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Quick & Easy Habitat Education Activities

Bark & Leaf Rubbings

First Grade 1-5
15-20 Minutes
Outdoors/Indoors

<p>Description: This activity serves to reinforce knowledge about the parts of a plant, and helps students recognize that different plants have different characteristics. Students make leaf and bark rubbings from four different plant species in a habitat area and then use these rubbings to sort by characteristics. The rubbings are also used to find the plants again, using the characteristics as ‘clues’.</p>	<p>Vocabulary Characteristics: <i>a distinguishing trait or property</i> Observation: <i>an act of noting a fact or occurrence, often involving a measurement, a record or description</i> Record: <i>to set down in writing; to register permanently by mechanical means</i></p>
<p>Objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students identify bark and leaves as parts of a plant. • Students distinguish differences in characteristics of plants by locating and collecting rubbings of leaves and bark. • Students sort the rubbings by key characteristics and identify these characteristics. • Students use these rubbings as tools for identifying plants. 	<p>Washington State EALRs Science 2.1 Develop abilities necessary to do scientific inquiry. Communication 1.1, 1.2 Focus attention, listen and observe to gain and interpret information. Arts 1.1 Identifies and uses basic arts skills and techniques. 1.2 Develops arts skills and techniques. Seattle School District Standards 1.1 Use properties to identify, describe, and categorize substances, materials, and objects. 1.2 Identify, describe, and categorize living things based on their characteristics, some are very different from one another. 1.3 Diversity of Life: Some plants are alike in the way they look and in the things they do, and others are very different from one another. Science Kits: Organisms</p>
<p>Print Materials:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘How-to-do Activity: Making Rubbings’ • Image: ‘Stinging Nettle’ (to identify and mark if present in habitat area) <p>Kit Materials:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Foam core clipboards with rubber bands: 1 per student <p>Teacher supplied:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1/2 sheets of 8 1/2” X 11” copy paper (okay to reuse paper that is printed on one side): 4+ per student • Crayons with wrappers peeled off: at least 1 per student • Optional: Adult or older student mentors to assist with rubbings 	

<p>Before Activity: Discuss the parts of a plant (roots, stem or trunk, branches, leaves). Go to habitat area and locate the best area to take students to collect leaf and bark rubbings.</p> <p>Activity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bring students to habitat area. Ask students: “What are the major parts of a plant? (roots, stem or trunk, branches, leaves) Where is the bark? Leaves?” Point out that different plants have different types of leaves and bark. Notice and discuss. • Tell students, “We are going to explore different plants, and collect data about them by making drawings called ‘rubbings’. We can use these rubbings for different activities to learn more about plants.” • Demonstrate how to do a leaf rubbing on the plant (see How-to-do Activity). Point out characteristics of the leaf rubbing (veins, leaf edge, shape, texture). Show how to do a bark rubbing on the plant. Point out different bark textures. • Ask students, “Why are we collecting rubbings of leaves and bark instead of collecting the actual leaves and bark from the plants?” (We don’t want to cause harm. Plants need leaves to create food; animals use leaves for food and shelter). • Establish boundaries and tell students that they are to stay within these boundaries during the activity. Next, create a signal to let students know when time is up. • Distribute materials (4 pieces of paper, 1 crayon and 1 foam core clipboard per student). Encourage students to use both sides of each piece of paper (or single side if reusing paper). • Tell students to look nearby for 2 different shapes of leaves and 2 different textures of bark. Show different shapes or textures that are from the same plant and others from different plants. Draw students’ attention to the veins and edges of the leaves. Note: If nettles are present in your habitat area, show the image: ‘Stinging Nettle Plant’ and locate live plants. • Have students make 2 leaf rubbings and 2 bark rubbings, one from each of four different plant species. Assist as needed. • Discuss by asking questions such as, “What shapes did you find? What textures did you find? What senses did you use to observe shapes and textures?” • Ask students to work in small groups (3-4 students) to sort leaf and bark rubbings by observable characteristics (leaves with teeth, same shape, parallel veins, rough bark, smooth bark, etc.). Have students describe which characteristics they used and how they used them to sort the rubbings into different groups. • Have students exchange rubbings with other students and then use those rubbings to find the matching plant. Discuss. • Summarize: “Different kinds of plants have different leaf shapes, textures, veins, edges, and types of bark. There are many different plants, and we can learn to find them by observing these differences.”
