



Pre-Visit Activity: Musical Chair Survival

Pre-visit activities prepare students for a more meaningful and rewarding visit to Theodore Roosevelt Island. Please complete as many as your schedule allows before bringing your students on their field trip.

Objectives

1. Realize that animals need food, water, air and shelter to survive.
2. Learn that competition for these elements is a daily condition of survival.

Method:

Students will play a version of musical chairs in which they are animals competing for what they need to survive in their environment.

Materials

- Chairs
- Music

Procedures

1. Discuss with students that all animals need food, water, air and shelter to survive.
2. Brainstorm a list of changes that may occur in the environment. Include both natural changes and changes caused by people.
3. Discuss what happens to, or what might happen to, the animals if these changes occur in the environment.
4. Arrange chairs in a circle with the seats facing out. The chairs will represent the animals' habitat.
5. Have the class role play as animals that live in a particular area. Have them stand around the chairs. Tell the students that about a mile away, people are building a new structure. The animals that had lived in the area

where the structure is being built -- represented by the other half of the class -- have been forced to leave their habitat and join the other "animals" around the chairs. Explain to the students that increased competition for limited resources is the result.

6. Turn the music on. Students should begin to walk around the chairs. They are now animals competing for food, water, air and shelter (habitat). Instruct them that when the music stops, they should sit in the closest open chair. Only one "animal" is permitted per chair.

7. Turn the music off. Those animals that do not get a chair will perish (or move to a suitable habitat if they are capable or such a habitat exists.)

8. Take a few chairs out of the circle. Explain to the students that this is habitat lost to development or degradation. Continue playing (using the scenarios that you brainstormed earlier) until only a few animals are left.

Evaluation

Write a paragraph explaining how a change in the environment affects the animals that live there.