

Notes/Reflections:

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Embodying Science • Ecosystem • Food Chain •
Producers, Consumers, Decomposers •



Discover the world of ecosystems and the players involved by
bringing food chains to life!

Using Tableau and Role Drama to Examine the Ecosystem

Students will analyze the ecosystem by assuming roles of various plants and animals in the food chain. Students will use tableaux to dramatize their place in the food chain. After students share out their tableaux, they will write in-role as their plant/animal arguing why they are important to the ecosystem. Students will take their writing and step into a Role Drama where students will debate which plant or animal is most important to the ecosystem. Students in each group are placed on a Character Panel in role as their characters and the remaining students step into role as reporters to ask them questions. This will result in a class discussion that explores the interdependence that each plant and animal have on one another in the ecosystem.

Essential Question: How can tableau and role drama be used to explore the food chain and its effect on the ecosystem?

Process:

- Tableau Warm-Up
- Review our Knowledge of the Ecosystem
 - Review key terminology and concepts that are critical to understanding the food chain (producers, consumers, herbivores, carnivores).
- Small Groups Create Tableaux
 - Place students in small groups.
 - Give each group 4 index cards with different animals/ plants that are in a food chain. Direct the group to create a tableau that dramatizes the food chain with each student taking on the role of the animal/ plant listed on the index card.
 - Each small group shares out their tableau with the class
- Reflect
 - Ask students
 - Which animal or plant was a producer? Consumer? Decomposer?
 - How did you know this?
- Students Write In-Role
 - Students return to their seats and write in first person as their character in their food chain. They write about why they are most important to the ecosystem.
- Class Role Drama
 - Students in each group are then placed on a Character Panel in role as their characters and the remaining students step into role as reporters who ask the panel questions.
 - Together we all step into role and create a Role Drama that analyzes why each animal is critical to the Food Chain and the Ecosystem at large.
 - Students debate why their plant/animal is important and defend it by explaining why. The reporters are charged with the responsibility to determine which character is most important. The objective is to spark a class discussion that deeply analyzes the food chain's interdependence on one another. We also discuss what ways each plant/animal can protect him/herself.

Assessment

Formative assessment: Class discussion, group discussions, reflection questions, anecdotal notes when observing students working in small groups, class reflection/ discussion, tableaux created, and the role drama

Summative Assessment: Pieces of writing written in-role. A rubric could also be used to evaluate students during the Tableau work and the Role Drama work.

Materials

- Anchor Chart Paper
- Markers
- Music
- Index cards
- Paper
- Pencils

Vocabulary

Camouflage

Process of animals changing their colors, patterns, and shapes to disguise them from predators or prey

Carnivore

An animal that eats only other animals

Consumer

An animal that gets its energy by eating plants or other animals

Decomposers

A living thing that breaks down the remains of dead organisms

Ecosystem

All the living and non-living things that interact with each other in an environment

Extinct

A species that is gone forever because all of its kind have died

Food Chain

The path of energy in an ecosystem from plants to animals (from producers to consumers)

Herbivore

An animal that eats on plants

Hibernate

When animals go into a deep sleep

Producer

A living thing that makes its own food

Tableau

A "living picture" in which actors pose and freeze in the manner of a picture or photograph

Narration

The act of telling a story

Storytelling

Conveying events in words and images, often by improvisation or embellishment

Classroom Tips

Use cueing methods when directing tableau in your classroom: "3-2-1- Freeze" and also the term "3-2-1- Action". "Actors Neutral" can also be used to focus students and direct students to stop what they are doing and listen to instructions.

Make your expectations for when students work together in groups to craft their tableaux explicit. Go over the guidelines before the group work begins. Write them up so that students can refer back to them if they need to during their group working time.

Georgia Performance Standards

SCIENCE

GRADE 4

S4L1: Students will describe the roles of organisms and the flow of energy within an ecosystem.

S4L2: Students will identify factors that affect the survival or extinction of organisms such as adaptation, variation of behaviors (hibernation), and external features (camouflage and protection).

THEATRE

GRADE 4

TAES4.3: Acting by developing, communicating, and sustaining roles within a variety of situations and environments

TAES4.7: Integrating various art forms, other content areas, and life experiences, to create theatre

National Standards

SCIENCE

NS.K-4.3: As a result of activities in grades K-4, all students should develop understanding of:

- Organisms and environments

THEATRE ARTS

Standard 2: Acting by assuming roles and interacting in improvisations

Standard 5: Researching by finding information to support classroom dramatizations