

Cottonwood Trail Pre and Post Activities

Beautiful Basics

Materials:

Chalkboard or white board

Vocabulary:

Habitat: a place that has enough food, water, shelter and living space for an animal or plant to live.

Lesson:

Draw a three-column chart on the board with the headings People, Pets and Wildlife. Ask the students what people need in order to be able to live. List or draw their answers in the column under the word people. Do the same for pets and wildlife.

Next, ask the class to cluster ideas together into larger categories or themes. For example, warmth and clothes may be combined and fit within the concept of shelter. Help the students define the lists and to establish the essential survival needs to people, pets and wildlife. The most basic needs will be the same for each group: food, water, shelter and space.

Birds and Worms

Materials:

30-40 small objects in assorted colors such as colored pieces of yarn, paper shapes or colored pasta (if playing outdoors) and a large piece of butcher paper or poster board.

Vocabulary:

Predator: an animal that hunts and eats other animals.

Prey: an animal that is hunted and eaten by a predator.

Camouflage: blending in with the surroundings.

Habitat: a place that has enough food, water, shelter and living space for an animal or plant to live.

Prep:

1. Collect or cut 60 squares or circles out of construction paper. You will want several colors. If the activity will take place outside, use something biodegradable such as colored pasta.
2. Draw columns on the poster board or butcher paper. Draw as many columns as there will be students on each team. Each column will represent the student's position in line.

Lesson:

Ask your students if they have heard of the word camouflage before. Do they know what the word means? Camouflage is when an animal (or plant) blends in with what is around it. For example, a polar bear is white and lives where there is a lot of snow. A polar bear has excellent camouflage. Ask the kids if they can think of other animals with camouflage. How would camouflage help an animal survive? How would camouflage help an animal that is trying to catch its prey or an animal that is trying to hide from a predator? Blending into the environment is a great way to avoid being eaten or to avoid being spotted by a potential meal.

Divide the students into teams with the same number of students in each team (5-6 students per team is best). Explain you have spread out all tasty "bugs" on the ground that are red, green, orange, etc. They are

hungry birds (predators) that love to eat these tasty bugs (prey). Describe what the bugs look like and show them an example. Ask them to guess what color bug will be the easiest to see. Which color bug do they think will be the hardest to see?

Arrange the teams in relay race lines a short distance from the play area where all the bugs are scattered. Explain the object of the race is for every bird on the team to get food. When you say "Go" the first bird in each line should "fly" over to the play area and pick up the first "bug" he/she sees. Stress that it should be the *first* one they see. Each bird then flies immediately back to their line and tags the next bird, who does the same thing. When the last bird returns, everyone on the team should sit down, signaling everyone has eaten.

Once all the teams are sitting down, use the poster board or butcher paper to document the results of the game. Each student should place their bug in the column that represents their position in line. Is there any pattern to the way in which the bugs were found? Does this pattern tell us anything?

Have the students sort the bugs by color. What color was the easiest to find? What color was the hardest? What type of bug has the best camouflage for this habitat?

Have the teams line up and play additional rounds with the remaining bugs. After each round, record the results the same as above.

Extension:

Have the students use art supplies to design an imaginary camouflaged creature. Where does their creature live? Is it a predator or prey?

Both lessons are from Project Learning Tree.