Backyard Exploration

Grade level: K-5

Time: 3 lessons 45 min. sessions

Concept: Observe habitats in the schoolyard

Overview: This activity helps students explore their own school backyard and gives them background information for further studies in areas around them.

Materials/Resources:
school backyard
paper and pencil
bulletin board paper
construction paper
crayons and glue
Optional: magnifying glasses, binoculars

Objectives: Students will:
1. gain a deeper understanding of their environment through observation.
2. record data on a schoolyard exploration trip.

Procedures:
Day 1
1. Have students write a definition for the word habitat.
2. Discuss definitions.
3. Come to a conclusion on a class definition for the word habitat.
5. Compare students’ definition with examples of habitats in the book.

Day 2
1. Review the meaning of word habitat.
2. Divide students into groups of four.
3. State rules for outdoor exploration. Ex. Students must leave everything the way it is found.
4. Check that students have pencils, paper and magnifying glasses.
5. Students will:
   a. tour the schoolyard looking for various habitats.
b. write about and draw the habitats they observe.
c. pencil rubbings of tree bark, leaves, animal tracks and building walls are encouraged.
Day 3

1. Students will share findings.
2. Each group can decide on the method of presentation. Have bulletin board paper, construction paper, crayons and glue available.

Evaluation:

1. Observation
2. Writings
3. Drawings
4. Presentations

Extensions:

1. Students can choose one of the habitats observed and research the animals/insect.
2. Students can make posters on ways to help keep the environment safe for the different species.
3. Invite speakers to discuss the environment and its habitats Ex. local gardeners, bird watchers, herpetologists, Audubon members.
4. Plant a small area that will attract and benefit wildlife. Website: Landscape for Wildlife: www.wec.ufl.edu/extension/

National Standards:
Standard 4: The physical and human characteristics of places.
Standard 14: How human actions modify the physical environment.
Standard 18: How to apply geography to interpret the present and plan for the future.

Sunshine State Standards:
LA.A.1.3 Student uses the reading process effectively.
LA.B.2.3 Student writes to communicate ideas and information effectively.
LA.C.1.2 Students uses listening strategies effectively.
SS.B.2.3.9 Student understands the interactions of people and the physical environment.
SS.B1.1.1 Student determines the absolute and relative location of people, places and things.
SC.D.2.3. Student understands the need for protection of the natural systems on Earth.

Websites:
www.wec.ufl.edu/extension/frog
www.audubonofflorida.org/ - bird information
www.nsis.org/butterfly/
www.npwrc.usgs.gov/resource/geograph.htm#FL dragonfly, moths and beetle info
http://pests.ifas.ufl.edu/ — various bugs and link to Florida Kids Bug Club
www.geobop.com/World/NA/US/FL/ — state tree and FL facts
http://www.nwf.org/education/ — Backyard Wildlife Habitat Program
http://www.nwf.org/frogwatchUSA/ — information of Florida frogs and Frog Watch program
http://www.ex.ac.uk/bugclub/penpal2.html — Kids Bug Club Pen Pals