



# SQUIRRELS NEED A HOME OR BATS NEED A CAVE

**SUBJECTS:** Science and Physical Education

**GRADES:** K-3

**KERA GOALS:** Meets Kera goals 1, 2, 4, 5, and 6

**ACADEMIC EXPECTATIONS:** observation, seeing patterns, becoming a productive group member, conceptualizing, expanding existing knowledge, and developing new knowledge.

**DURATION:** One 20-35 minute period

**GROUP SIZE:** One or two classrooms (at least 15 students)

**SETTING:** Outside or Indoors in a gym

**KEY VOCABULARY:** home, habitat, squirrels or bats, "Bat Friendly Gate"

**ANTICIPATORY SET:** We are going to play a game that talks about an animal. This animal lives in the forest, eats nuts, and has a long bushy tail. Does anyone know what this animal might be?

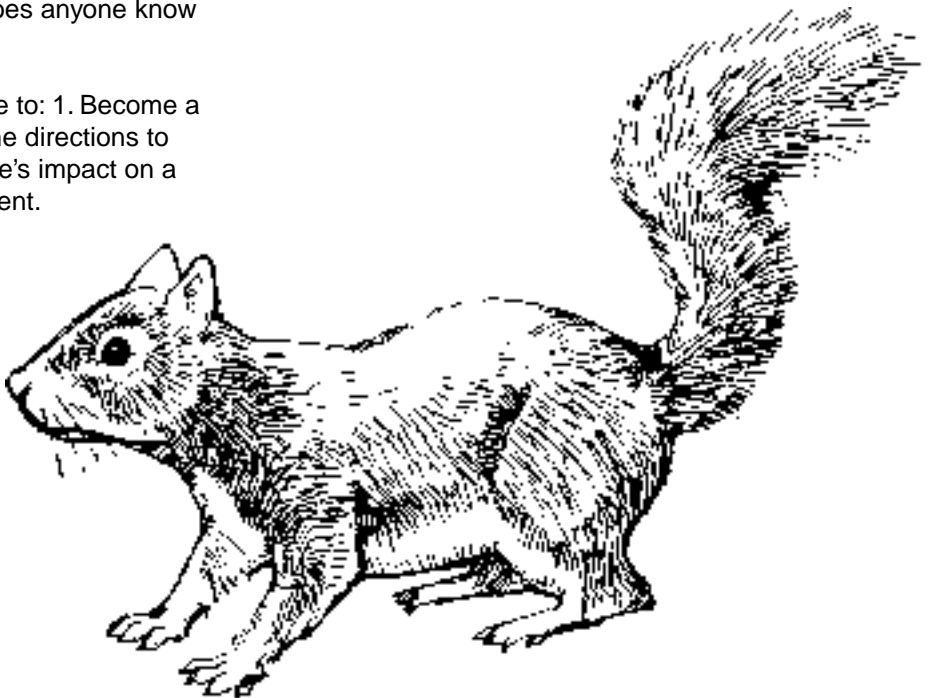
**OBJECTIVES:** The students will be able to: 1. Become a productive team member by following the directions to the activity; 2. Conceptualize how people's impact on a forest (or cave) changes that environment.

**MATERIALS:** None are needed

## BACKGROUND:

This game teaches the concept that animals need a place to live. It also illustrates the importance of people making appropriate choices when wildlife habitat is involved. This activity develops the concept that squirrels need a tree to live in and when the tree is taken away squirrels can be left homeless.

Sometimes the game is played as bats needing a cave. The change used with bats is boarding entrances to cave vs. using a "Bat Friendly Gate." It can be explained that sometimes people need to protect their cave from trespassers. The cave could be vandalized and people could also be injured. Many times people board up the entrance ways to keep people out. The only problem is, it also keeps bats out. The other alternative is using a "Bat Friendly Gate" over the entrance. This keeps people out, but the squares of the gate are large enough to allow bats to fly in and out freely.



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## PROCEDURE:

1. The instructor explains that it is important for all animals to have a place to live. The instructor asks, "Where do squirrels live?" The students should answer, "trees". The instructor then explains that some of the students will be trees and some of the students will be squirrels. They also state that each squirrel will need a tree to live in.
2. The instructor counts the children into groups of three, making two students join both hands facing each other, and then puts the third child in the middle to be the squirrel. After all the children are arranged into groups of three, the game is ready to begin. If you have one extra student- they can be a squirrel looking for a home, or if you have two you can have an extra tree or two squirrels that need homes.
3. The instructor now explains that it is time for the squirrels to look for a new home. When it is time to move, the instructor will say "Squirrels need a new home." The trees will raise their branches (arms) to let the squirrels run to find a new tree. The trees will keep their branches raised until a new squirrel moves in. Then they will lower their branches to protect the new squirrel. Remember only one squirrel per tree.
4. Several rounds (at least 3) are played, trading off the squirrels with half of the tree until all have had a turn. The next round the instructor can bring up the idea that people want to move into the area and they need to cut a tree down to build their home. The instructor "cuts down" a tree. The squirrel inside now needs a home. The "tree" becomes two new baby squirrels (this can be justified by saying it is spring) who also need homes. \* The instructor announces, "Squirrels need a new home." At the end of the round there should be several squirrels without a home. The instructor might ask how these squirrels will live and how they are to survive?

5. The instructor can continue to cut down trees to build a house. The instructor can plant new trees as they desire. In the next round the class may discuss how people need to have shade around their home. For shade they plant a tree. The instructor takes two squirrels and turns them into a tree. Five to Seven rounds (total) is usually the maximum for this game depending on the students and their age.
6. At the end of the game the instructor should talk about how important it is for people to think about animals and their homes when they build in an area.

\*Note "Cave" can be substituted for "Tree" and "Bat" can be substituted for "Squirrel" in the above instructions. In this situation the teacher boards off the cave and two baby bats are born.

**CLOSURE:** We have played a game about squirrels and their homes. "What do people need to do before we cut down trees or change an area?" The students should be able to answer, "People need to think about the animals before they make changes to the land."

**EVALUATION:** The teacher is able to evaluate the students during the game's discussions.

## EXTENSIONS:

1. The students could make posters telling people to think about the animals before they make any decisions that might effect the animals' homes.
2. The students may want to draw a picture of another animal that might be effected by cutting down trees.
3. The students could make a squirrel feeder and observe squirrel activity around the school.
4. The students could write another Government Agency, The U.S. Forest Service, and request posters dealing with trees and their inhabitants.