

TRIATHLON:

Bronze Research Project - For Teachers

What makes a good wetsuit?

The swimming leg of the 2009 world triathlon championships took place in an outdoor lake in Hyde Park, London. We all know that Britain can be a bit cold, even in the summer. Imagine how cold it must be jumping into a lake with only a swimming costume to keep you warm! That's why, if the water temperature drops below 20°C, triathletes are allowed to wear wetsuits instead of a swimming costume.

HAVE YOU EVER WONDERED?

... how swimming in cold water affects the body, and how a wetsuit helps?

You might like to imagine yourself in a situation such as...

Your swimming club wants to use the park lake. You ask your local Borough Councillors. Although they're keen to encourage healthy and active lifestyles, your local Council members are concerned about the safety of people from a Swimming Club swimming in a park lake. They are trying to decide whether or not to say yes. You have to advise them. You decide to **research information** to...

- find out what temperature the water is likely to be
- find out how these temperatures will affect swimmers
- help you evaluate how safe the swimming would be for strong swimmers who are properly equipped.

POSSIBLE EQUIPMENT, MATERIALS AND RESOURCES

Though primarily a 'theoretical' research project, 1-2 hours could usefully be spent in the laboratory – to illustrate, and explain or clarify, aspects already investigated theoretically.

Access to:

- Equipment for measuring temperature and rate of cooling
- Texts for GCSE (or equivalent) for physics, biology, applied science

