

Everglades Baseball

Subject: Science

Duration: 30 minutes

Location: Classroom

Key Vocabulary: Habitat, exotic species, endangered species, food chain, periphyton, Native American, characteristic, nutrient

Related Activities: Park Vocabulary; Riddles-Guess the Organism; Habitat Hunt; and many others

Florida Sunshine State Standards: SC.4.L.17, SC.5.L.17, SC.6.L.14



Materials

- Blackboard/whiteboard
- 2 colors of chalk/pens
- Copies of “Baseball Questions”

Objectives: Students will be able to review facts and concepts learned about the Everglades ecosystem.

Method: Students will demonstrate their knowledge of the Everglades through a competitive game.

Background: See the “Natural History” section.

Suggested Procedure

1. Divide students into two equal teams.
2. Use a section of the board for keeping score and draw a baseball diamond beside it.
3. Each time a question is answered correctly the batter advances to the next base. Use a different color chalk for each team and mark the base with the correct color when the runner (student who answered question correctly) gets on.
4. Rules:
 - Questions with more than one answer can be “doubles,” “triples,” or home runs.
 - Incorrect answers are an out.
 - Three outs brings the other team to bat.
 - Teacher/ranger is pitcher who asks the questions.
 - Play continues for nine innings or until all questions have been asked.
 - Team with the highest score wins.

Extension

Have each team develop additional questions to ask the opposing team. Then play a “double-header.”

Baseball Questions

1. Name a habitat in the Everglades.

Possible answers: hammock, pinelands, sawgrass prairie, mangrove, cypress slough, bayhead, sea grass beds, coral reef, willowhead or gator hole.

2. What causes the highest unnatural fatality rate among manatees?

Answer: being hit by boat propellers.

3. Name 2 exotic species in the Everglades.

Possible answers: Australian Pine, melaleuca (or Australian paper tree), Brazilian pepper, tilapia, oscar, walking catfish.

4. Where does the water flowing into Everglades and Big Cypress come from?

Answer: rain and the Kissimmee River Basin.

5. Name a resident of an alligator hole.

Possible answers: alligator, birds, fish, willow, red bay.

6. Name one of the two birds that stretches its wings out to dry.

Answers: cormorant and the anhinga.

7. Name a human-caused problem in South Florida.

Possible answers: wetland drainage, nutrient runoff (water pollution), exotic species introduction.

8. Everglades, Biscayne and Dry Tortugas are _____ Parks. Big Cypress is a _____

Answers: Everglades, Biscayne and Dry Tortugas are national parks. Big Cypress is a national preserve. (For a triple, what is the difference between a national park and a national preserve?!)

9. Name a bird with no feathers on its head.

Possible answers: turkey vulture, black vulture, woodstork.

10. Name something an alligator eats.

Possible answers: gar fish, smaller alligators, turtles, apple snails.

11. Name an endangered species in South Florida. (For a “double” name two, for a “triple,” name three.)

Possible answers: Florida panther, snail kite, woodstork, manatee, cape sable seaside sparrow, American crocodile, red-cockaded woodpecker, Schaus swallowtail butterfly, hawksbill turtle, green turtle, Atlantic Ridley turtle, leatherback turtle, Key Largo cotton mouse, Key Largo woodrat.

12. How does the slash pine resist fire?

Possible answers: thick layers of bark so fire doesn't burn all the way through the tree, needles and cones held high up off the ground.



13. Name a plant that lives in the pinelands.

Possible answers: slash pine, saw palmetto, sabal palm.

14. What animals might live in the sawgrass prairie?

Possible answers: alligator, mosquito fish, white ibis, egret, heron, or scud (homerun if you know that this is a tiny - less than .5 inch long - aquatic invertebrate related to crayfish, that eats plant and animal debris found on the bottom of freshwater ponds and wetlands!)

15. Name a characteristic of the hammock.

Possible answers: higher elevation, dry land, tall trees (many tropical), some have a shallow moat around the outside.

16. What force of nature is necessary to maintain the pinelands?

Answer: fire kills the invading hardwoods but not the pineland plants which keeps the pinelands from becoming a hammock.

17. Name the favorite tree of the tree snail.

Answer: lysiloma or wild tamarind.

18. What is the base of the food chain in the sawgrass prairie?

Answer: periphyton, an algal mat. (For a homerun, spell p-e-r-i-p-h-y-t-o-n.)

19. Define habitat.

Answer: a place which provides food, water, shelter and space for plants and animals.

20. Name two plants in the hammock.

Possible answers: gumbo limbo, lysiloma (wild tamarind), sabal palm, strangler fig.

21. Name two plants in the sawgrass prairie.

Possible answers: sawgrass, periphyton, bladderwort, bacopa.

22. What Native American tribes live in the Everglades?

Answer: Miccosukee and Seminole.

