



Nurture the Wonder

Preschool Inquiry Lesson Plan

Orangutan Behavior

Lesson Summary: This is a preschool inquiry lesson that utilizes exhibits found in The RainForest at Cleveland Metroparks Zoo. The lesson pairs observations and experiences that students have had at The RainForest with classroom materials and inquiry skills to capture the curiosity of young learners to understand the natural world around them.

Goals and Objectives: Students will draw from prior knowledge, use observational skills to explore the orangutan behavior at The RainForest, collect data, and use critical thinking skills to come up with predictions and further inquiry investigations.

Cleveland Metropolitan School District Scope & Sequence:

Pre-kindergarten

Strand: Science Inquiry and Application

Topic: Inquiry

- Explore objects, materials and events in the environment.
- Make careful observations.
- Engage in simple investigations.
- Describe, compare, sort, classify, and order.
- Share findings, ideas and explanations (may be correct or incorrect) through a variety of methods (e.g., pictures, words, dramatization).
- Record observations using words, pictures, charts, graphs, etc.
- Make Predictions
- Make inferences, generalizations and explanations based on evidence.

Strand: Life Science

Topic: Explorations of Living Things

- With modeling and support, recognize similarities and differences between people and other living things.

Possible Comparative Questions: Do orangutans at The RainForest spend more time moving or resting?

Materials:

- Picture worksheet/graph of orangutan behaviors (provided)
- Crayons or pencils

Questioning and Predicting

Pre Field Experience Procedures:

- In the classroom before coming to Cleveland Metroparks Zoo, ask students if they have ever heard of an animal called an orangutan. Let them freely answer the question and describe any past experiences they may have had with the animal. They should also share any information they might know about orangutans already (what they look like, where they live, how they move, what they eat, etc.)
- If they have not seen an orangutan before, ask them what they think the animal might look like, what it might eat and how it might move etc. They can draw pictures, tell stories or use play to share their ideas.
- Tell the students they will have an opportunity to observe orangutans when they visit the Zoo, and will be doing an inquiry investigation on their behaviors.
- Propose the comparative question: Do orangutans at The RainForest spend more time moving/playing or resting?
- Ask students to individually make a prediction of which behavior they think they will see the orangutans doing more (moving around or resting). Record their answers and keep them for after the class observes and collects data.

Observing

Visit The RainForest at Cleveland Metroparks Zoo:

- If possible, break students up in to smaller groups.
- Hand out one orangutan behavior graph to each group when they enter the orangutan area of The RainForest.
- Let children freely observe the orangutans while paying close attention to behaviors.
- It might be helpful to then tell the students to try to focus on just one orangutan for a few minutes while recording the behaviors they observe.
- Students should color in one space on the graph above the picture representing a behavior every time they observe an orangutan doing it (ex. walking, climbing, eating, sleeping, sitting) Adults should assist when necessary.
- Collect orangutan behavior graphs when students are finished recording observations (limit it to a few minutes) and save them for lesson completion when returning to the classroom.

Investigating and Communicating

Post Field Experience Procedures:

- As a class, go over some of the behaviors the students observed while visiting the orangutan exhibit at The RainForest by using the orangutan behavior graphs.
- Have a discussion about which behaviors might be considered “moving” behaviors, and which might be “resting behaviors”
- Have students count and total each behavior on their graphs.
- Ask students if their prediction before the field experience was correct.
- Continue to ask and answer questions about the data on the graphs.
 - Which behavior did they see the most?
 - Which behavior did they see the least?
 - How many more times did they see the orangutans eating than climbing, etc.

- Have students compare and contrast orangutan behavior to their own daily behaviors by creating a list of things they do (at school and at home). Did they see the orangutans doing those things too?
- Possible extension: Ask students to think of other animals and behaviors they can easily observe and collect data on much like the orangutans. Have them design their own inquiry investigations.