

Nebraska State Parks Centennial Lesson Plan



Activity Title:

Hula Hoop Habitat

Grade Level:

Lower Elementary

Upper Elementary

Method:

During this activity, students will observe plants and animals to compare the diversity of life in different habitats. This lesson can take place outside of a school or in a state park.

Materials:

[Hula Hoop Habitat Worksheet](#)

Hula hoops

Clipboards

Pencils

State Standards:

SC.K.7.2.C, SC.2.7.2.C; SS 5.3.3.a; SS 4.3.2.b

Vocabulary:

Habitat: the natural home or environment of an animal, plant, or other organism

Organism: an individual animal, plant, or single-celled life form

Pollution: the presence in or introduction into the environment of a substance or thing that has harmful or poisonous effects

Objective:

Students will 1) develop the understanding of different habitats, 2) compare and contrast the diversity of life in different habitats.

Background:

What is a habitat? Introduce the main features of a habitat, through guiding questions. Discuss that habitat is a place where an organism (living thing) lives. It includes all living and nonliving things in the environment. The habitat should meet the essential needs of living things: food, water, shelter, air and space. Are some habitats better than others? Why? (Provide examples. The best habitats include ample food, water and shelter options. Poor habitats may have pollution, a lack of or limited resources or insufficient shelter.)

Step-By-Step Instructions:

Hula Hoop Habitat Exploration

1. Examine 3 different habitats by comparing and contrasting them. When we COMPARE things, we look for what is the SAME. When we CONTRAST things, we look for what is DIFFERENT.
2. We will travel together to three different types of habitat and place hula hoops on the ground to observe as a study plot. Participants (in groups no larger than 4) will gather around their plot with the data sheet and record observations. Examples of different habitats could include:
 - Human-Made Habitat (Includes pavement, parking areas, landscaped spaces.)
 - Forest Habitat (Are there any trees or wooded areas nearby?)
 - Wetland Habitat (Is there a pond, or stream nearby?)
 - Prairie Habitat (Is there a natural grassy area nearby?)

Process Findings & Discussion

1. Gather the participants with their data sheets.
2. Discuss what they found in each habitat using 1 or more of these ideas (depending on time):
3. Habitat Diversity - Did they notice some habitats had more plants, animals, life, etc. than others?
4. Revisit some of the guiding questions: living things, non-living things, signs of life?
5. Share-out - Have each group share-out something they learned or were excited to see.
6. Ask participants to show a thumbs up or down to show if the habitats were “healthy” or “not healthy” for living things. Are there ways we can help promote healthy habitats? (don’t litter, recycle things, avoid using harmful chemicals)

Focus Questions:

What living things do you see? (plants, animals, insects)

What nonliving things do you see? (soil, rocks, trash, seeds, dead branches)

What signs of life can you find? (feathers, fur, dead insects)