

Snake Survey

Subjects: Science and Art

Objectives: Students will complete an attitude survey regarding their feelings about snakes, take part in a discussion designed to dispel myths and make snakes out of old men's ties.

Materials:

- Pencil and paper
- Old men's ties (one per student)
- Hanger for each student (optional)
- Red felt
- Google eyes



Procedure:

1. Ask students to list the top five animals of which they are most fearful. Tally the responses on the board. Snakes will probably be a popular answer.
2. Note the animals that have the most tally marks. Tell the students they will be talking about one particular animal, snakes! Ask students why people may have negative feelings about snakes. One thing that might seem creepy to people is that snakes don't have legs. We are used to things having two or four legs.
3. Write the following statements on the board. Have students rate each statement as either: 1 – disagree, 2 – agree, 3 – strongly agree.
Statement 1: Snakes are mean.
Statement 2: Snakes are ugly and gross.
Statement 3: Most snakes are poisonous.
Statement 4: Snakes are slimy.
Statement 5: Endangered species that are cute and intelligent should be saved before endangered snakes.
4. Tally these results. Begin a discussion about snake attributes. Discussion responses to the above statements:
Statement 1: Students should understand that snakes, like many other animals, exhibit a variety of behaviors. Some species of snakes are quite docile. Others are more aggressive. Behaviors that students may label as "mean," such as biting people, are just a snake's way of surviving.
Statement 2: Although some people may believe that snakes are ugly and gross, it is important to remember that snakes evolved certain features to help them survive. For example, a snake's streamlined body can fit into animal burrows.
Statement 3: Fewer than 10% of snakes have venom that is harmful to humans.
Statement 4: Snakes are not slimy at all. Their skin is dry and can be smooth.
Statement 5: it is important that we protect all living things, because every species has a role to play within its habitat. For example, snakes eat rodents that spread disease.
5. After discussion, have the students make a snake out of an old men's tie. Do this by stuffing the tie with stuffing. Use a hanger to get the stuffing deep. You can leave the hanger in the tie if you want to make the snake bendable. Cut a tongue out of red felt. Glue the tongue and google eyes onto the big end of the tie.

Activity modified from David Wines' Snake Lesson Plans http://pages.uoregon.edu/titus/herp_old/wines.htm

Gopher Snake Classifieds

Subjects: Language Arts and Science

Objectives:

Science: Students will synthesize what they have learned about a gopher snake's habitat needs.

Language Arts: Students will be able to write in a variety of formats to record, generate and reflect upon ideas.



Materials:

- Examples of advertisements from a newspaper
- Pencil and paper

Procedure:

1. Review the components of habitat with your students: food, water, shelter and space in a suitable arrangement.
2. Ask the students to imagine that they are a gopher snake looking for a place to live. Have them describe why they are looking, what they would like to have available in their habitat and how long they will be there.
3. Instruct the students to write and illustrate advertisements that offer gopher snake habitat for rent.
4. Display the advertisements.

Example for a kestrel:

Old woodpecker hole now available. Located on dead tree near forest edge. Close to meadow with lots of grasshoppers and mice. Many perches for those with young and fledglings just learning to fly. Interest kestrels should call Speedy at 1-800-4falcon.

Assessment idea: Ask the students which classified ad a gopher snake might answer and why.

Extension: Have students create a gopher snake newspaper that includes gopher snake issues and stories. Don't forget the comic section!

What It Takes to be a Snake

Subject: Science

Objective: Students will complete a comparison of different snake and human characteristics.

Materials:

- Pencil and paper
- Colored pencils, markers or crayons

Procedure:

1. Break the students into groups. Give each group a characteristic of snakes to research. Following is a list to get your started:
 - What class do snakes belong to? – reptiles
 - Are snakes exothermic or endothermic? – exothermic
 - Do snakes have a backbone? yes- vertebrate in Craniata phylum
 - How do snakes smell? – with tongues and Jacobson's organ on roof of mouth
 - How do snakes see? – different visual field with each eye
 - What is a snake's skin like? – thick, covered with scales
 - What do snakes need to survive? – food, water, shelter, space
 - Do snakes lay eggs? Some do; others bear live young
 - Do snakes hear? – no outer ear, but inner ear feels vibrations
 - Do snakes chew food? – no, swallow prey whole
 - How do snakes shed skin? – all at once
 - How do snakes move? – slithering
2. Have each group write a brief answer to the question they researched and bring students together to share.
3. Ask students if they think we share any of the same characteristics as snakes. Tell them they are going to get back in their groups and discuss the question they had but relate it to humans. For example, the hearing group would say snakes are different because they have inner ears that help sense vibrations. Humans have outer ears that hear sound waves through the air. Students may need time to explore how humans do things. Assist where needed.
4. Bring groups back together to share. Are we more similar to snakes than different? One key element you'll want to point out is that both snakes and humans need food, water, shelter and space (habitat) to survive. We also belong to the same phylum Craniata.
5. After discussion, ask students to create a What if ... poster. The poster should include a picture of either a snake with a person characteristic or a human with a snake characteristic. This could get fun! Imagine a snake walking on two legs or chewing gum. What about a person walking into a bakery and sticking his/her tongue out to smell the baked goods or shedding skin all at once. Posters should include a sentence describing the illustration such as, "What if a snake walked on two legs?" Students should then explain why the statement not possible.



WILDLIFE WORKSHEET

Cinquain and Paint a Snake

A cinquain is a 5 lined poem, which follows the format below. It does not have to rhyme!

Title (2 syllables)
Description of title (4 syllables)
Description of action (6 syllables)
Description of feeling (8 syllables)
Rename title (2 syllables)

Sample:
Salmon
Anadromous
Migrate to the ocean
Powerful native of Idaho
Chinook

Directions:

- On the lines below, write a cinquain poem about a snake that lives in our state. Be sure your poem has 5 lines and follows the correct number of syllables.
- Trade poems with a partner to edit spelling and number of syllables.
- Follow the directions in the box to make a hand-print snake. Write your final draft neatly on your art work.

Line 1: Title

Line 2: Description of title

Line 3: Description of action

Line 4: Description of feeling

Line 5: Rename title

Directions for making a hand-print snake

1. Decide what three colors you would like your snake to be.
2. You'll need to use both pointer fingers at the same time, so have all paint ready.
3. Start by dipping your pointer fingers in the two most prominent colors you would like your snake to be.
4. Make a fingerprint with one finger on your paper. Place the other finger just about a ¼ inch after the first print.
5. Alternate fingers following the same directions as above, making a curly design.
6. Let dry. Add the third color as a stripe between the two colored finger prints. Use the side of your pinky finger to make the stripe.
7. Outline with marker when dry and add a forked tongue and eyes. Eyes could be painted with white paint or drawn.

**Modified from Hand-Print Animal Art: A Kids Can Series by Carolyn Carreiro*

