

TEKS-Based Activity Starter for Grade 3

Changing How Things Look

Description:

In this activity, students observe how organisms change the environment.

Time Frame:

1 lesson (45 minutes)

Correlation to Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills:

During this activity, students will be exposed to the following Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills:

(3.8) Science concepts. The student knows that living organisms need food, water, light, air, a way to dispose of waste, and an environment in which to live. The student is expected to:

- (D) describe how living organisms modify their physical environment to meet their needs such as beavers building a dam or humans building a home.

Note: The TEKS listed here are the main content TEKS for this activity; however, this activity may also cover additional content and process skills included in other TEKS.

Materials:

The Magic School Bus Hops Home (1 copy)

Resources:

Pat Relf. *The Magic School Bus Hope Home: A Book About Animal Habitats*. New York: Scholastic Inc., 1995.

Background Information for the Teacher:

A **habitat** is the place where a plant or animal usually lives. An **environment** is the set of physical and chemical surroundings of a plant or animal. An environment may or may not be the organism's natural habitat. For example, a tadpole's habitat is in a natural setting, but the tadpole may be studied in a classroom environment.

The environment in which students live and go to school is ideal for observing change in the natural world. These changes may occur very quickly, or they may occur at a slower rate over a long time. For example, students could observe changes immediately following a rainstorm or throughout the seasons of a year. Observing plants and animals in their natural habitat allows students to see not only the changes in the habitat that are occurring but also examples of the interdependence that keeps the system in balance.

Advance Preparation:

Locate areas in the schoolyard where organisms have changed the environment. These changes may be an anthill, a bird's nest, holes that have been dug, or plants growing through parking areas or sidewalks.

Procedures:

1. Read aloud *The Magic School Bus Hops Home*. Afterwards, review the story and ask the students what the beaver did in the story. How did the beaver change the stream? Was this good? Was it harmful, or could it be harmful in the future?
2. Take the students on an observation walk. Ask them to locate signs where organisms have changed the environment.
3. After returning to the classroom, ask students to describe what they found and whether the changes could be described as good, harmful, or of no impact to the environment.
4. Ask each student to draw a picture showing how plants or animals can change their environment.