to make all kinds of decisions and at the same time... they missed their parents, other kids bullied or bossed them around, and they tried to break some rules because nobody was

there to punish them. Every weekly episode ended with a town meeting where one child was awarded a gold star worth \$20,000, which would be used later for a college education.

**The bottom line is this:** the show Kid Nation started in August 2007 and it has stirred a great deal of **controversy** among both adults and kids who have heard of or watched the show. Controversy means **not everyone agrees with it**. Some people feel it is unsafe and have the **opinion** that

television **producers** (people who make shows) are being careless. Some people say the producers only care about the money and not the safety of the kids... and that they just want lots of people to watch their show because people who watch television are naturally very curious about kids not having adults around for forty days to make all kinds of decisions. As you have gathered, the kids do not have **supervision**, which means that **there aren't any adults around at all**. Though that sounds sort of exciting in a way, there are many who think- What if someone gets seriously hurt and needs medical assistance? Why aren't they going to school? Shouldn't there be some sort of teacher or doctor around, at least? Can a kid be given too much responsibility?

### **Here are some things that have happened with the kids on Kid Nation-**

The kids earned buffalo nickels and spent it immediately on candy and junk food instead of saving the money. They partied throughout the night, drinking soda after soda... and could not awake the next morning. Three kids did not participate and tried to sleep, though they couldn't at all because there was a lot of **commotion**. A few kids who served on the town council then set a town **curfew** that the kids had to go to bed by 9:30 every night! However, the oldest people on the show are 15, and they are used to staying up later. They felt bossed around by 10-year olds setting rules for them. There was too much partying, not enough working. One of the elementary school participants, Taylor, shouted out... "If anyone has a problem, you're just going to have to deal with it!"

After the meeting, a boy named Colton took his two friends Zach and Hunter into the woods. Colton was jumping off rocks, and Zach was just watching. Colton then went on to scare a herd of cows and did a stare down with one of them that wouldn't budge. Zach warned Colton to back off, yet Colton eventually won and the cow ran away from him in fear.

The town was then preparing a breakfast in the kitchen, yet they were having a flour fight. One of the girls who tried sleeping the night before, eight-year old Mallory, cleaned up after everyone. Late into the morning, the kids eventually make a horrible brunch of hash browns, and the kids didn't want to wash dishes, so they told everyone they couldn't eat on

dishes. The kid cooks walked the town, spooning greasy potatoes into hungry kids' hands.

Mallory turned out getting the \$20,000 star that day. It was her birthday, though, so a few people were very angry... thinking she got the star just because she was turning nine. However, she was the one who cleaned up the great mess from breakfast. Mallory's last quote to the group was- "A Kid Nation proves that even though we may be younger and smaller than the adults... that we can still do just as much as they can."



The week before, there was a breakfast with sticky globs of oatmeal, and the group had to take a vote on whether to **slaughter** a chicken or not. One of the kids, Markelle, asked the kids whether they even knew the first step on how to slaughter a chicken. The girl pictured to the left, Emilie, was strongly against the slaughtering and grabbed two other girls, Campbell and Savannah, to run to the chicken coop and lock themselves inside, **intent** on stopping any chicken-killing. However, she didn't win. Two of the chickens were slaughtered, and a boy named Greg showed those who remained after the slaughtering how the pluck the feathers from the chicken's body.

Emilie couldn't stand it. She was upset that the kids eventually ate the chicken. After that, again some kids refused to cook the next meal and other responsible kids had to do the job to feed the hungry kids. Then one girl blurted out to the group that just because she was 10, she didn't have much good cooking experience. **Her quote?** "As the youngest people, we don't have as much good cooking experience. I'm sorry, you're just going to have to starve."

## Your Journal Entry:

Write a one-page or longer journal entry entitled “**Kid Nation**”. In addition, **date your page**. Consider these questions as you write your entry.

- Do you agree that kids should be on **reality television** shows?
- Do you think it is safe that the kids do not have any adults around for forty days? Why or why not? Do you think there should be some adults around for safety purposes?
- How do you feel about some of the events that have occurred on Kid Nation? (All the things mentioned above)
- What do you think are some important qualities of a person who participates on a show like this one?
- Would you ever participate on a show like this? Please explain why you chose the answer of “yes” or “no” in at least 3-5 sentences.

Last, when kids filled out their application for the show, they were asked all these questions. Separate your journal entry by now writing “Application Questions”. **Choose only three to respond to**, and write out the question as well so I know which questions you are answering.

- What world leader do you admire?
- How would you change the world?
- How would you change your neighborhood?
- What have you learned about power?
- However, some people are corrupted by having power and abuse it. Is power a good thing?
- What makes a good leader?
- Who have been some of the best U.S. presidents, and why?
- Who have been some of the worst U.S. presidents, and why?
- When you become an adult, what do you think will be the biggest problem facing our nation and/or world?
- If you had the power to change one or two things about our country right now, what would it be?
- If you could put into place one law that pertains to kids in our country, what would it be?
- Why are some people rich and others poor?
- Do you believe global warming is a fact or a myth? If you think it is a fact, what would you do about it if you were in charge?
- If you were in charge of immigration, would everyone be allowed to enter the country? Would illegal immigrants be allowed to stay?
- If you were in charge of education, would art class be as important as math?
- Do you belong to any organizations or clubs?
- If you could switch places with one person, who would it be and why?