



Wildlife Lego Challenge

Grade: 4th - 6th grade

Topic: Kind living among wildlife

Duration: 60 minutes

Related Subjects: Science, Language, Art and STEM.

Objectives

Analyze a situation in which many lives and species may be affected. Develop empathy towards wildlife and comprehend their specific needs. Read and understand text to find relation between different points of view. Work in groups to find a humane solution for a problem, design and construct a model of it.

Materials

- Printed story "A Tale of Two Critters" (attached)
- Variety of Legos (enough for each group to be able to build something)
- Paper and pencil
- Ruler
- Paper bags, "ziplock" or reused boxes to place Legos in and hand out.

Preparation

Divide Legos into packs depending on the amount of groups you will have.

Opening

- Begin with a conversation about points of view and having two sides to a story.
- You can have them give examples and/or provide some of your own.
- Explain that when we are talking to people in the same language it may be easier to understand different points of view. But when dealing with animals, we can't speak the same language, so we cannot understand their point of view, or can we?
- Explain what empathy means and how it can help us find ways to peacefully coexist with other animal species. For example, we can consider how something may hurt or scare them. Also, how our actions in the environment can affect them.
- Explain the needs of wild animals; water, food, shelter, space and other animals of their species.



Activity

- Depending on the reading abilities of the students, you may read the story out loud, have some students read or have each working group read individually.
- If you are reading for them, have them discuss each story to make sure they comprehend and ask the following suggested questions: Who is telling the story? What is the main problem from their point of view? Who is causing the problem?
- If they are reading on their own, have them stop once they've read each story to discuss these questions.
- Now, each group must think of a way in which both characters, the person and the squirrel, can be happy, have what they want and need.
- Hand out a sheet of paper and pencil. They must draw the solution. It should be clear, organized and may include measurements such as the height of a feeder, size of a box for the squirrel. This should take 10 minutes. It is important for them to work with the members of the group. Each one must have a say, take on a task and help in the process.
- You may guide them along the way asking open ended questions to get them thinking.
- Once they have the drawing of their idea, each group must construct the solution with the Legos provided.
- This process should not take longer than 15 minutes since it is a challenge.

Closing

- When construction time is up, each group must stop.
- Then have each group present their construction and explain their humane solution.
- Discuss the solutions briefly and offer any suggestions of ways to improve if needed.
- Their constructions can be displayed.





Suggestions

If any suggestions do not seem humane or even harmful to the animal they must be addressed. Although rare, a child may suggest caging the animal, calling animal control or even have the person from the story destroy their house. We must be there to guide them if this happens, considering animal welfare but also realistic options.

This is a great opportunity to talk about local birds and other wildlife since the ones in the story are not necessarily the ones in your area.

These constructions can be displayed for the school to enjoy and also learn from it. Students can take turns explaining the work to other groups.

You may do this activity with one large bin of Legos instead of individual packs. This way they have more options to choose what they need.





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A Tale of Two Critters

Part 1

After years of city life, I was thrilled to move to a home in the country. My new place is in a quiet neighborhood, surrounded by deep woods.

Right away, I hung a bird feeder in my backyard. Every day, I fill it with nuts and seed. It's such a treat to watch the birds fly over for a nibble. Flashy cardinals, shy finches, bossy blue jay—they're all here.

But now an uninvited guest has started showing up too: a squirrel. With the greatest of ease, the furry pest perches himself on my bird feeder. Stuffing his cheeks, he leaves piles of shells behind. Some days I find the feeder completely empty!

What's worse, the birds won't come near the feeder while the squirrel is there. Instead, they perch on high branches and chirp loudly. The chickadees sound downright mad, as if they're yelling at the squirrel to leave.

Time and time again, I scare the squirrel away by shouting and waving my hands. But that doesn't work for long. Soon enough, he's back.





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A Tale of Two Critters

Part 2



I couldn't believe it when a house was built right in the middle of my woods. As if that wasn't bad enough, my favorite oak tree was cut down too. No more acorns for me!

Luckily the human who moved into the house set up an awesome feeder for me. It's an all-you-can-eat, help yourself buffet, hanging from a cozy tree. He stocks it up every morning with yummy seeds and nuts.

I love this feeder! It has all the munchies I can get my hands on, with no work involved. Sometimes I sit in the sun all day, filling my tummy until every crumb is gone. The birds sing sweet songs to me while I eat—especially the chickadees. They don't even bother coming to the feeder until I'm done. Now that's what I call polite!

The only problem is that the human acts strangely when he sees me. I'll be having, minding my own business, and he'll start flapping his arms and yelling. Sometimes it scares me so much I run away. I don't know what his problem is. I'm just trying to get a good meal.