

Teaching News Is Elementary

September 11, 2015

Each week, this lesson will share some classroom activity ideas that use the newspaper or other NIE resources. You are encouraged to modify this lesson to fit the needs of your students. For example, some classrooms may be able to use this as a worksheet and others might need to ask and answer the questions in a class discussion.

Please be sure to preview all NIE content before using it in your classroom to ensure it is appropriate for all of your students.

Materials you will need for this lesson: The Seattle Times e-Edition, pencil or colored pencils for sketching/drawing. Internet/library for research.

Article: BIG in The Present: Exploring Our NW Outdoors

Page: page C8

Date: Thursday, September 10, 2015

Pre- Reading Discussion Questions:

Look at the title. Before reading the article, what states or areas make up the Pacific Northwest? What types of plants and animals do you commonly see outdoors in the Pacific Northwest?

Vocabulary:

Read the following quotes and determine the meaning of the word based on how it's used in the sentence:

"What conditions make plants **flourish** in the Pacific Northwest and what makes our **native** plants so unique?"

Flourish: to grow well: to be healthy

Native: produced, living, or existing naturally in a particular region

"Our region typically has warm, dry summers and cool, wet winters, so our native plants have **evolved** and **adapted** to these conditions."

Evolved: to change or develop slowly often into a better, more complex, or more advanced state: to develop by a process of evolution

Adapted: to change (something) so that it functions better or is better suited for a purpose

“The land surrounding the streams is called a **watershed**. It is important that **watersheds** are clean.”

Watershed: the area of land that includes a particular river or lake and all the rivers, streams, etc. that flow into it

Journal Writing Prompts:

“Douglas Firs are also used by animals. Some rodents and birds eat the seeds inside the Douglas fir cones while white-tailed deer eat the foliage and twigs in the winter.”

Draw a simple sketch of your favorite native plant in your journal. Write about the native plant you sketched describing it and what animals and insects depend on it for survival. What parts of the plant do they use and how (shelter, food, etc.)?

Discussion Questions:

Review the excerpt and discuss the following questions:

“There is a wide range of plants native to the Pacific Northwest, the region defined as Washington, Oregon, most of Idaho and parts of Montana, California, British Columbia and Alaska. What conditions make plants flourish in the Pacific Northwest and what makes our native plants so unique?”

Discuss the questions in the excerpt above. Research and make a list of plants that you know are native to the Pacific Northwest, in addition to the ones mentioned in the article (Douglas fir, Beach Strawberry and Red Alder). What special characteristics do those plants have that allow them to flourish in the Pacific Northwest? What makes each of the plants on your list unique? How are they different from non-native plants that have been introduced to the Pacific Northwest?

Small group discussion and activity:

“The Washington state tree is the western hemlock, a type of evergreen tree.”

Why do you think the western hemlock was chosen as the Washington state tree? What does it mean if a tree is evergreen? How is the western hemlock important to Washington state and the Pacific Northwest? In small groups, research to find out about the western hemlock and its habitat, how it grows and what its importance is to our region (products, cultivation, etc.). Share your findings with the other groups in a presentation, report, or poster.

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