

SUBJECT AREAS:

Social science

ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION:

Analysis, comparing similarities and differences, evaluation, invention, psychomotor development, problem-solving, small group work, synthesis.

OBJECTIVES:

Student will be able to: a) distinguish between games that are damaging and not damaging to the environment; and b) invent games with a benign effect on the environment.

MATERIALS:

Access to going outside, paper, notes, pencil.

GRADE/LEVEL:

Upper Elementary School (12-14)

DURATION:

Preparation time: 10 min.

Activity time: 30-45 min.

PLACE:

Classroom, outdoors

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Playing Lightly on the Earth

INTRODUCTION:

Outdoor play is beneficial for children beyond the physical activity it provides. It helps them socialize, understand their bodies better, engage in imaginative play and enjoy the outdoors. In today's busy and complex world, it can be difficult to schedule outdoor time with your child. But, it is something you should prioritize for your child's healthy growth and development.

Outdoor recreation may be a positive, healthful activity for humans, but high numbers of visitors to an area can damage plant life, stress local animal populations, and introduce invasive species.

BACKGROUND:

Personal choices of all kinds can have an effect on the environment. Young people can look at the games they play outside-and choose those which have little or no damaging impact on the environment, rather than those which leave scars-aesthetically and ecologically.

The major purpose of this activity is for students to become actively aware of the choices they make each time they play a game outside, and to consciously experience games that have a benign effect on the environment. The activity is designed for students to experience success, at a personal and immediate level, in maintaining and improving the quality of their own environments.

Procedure:

- Most of us like to play. In fact, playing is an important way to learn-as well as to have a good time. Ask the students to think of examples of ways to play outside that do no serious or permanent damage to the environment, and ways that are damaging. The damage might affect non-living things-like putting graffiti on cement walls. It might be damaging to plants and animals-like carving initials on tree trunks. Both are damage? There may not be, but we can think about how much damage, how permanent it is, and what it affects.
- Go outside on the school grounds and look for evidence of games that have damaged the environment. Ask students what could have caused the damage and how it might have been prevented.
- Introduce the concept of playing games that do no seriously harm the environment.
- Ask the students to work together in small groups-from two to seven or eight-to invent a game that does no serious harm to the environment, including the plants and animals living there. The students could also try to invent games that could make this a better environment in some ways. Give the students about 15 minutes to invent their games.
- Ask each group to present their game to the other students. Play each of the games. Ask the students to talk about their feelings about the importance of playing games that do little if any damage to the environment.

FUN FACTS:

- *Hiking is now the most popular outdoor adventure activity. The number of campers is also on the rise.*
- *Gardening is great exercise and helps with strength, flexibility and endurance – and it helps you sleep better!*
- *Barbecuing, picnicking, walking and bird watching are among the top recreational activities – especially in summer.*
- *The very first hang glider was built in 1890 from wood and cloth. They've come a long way since then.*
- *35 million people around the world are surfers. That's more than three times how many there were in 2002.*

ASSESSMENT:

Students should choose several games or activities that they want to do in nature.

For each of them, they should list the positive aspects but also list the negative aspects of the activities that would affect the environment and nature.

EVALUATION:

Keep a record of the games you play outside for one week. Identify which, if any, are harmful to the environment. For one week, or longer, play only games that do no harm to the environment.