



NATURE/UNNATURE WALK

SUBJECTS: Science and Math

GRADES: K-2

KERA GOALS: Meets KERA goals 1,2, 5, and 6

ACADEMIC EXPECTATIONS: application of basic communication and math skills, observing, classifying, thinking and problem solving, decision making, developing new knowledge, and expanding existing knowledge.

DURATION: One 20-40 minute period

GROUP SIZE: One classroom of 25-35 students (or fewer)

SETTING: Indoors or Outdoors

KEY VOCABULARY: nature, natural, un-nature, un-natural

ANTICIPATORY SET: Today we are going to go on a walk. While we are on our walk we will need to keep our eyes open for all the different things we will see!

OBJECTIVES: The students will be able to: 1) make observations of natural and un-natural items; 2) classify items into the categories of what is natural and un-natural.

MATERIALS:

- ◆ 6-9 natural items
- ◆ 6-9 un-natural items
- ◆ a bag to put the items in

BACKGROUND: For this activity it would be good to use items that are found locally. Some natural items you may wish to use would be things like birds' nests, feathers, snail shells, acorns, pine cones, leaves, antlers, animal skulls, turtle shells and others. Some common un-natural items to use could be cans, bottles, newspapers, shoes, balloons, plastic bowls and other man-made items.

PROCEDURE:

This involves going on a short nature walk. Just before the walk begins the instructor places items along the trail. The instructor puts out 12 to 18 items. Remember you can also use items naturally found along the trail. This game develops the idea of what is natural in our world and what is man-made or added by people.

1. To begin the walk with the students the teacher explains that some things are found in nature and some things are not. If we find something that is found in nature then it is a "thumbs up," (make the thumbs up sign with your hand) like a leaf or a flower. If it is something that is un-natural or not found in nature then it is a "thumbs down," (make a thumbs down sign with your hand) like a bottle or litter.
2. The walk now begins. The group makes their way out along the trail. As students find something it is pointed out. The students silently make a decision and hold out their thumbs. Then as a group, they discuss why it is "thumbs up" or "thumbs down" and continue down the trail. This is done for each item found along the trail.
3. At the end of the walk sometimes it is nice to select a student and ask whether people are "thumbs up or thumbs down." Then explain that if people take care of nature they are "thumbs up" and if they don't they are "thumbs down."

This activity can be adapted to a classroom by taking an imaginary walk and pulling different items out of a bag or box. The instructor can set the stage by making it into a story format while pulling items out of the bag, for example "then we continued down the hot trail and behind a tree we saw a . . ."



NATURE/UNNATURE WALK

CLOSURE: On our walk we talked about things that are found in nature. "Who can show me the sign for things we find naturally outside?" They are good so they are "thumbs up." "What about the other things we found outside. What were they?" They were not supposed to be there so they are "thumbs down."

EVALUATION: The teacher is able to evaluate the students in the field by watching for the appropriate signs (thumbs-up or thumbs-down).

EXTENSIONS:

1. As long as the teacher explains that any thing found in a national park should be left where it is found, the teacher may want to "recollect" the items they found along the trail. The teacher should explain that this is okay for the class today. By using two boxes the student could sort the items into one box for natural items and use the other box for un-natural items.
2. The students could cut out pictures from magazines and make a collage of natural things, un-natural things, or both.
3. The students may want to draw a picture of a natural item and of an un-natural item. These pages could be collected and put in a book for the class to pass around and share during free time or indoor recess.

*This activity was adapted from *Sharing Nature with Children* by Joseph B. Cornell

