

TEACHING KATE
TEACHING KIDS ABOUT THE ENVIRONMENT

ANIMAL TREASURE HUNT

Grade Level: K-5

Time Required: 1-2 class periods

SC Science Standards

This lesson plan was correlated with only the grade level specified unless otherwise noted.

Grade K:

- I. A. 1. a
- I. A. 2. a
- I. A. 4. a
- I. B. 1. b
- II. A. 1. b

Grade 1:

- I. A. 1. a
- I. A. 2. a
- I. A. 4. a
- I. B. 1. b
- II. C. 1. a

Grade 2:

- I. A. 1. a
- I. A. 2. a
- I. A. 4. a
- I. B. 1. a, c
- II. A. 2. a, b

Grade 3:

- I. A. 1. a
- I. A. 2. a
- I. A. 4. a
- I. B. 1. c
- II. A. 1. b

Grade 4:

- I. A. 1. a
- I. A. 2. a
- I. A. 4. a
- I. B. 1. c
- II. B. 1. b

Grade 5:

- I. A. 1. a
- I. A. 2. a
- I. A. 4. a
- I. B. 1. c

Purpose

The students will go on an animal treasure hunt to explore a nearby habitat, the school yard, while looking for signs of animals living there.

Skills

Concluding, interpreting, observing.

Concepts

Plant and animal populations exhibit interrelated cycles of growth and decline. Organisms are interdependent; they all depend on non-living components of the earth.

Materials Needed

notebooks	drawing paper
markers	hand lenses
sample containers	

Definition of Terms

Animal Signs Evidence left which proves the presence of an animal. Signs may be scat (droppings), scrapes, rubs, tracks, feathers, hair, etc.

Habitat The place where an organism lives and grows.

Interdependent Organisms relying on each other for existence.

Organism Any living thing.

Before the Session

Consider doing this activity during the spring or fall when animals are more active during the day.

Survey the outdoor site before taking the students. Look for potential hazards and risks. Either remove potential dangers or caution students about them. For younger students, arrange to have at least one or more parents, aides or older students to help with the animal treasure hunt.

Remind students that all living things, including plants, are to be respected and not injured in any way. Follow the rule: look, learn and leave alone.

Background Information

Habitat refers to the place where an organism lives and grows. Its habitat provides an organism with everything it needs to survive, including its specific needs for food, water, shelter, space and reproduction.

Habitats vary tremendously in terms of size and appearance. For example, a field is home both to many types of grasses and to mice and rabbits that live among the grasses. A tree is the entire habitat for many tiny animals that live in its bark and among its leaves. A crack in the sidewalk is the habitat for dandelions and ants that live there.

Even in the most sterile looking environment, you can usually find some signs of animal life. In an urban school yard, for example, students can find things such as spider webs, ants underneath pieces of cement or rocks or insects buzzing around. Students need to understand that all animals, large and small, require food, water and shelter from their environment to survive. Remind students that people are animals too. Around the school yard they will find plenty of signs indicating the presence of people.

While most students enjoy looking for animals, some may be afraid of certain organisms like spiders or worms. Be prepared for some students to act timid or scared during the activity. A brief summary, before the activity, of the kinds of animals which may be present as well as an assurance that most of the animals will be more scared than they are, may help to reassure the students. Inform the students that it is smart to be cautious and they should not touch or pick-up any plant or animal unless they are certain it is harmless.

Suggested Lesson Plan

1. Divide students into pairs. Take them outside and allow pairs 5-10 minutes to find two animals or signs of animals. Set boundaries so that students do not roam too far.
2. Ask students to sketch animals or signs they find. Allow them to collect samples from sites.
3. The students will set up a table and record the number of each animal they find.
4. Bring the group together. Have students share their experiences and compare their findings.

Application

The students are now aware of animals and their habitats within a given area. Allow students to collect or observe the same animals from other sites and compare the two habitats.

Students can create artificial habitats to see which animals utilize them. This is a good way to lead into a discussion on creating habitats for wildlife. In coastal areas, discarded Christmas trees are collected and used for fish habitat. Fish habitat is also created by sinking old boats and ships offshore and by the placing of specially created concrete “habitats.” Farmers and hunters are recreating hedge rows around fields, which had been removed in the interest of “clean farming,” to restore populations of quail and rabbits.

Extension

Take students on a field trip to a wildlife management area. Arrange for a District Wildlife Biologist to give the students a tour of the area pointing out how the area is managed: for what animals, what the specific needs of these animals are and how they are met. Have them compare this area to their school yard.

Resources Available

Elements of Ecology, 3rd edition. 1992. Robert L. Smith. Harper Collins Publishers Inc., New York, N.Y.

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