

Lesson Four: Rain Forest Appreciation Day

Objectives:

1. Students will experience the diversity, sights, sounds and tastes of the tropical rain forest.
2. Students will create a collage of tropical rain forest organisms.
3. Students will visualize the size of an acre by measuring the square yards that compose an acre.

Background:

This lesson is divided into three 20 minute segments.

1. Experiencing the foods, sounds and images of the rain forest
2. Making a rain forest collage as a model for amount destroyed.
3. Measuring an acre.

Materials:

Student provided pictures from homework assignment the previous day
22" x 28" poster-board
glue/glue sticks
yard sticks
access to internet & LCD projector (for teacher presentation of slides/sounds)
access to a field or large area outside

Part One: Foods, Sounds and Images

Students will share with each other the various rain forest foods they've brought in as the teacher leads them through sights and sounds of the rain forest. The goal is to provide an affective experience of the rain forest. In subsequent lessons of this unit the students will be presented with facts about how human activity contributes to destruction of the rain forest. It is hoped that this lesson will help the students to value all that the rain forest has to offer.

Procedure:

As students are eating the teacher may play music or rain forest sounds in the background. Below is a website with 15 minutes of tropical rain forest sounds.

<http://www.exploratorium.edu/frogs/rainforest/>

As students are eating, the teacher may want to walk them through a slide show of images highlighting the diversity of life in the rain forest (and maybe even introduce its destruction). Below is a website with a variety of images.

<http://www.leslietaylor.net/gallery/gallery.htm>

For suggestions of more websites related to this lesson, see listing included at the end of this packet.

Part Two: Make a Collage

Students will share the images they collected for homework, make a collage that represents the rain forest, destroy their “rain forest” and then participate in a class discussion.

Procedure:

1. The students will share with each other the rain forest pictures they’ve brought in. Students should be sure to identify the image and mention its relevance to the rain forest.
2. Next they will glue the pictures onto poster board provided by the teacher, thus creating a class collage.
3. Once all students have shared and the collage is complete, the teacher now explains that this collage represents the acreage and biodiversity of the tropical rain forest. It has been estimated by many sources that 17-20% of forest that once existed has already been destroyed. Remove or “destroy” 20% of the class poster to represent this amount. (Note to teacher: To make this more dramatic you may want to rip up 20%, scribble all over 20% with a dark marker, or even splash red paint on 20%.
4. Discuss with the students the significance of a 20% loss of rain forest. A loss of this magnitude has many impacts. (Examples: shorter rainy season, lower rate of CO₂ uptake, loss of biodiversity, desertification, impacts global warming). Also significant is that the rate of destruction per year is higher today than in the past. Ask students to imagine... “How much rain forest will remain in 50 years?...100 years?”

Part Three: Measure an Acre

This activity will help the students to actually see the amount of space that comprises an acre. Measuring an acre will help students appreciate the vastness of the rain forest and comprehend the magnitude of loss due to deforestation and unsustainable farming practices.

Procedure:

1. Introduce activity by emphasizing that the world's tropical rain forests cover 2.6 billion acres of land and that thousands of acres are destroyed each year.
2. How much is an acre? 1 acre = 4840 square yards. What does that look like? Go to a large field or park and have students measure a 70 yards x 70 yards area—this is one acre. Place small groups of students at each of the four corners of the measured acre. Teacher remains in the middle area of the acre.
3. From your position in the middle of the acre, have students consider the following:
 - a. This is only one acre.
 - b. 2.6 billion acres of rain forest exist worldwide.
 - c. Hundreds of acres are destroyed each hour.
 - d. Thousands of acres are destroyed each day
 - e. Hundreds of thousands of acres are destroyed each year.
 - f. Remember that 20% of the rain forest has already been destroyed.

Note: Teacher may want to see the resources list at the end of this packet for more information on rain forest destruction.