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NATIONAL AGENCY FOR EUROPEAN EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMES AND MOBILITY

Exploring Habitats: Understanding and Preserving Biodiversity

SUBJECT AREAS:

Natural sciences

ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION:

Habitats, terrestrial and aquatic, adaptations, biodiversity conservation, ecosystem sustainability, interdependence

OBJECTIVES:

Understanding the concept of habitats and their importance in supporting biodiversity.

MATERIALS:

Visual aids
Multimedia resources
Books or articles
Tablets or computers
Drawing materials

GRADE/LEVEL:

Upper Elementary School (12-14);

DURATION:

90 minutes

Preparation time: 1 hour

Activity time: 40- 60 minutes

PLACE:

Classroom, outdoors

AUTHOR:

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INTRODUCTION:

In this lesson, students will embark on an exciting journey to explore the diverse world of habitats. Through engaging activities and discussions, they will deepen their understanding of what habitats are and why they are vital for supporting life on Earth. By delving into the unique characteristics of different habitats, students will discover the rich tapestry of plants and animals that call these environments home.

BACKGROUND:

Before delving into the specifics of habitats, it's essential to lay down a solid foundation of understanding about **ecosystems** and the interdependence of living organisms within them. Students should have prior knowledge about the basic needs of living organisms, such as food, water, shelter, and space, as well as the concept of adaptation – how plants and animals have special features that help them survive in their environments.

Additionally, students may have been introduced to the idea of **biodiversity** – the variety of life forms found in a particular habitat or ecosystem. They should understand the importance of biodiversity in maintaining healthy ecosystems and the potential consequences of habitat destruction and species extinction.

Procedure:

Instruction: Engage students with a visually stimulating presentation showcasing diverse habitats and their inhabitants. Pose questions to prompt critical thinking and discussion about habitats. Share intriguing facts or stories to capture students' interest.

Guided Practice: Divide students into small groups and assign each group a specific habitat to research and explore. Provide resources such as books, tablets, or computers for group research. Encourage groups to create presentations or posters showcasing their findings and adaptations of organisms in their assigned habitat.

Formative Assessment: Monitor student progress through the lesson by circulating the classroom, observing group discussions, and answering questions. Pose questions throughout the lesson to check for understanding and clarify concepts as needed. Use exit tickets or quick quizzes to assess students' grasp of key concepts.

Collaborative Process: Pair or group students to explore concepts further through collaborative activities. Rotate groups to ensure diverse perspectives and encourage teamwork.

Independent Practice: Provide worksheets or assignments for students to practice applying their knowledge independently.

FUN FACTS:

- *The Amazon Rainforest, often referred to as the "lungs of the Earth," produces around 20% of the world's oxygen.*
- *The Arctic Tundra is home to the largest land predator, the polar bear, which can weigh up to 1,500 pounds (680 kilograms) and stand over 9 feet (2.7 meters) tall.*
- *The Great Barrier Reef, located off the coast of Australia, is the largest coral reef system in the world, spanning over 1,400 miles (2,300 kilometers).*
- *The Sahara Desert, the largest hot desert in the world, is home to the dromedary camel, which can survive for weeks without water by storing fat in its hump.*
- *The Amazon River, flowing through the Amazon Rainforest, is home to the Amazon river dolphin, also known as the pink river dolphin, which is one of the few freshwater dolphin species in the world.*

ASSESSMENT:

Questioning: Ask open-ended questions throughout the lesson to gauge students' comprehension and encourage critical thinking. For example:

What are some examples of terrestrial habitats? Can you describe one?

How do animals adapt to their habitats for survival?

Why is biodiversity important for ecosystems?

Games: Incorporate interactive games related to habitats, such as habitat bingo, habitat matching games, or habitat jeopardy. These games not only make learning fun but also provide opportunities for students to demonstrate their understanding in a relaxed and engaging setting.

Crossword or Word Search: Create crossword puzzles or word search activities with vocabulary related to habitats. Students can complete these puzzles individually or in pairs, reinforcing their understanding of key terms and concepts.

EVALUATION:

Performance tasks, such as habitat dioramas or conservation plans, will evaluate students' application of knowledge in real-world contexts. Observations during class activities and discussions will provide insights into individual understanding and participation. Written assessments, projects, and presentations will assess knowledge, analysis, and communication skills. Rubrics will ensure consistent evaluation criteria, while peer and self-assessment activities promote collaboration and metacognitive reflection. Informal checks for understanding will allow for real-time feedback and adjustment of instruction. Through this comprehensive approach, students' comprehension, application, and growth in understanding habitats will be effectively assessed.