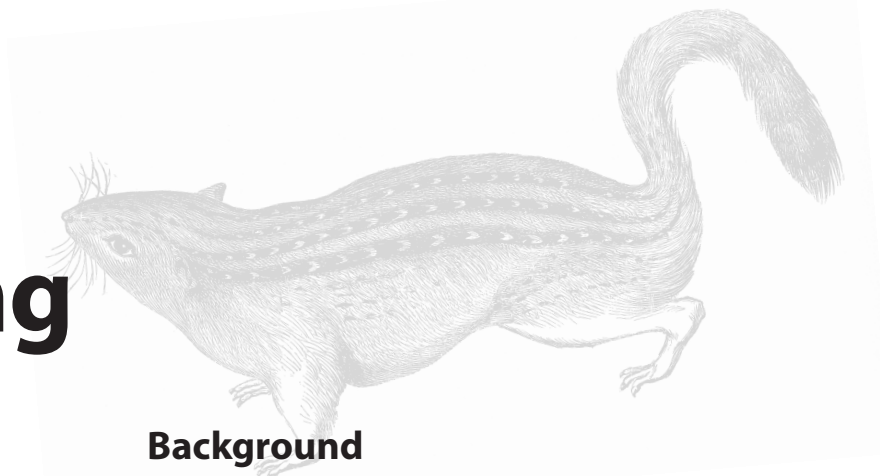


Habitrekking



Objectives

Students will (1) summarize evidence about the nature of habitats, and (2) generalize from evidence that people and wildlife have similar basic needs, share environments, and are subject to the same or similar environmental issues.

Method

Students go outside to conduct an investigation requiring observation, interpretation, and data-gathering skill; then they prepare and present their findings.

Materials

Copies of Habitrekking Evidence Lists on page 80, mixed media available for students to create visual and verbal reports

Background

NOTE: It is recommended that educators use the Project WILD activities “Ants on a Twig,” “Habitat Lap Sit,” and “Habitat Rummy” prior to this activity so that the students are introduced to the various components of a habitat.

All animals—including people, pets, and wildlife—share similar basic needs. All animals need a place to live. The term for an area where an animal lives is “habitat.” Habitat includes food, water, shelter, and space in a suitable arrangement. People, domesticated animals, and wildlife all need those elements.

Wildlife is all around, even though it may not be seen, heard, or sensed. Because people and wildlife share similar basic needs, it is likely that if people are without elements of their basic needs, wildlife will be as well. Wildlife habitat often is destroyed without people being aware of what has happened. The health and well-being of people, domesticated animals, and wildlife depend on a sustainable environment.

The major purpose of this activity is for students to recognize that people and wildlife share the same environment, have similar basic needs, and are subject to the same or similar environmental issues. Students are encouraged to generalize from their investigation into microhabitats so they come to these conclusions.

Grade Level: 3–4

Subject Areas: Science, Language Arts, Expressive Arts, Environmental Education

Duration: two or three 45-minute sessions

Group Size: three groups, with a minimum of two students each

Setting: outdoors and indoors

Conceptual Framework Topic Reference: IDIA1, IDIA2a

Key Terms: evidence, wildlife, habitat, environmental quality, pollution

Appendices: Outdoors, Field Ethics

continued

Procedure

1. Divide the class into three groups.
Have the students in each group pair off.
2. Each pair should be equipped with observation tools. Students could have one or more of these optional items: hand lens, trowel, camera and film, sketch pad, tape recorder, tape, string, meter stick, empty corked test tubes, microscope slides, paper bags, small containers with lids, video or still camera equipment, and so on. Given advance notice, students might bring in a variety of such “observation tools” from home.
3. Provide Habitrekking Evidence Lists for the pairs in each group.
4. Before starting, ask a student from each group to read his or her Habitrekking Evidence List to make sure each member understands what students are looking for. Make sure the students have a clear definition of wildlife and habitat. Establish the study sites where students will be looking for evidence. School grounds, urban city centers, forested parks, and vacant lots can be used as study sites. Establish a length of time for the investigations. Thirty minutes is recommended if the students stay near the school or organization where this activity began. Tell the students they should exercise their creativity because there are no real right or wrong answers. They may observe and infer. Both are sources of evidence.

**GROUP #1
HABITREKKING EVIDENCE LIST #1**

Caution: You may bring back evidence, but be careful not to harm the wildlife or environment.

Find Evidence That

1. Humans, domesticated animals, and wildlife all need food, water, shelter, and space arranged so they can survive.
2. All living things are affected by their environment.
3. Animals—including people—depend on plants—either directly or indirectly.

**GROUP #2
HABITREKKING EVIDENCE LIST #2**

Caution: You may bring back evidence, but be careful not to harm the wildlife or environment.

Find Evidence That

1. Humans and wildlife share environments.
2. Wildlife is everywhere.
3. Wildlife can be in many forms and colors, and can have special features that help it live in its environment.

**GROUP #3
HABITREKKING EVIDENCE LIST #3**

Caution: You may bring back evidence, but be careful not to harm the wildlife or environment.

Find Evidence That

1. Humans and wildlife are subject to the same or similar environmental problems.
2. The health and well-being of both people and wildlife depend on a good environment.
3. Environmental pollution affects people, domesticated animals, and wildlife.

5. Send the students “habitrekking.”
6. When they return, ask each pair to present its evidence, including both pictures and words. The pairs within each group can compare their findings as they prepare for their group’s report. Spend at least 45 minutes presenting and discussing reports.
7. In the discussion, ask the students to summarize what they learned. Emphasize the generalizations that people and wildlife have similar basic needs, share environments, and are subject to the same or similar environmental problems.

RECOMMENDATION: Check the observations and generalizations against resource books or other sources to verify the results and to correct false impressions.

Aquatic Extension

Adjust the “habitrekking” instructions to apply specifically to aquatic wildlife and aquatic habitats. For example, find evidence that humans and aquatic wildlife are subject to the same or similar environmental issues.

Evaluation

Using one of the Habitrekking Evidence Lists, conduct a similar investigation in a local environment. Write a brief summary of the findings.

