



TROPICAL RAIN FOREST

Level: middle school

Course: language arts

Rationale

The topic of the rain forest is a very interesting and controversial topic. Topics that students are studying need to be able to reach out and grab their attention. The controversial aspect of the rain forest will do just that. Do you save the rain forest and help solve many of the world's problems or do you let the forest continue to be burned-and-cut so people will have farms and jobs?

Students will research these different aspects in their Science and Language Arts classes. They will use various ways of obtaining information; the Internet, CD ROM, books, etc. The rain forest is an ideal topic because it builds off of information they are learning in Social Studies.

Latin America contains a great deal of the world's tropical rain forests and the rain forest is a political and economic issue. It is also a global environmental issue.

The goal for our students is to become familiar with the rain forest and how it environmentally affects the world. After using the above methods of research students will make their own judgments of how the rain forest affects them in their world.

Lesson Overview: Language Arts

Lesson 1 - Reading and evaluating an article on the rain forest.

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Lesson 2 - Booklist and book report ideas.

Lesson 3 - Using the Internet to communicate with other students.

Lesson 4- Writing a persuasive five paragraph essay about the rain forest.

Other Activities - Activities that pertain to Language Arts that come from What Have You Got to Lose?, a curriculum by SPICE.

Time Needed

3 weeks

Lesson 1

Goal

For students to have a broader knowledge base of global destruction, products that are being found in the rain forest, and how much of the rain forest is being destroyed.

Objective

Students will read and evaluate the attached article. After reading the article the students will write in their journals about their thoughts and feelings on it. A whole class discussion about the article will follow.

Materials

Article, pen or pencil, paper or notebook for journal

Procedures

1. Ask students what they already know about the rain forest. Discuss this information.
2. Pass out articles and explain to students that upon finishing the article, they need to write down their thoughts and feelings about what they just read.
- 3 After students have completed the above task begin a discussion about the information from the article.

Evaluation

For each student to read the article, write a journal entry and participate in discussion.

Lesson 2

Goal

For students to choose information about the rain forest and present the knowledge they have acquired.

Objective

Students will read at least 1 or 2 books off the following reading list. Students will then do a report on the books they chose.

Materials

Book report idea list and any materials listed on it that students might not be able to get from home.

Procedures

1. Display some of the books from the list on the table in your room.
2. Read orally to students Welcome to the Greenhouse by Jane Yolen. (If this book does not suit you, read any picture book to the students that you feel they might find interesting.)
3. Explain to the students that they will need to read at least 1 or 2 of the books off the booklist.
4. Explain that after reading the books they will complete a report on them using "75 ways to do a book report". Tell the students they will be able to pick the type of book report they will do, but that it must apply to the book. You may want to spend some time going over the various forms of reports and discussing them.
5. Set deadline for when the reports must be turned in.

Evaluation

Students will complete at least 2 projects. They will be graded upon how the complete project looks and how they meet the requirements of what is expected from "75 ways to do a book report".

Book List

Welcome to the Greenhouse by Jan Yolen

One Day in the Tropical Rain Forest by Jean Craighead George

The Greenhouse Effect by Darlene R. Stille

Vanishing Forests by Helen J. Challand

Global Warming by Jean F. Blashfield and Wallace B. Black

Where the Rain Forest Meets the Sea by Jeannie Baker

Lesson 3

Goal

For students to use the Internet to communicate with other students about the rain forest.

Objective

Students will use Hyper News in Netscape to write and answer questions on the rain forest. Students will print out their questionnaires they have answered and present their information to the class.

Materials

Computer and printer with Internet access to the World Wide Web and Netscape capabilities.

Procedures

1. Students should be familiar with Netscape before beginning this exercise. Prior to exercise take students to computer lab and work on the World Wide Web using Netscape.
2. Students will need to access Hyper News and find questionnaires on rain forest issues.
3. Students will then do as Hyper News instructs and answer the questionnaires. Explain to students that they should take their answers very seriously as other students may use this information for research.
4. Student will print a copy of questionnaires.
5. Hold a class discussion about the different questionnaires and how they answered.
6. Students will turn these in.

Evaluation

Students will have accessed Hyper News on Netscape and will have answered at least one questionnaire. Students will turn in questionnaires for credit. Most evaluation will come from monitoring the students in the lab.

Final Lesson

Goal

For students to make an informed decision and then to take a stand on rather to save the rain forest or continue destroying it. Students must support their decision.

Objective

Students will write a 5 paragraph persuasive essay about the rain forest. They will support their position with the statistics and facts obtained from their research on the rain forest.

Materials

5 paragraph essay handout. Paper, pencil and pen.

Procedures

(Before beginning this lesson I recommend that you do this 5 paragraph essay exercise several times with the students on various topics.)

1. Ask the students their viewpoints on the rain forest and discuss. Have them support their opinions.
2. Explain to the students what a persuasive essay is. Tell them that they must support their point using the information they have obtained using the Internet and what they have learned in Science. Be sure to remind students that they can only support their opinion by using facts. Discuss what a fact and opinion is if necessary. You may need to spend some time discussing this. Make sure all students understand before letting them work on their own.
3. At this point remind students what the 5 paragraph essay is and explain to them that they will be writing their essay in the 5 paragraph essay format.
4. Have students work on their own and write their persuasive essay.
5. Set deadline for when papers are due.

Evaluation

Each student will complete a 5 paragraph essay. Each student should support their position with facts and information they have retrieved off the net or from books, etc.

Other Lessons

The following lesson plans are in What Have You Got To Lose? New World Tropical Rain Forests, from SPICE.

1. The Rainforest Speaks (Lesson 4)

Objectives:

- To learn the meaning of the word "anthropomorphism".
- To develop a written speech for a rain forest plant or animal.
- To deliver a speech. (p. 37)

2. Rainforest Choices No. 1

Objectives:

- To become familiar with an example of human existence in a New World rainforest, both from the historical and modern perspective.
- To work in a cooperative group.
- To make decisions based on the evidence available.
- To examine a life-style other than their own.
- To learn about adapting to an environment.
- To experience oral storytelling as a means of passing on traditions and history. (p. 39)

3. Stories Of The Rainforest

Objectives:

- To become familiar with some oral traditions of the rainforest.
- To work cooperatively in a group.
- To make decisions based on the evidence available.
- To experience oral storytelling as a means of passing on traditions and history. (p. 49)

Bibliography

World Wide Web

"Rainforest Action Network". <http://www.rain.org/ran/>

"Yahoo- Science: Ecology: Rainforest." <http://www.envirolink.org/HyperNews/get/studentactivism/3/html>

Book Sources

Murphey, Carol E. What Have You Got To Lose? New World Tropical Rainforests.
SPICE: Stanford University, Stanford, California.

Handouts

"75 Ways To Do A Book Report." by Suzanne Barchers.

"The Five-Paragraph Essay." by Dr. Sandra Pitts. College of Santa Fe, New Mexico.