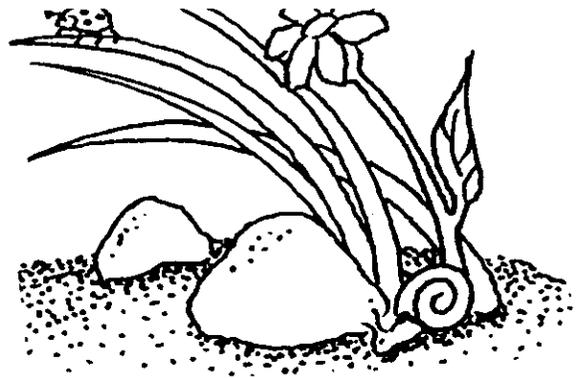


Habitats

Grades K-1



Overview

The students will observe and discuss various habitats. They will also set up a classroom habitat.

Objectives

- To help the students understand what a habitat is.
- To help students understand that all living things need food, water and shelter to live.

Materials

For the presenter:

- a tree by the classroom, a fish bowl, anything that would show a habitat (if you are not able to find anything, a picture will do)
- pictures of wild animals
- pictures of habitats (river, pond, forest, yard, etc.)
- chalkboard
- a glass aquarium tank, clear plastic box or gallon-size glass jar
- fine screening for top
- gravel -- enough for 1 inch cover on the bottom of container
- soil -- enough for 2-3 inches to cover gravel, it should come from the same place that you get your plants
- small plants -- grass, weeds, etc. -- ones that you would find in a meadow, make sure you get a clump of soil when you dig up a plant, they need to have roots for planting
- a spider or insect that you would find in the meadow
- large spoon
- container -- used to put soil into tank or jar
- newspaper to cover the table

Getting Ready

Activity 1

Draw a large picture of a house on the chalkboard. Make a picture of a child beside it. Put the habitat and pictures on a table in front of the class where everyone will be able to see.

Activity 2

Cover another table with newspaper. Put all the things needed to build the habitat on a table. The table should be in an area where all the children can sit in front of it or gather around to see.

Procedures

Background Information

A habitat is a place where plants and animals live. A habitat is like a home, it provides water, food and shelter that living things need to live. All wildlife has specific needs. Examples of habitats are: desert, rainforest, prairies, oceans, rivers, wetlands and forest. A habitat can be a single tree or as large as an ocean. It is important for us to protect the earth's habitats and in turn will protect all living things.

Activity One: Habitats

Start this activity by asking the students where they live. Refer to the house you drew on the chalkboard. Ask: "What things do you have in your home that you need to live?" You will want to guide them so they end up with food, water and shelter. Show the students the habitat that you brought. Ask: "Do you know what animal lives here? What things does it need to live?" Share the pictures of the animals and habitats, discuss what kind of animal it is and where it lives. Point to the word **Habitat** on the board and ask: "Does anyone know what the word **habitat** means?" (**The place that provides food, water and shelter for living things**) Tell the students that habitat is another word for home. Ask: "What is your habitat?"

Refer back to the habitat that you brought. Ask: "What would happen if you took away this animal's habitat?" (**They would not be able to live.**) Share with the students that is why it is important for all of us to do things that help take care of places where animals live, like the forest, river, wetlands, etc.

Background Information

Setting up a Meadow Community for the classroom will give the students first hand experience observing an insect's habitat. Other types of communities that you could set up are Rotting Log, Desert, Forest Floor, or Pond. The Meadow Community is used for this activity because collecting insects and finding the materials for setting it up, should not be too difficult. When choosing plants and insects, keep in mind that each living thing must have certain conditions in order to live. Some questions to ask yourself before setting up a habitat: "What is the temperature where the insects and plants live? How moist is the habitat?"

Activity Two: Setting up a Classroom Habitat

Explain to the students that together they will set up a classroom habitat. Ask: "Where do bugs and insects live? What kind of things do they need to live? Where do they find shelter? Where do they find water and food?" Tell the students that they are going to make a home for an insect. Have the students gather around an area where everyone is able to see. Ask the students to volunteer to help with each of the steps. As you put the habitat together with the students, ask questions about why you are putting in the things you brought. How does the insect use the things in his habitat, etc.?"

1. Put about 1 inch of gravel in the bottom of the tank or jar. This is necessary so water can drain through the soil.
2. Next, put 2-3 inches of soil on top of the gravel. Make sure you have it deep enough to put in your plants. Be sure your soil came from the same place you got your plants.
3. Do not leave it level. Make a hill in the corner, or have the soil slope from back to front.
4. Put the plants in the soil.
5. Add a small amount of water if the soil is dry.
6. Put the insect or insects into his or their habitat.
7. Cover the top with screen or glass top.

Decide where you are going to keep the habitat. Put it in a place that does not receive too much heat. The fun part for the students will be observing the insects each day. Talk about the times that they will be able to do this. If they have science journals, they could record each day what they observed the insect doing or any changes they notice in the habitat. If your habitat contains ants, provide a few crumbs and some sugar water on a piece of sponge for them. To keep ants from crawling out of the terrarium, spread a layer of Vaseline along the top edge of the tank or jar.

Closure

Ask the students to return to their desks. Tell them to whisper to their neighbor what a habitat is. Ask for one volunteer to share with the class.

Clean up

Roll up newspaper and clean off table. Leave the classroom clean.

