

“HOW I USE PLANTS” COLLAGE

Basic description:

Students gain an appreciation of the importance of plants to humans by creating a collage that depicts the different ways they, as individuals, use plants.

Curriculum connections:

Overall Expectations

- Describe ways in which plants are important to other living things, and the effects of human activities on plants.

Specific Expectations

- Describe ways in which humans use plants for food, shelter, and clothing (e.g., trees are used for building houses; cloth is made from cotton).
- Describe ways in which humans can protect natural areas to maintain native plant species (e.g., establishing conservation areas, wildlife reserves, wetland sanctuaries).

Preparation Time: 10 minutes

Duration:

- Introduction: 5 minutes
- Information gathering: overnight
- Collage activity: 30-45 minutes

Materials:

- Bristol board, construction paper or poster paper
- Pencils, pens, coloured pencils, markers, crayons, paints
- Scissors
- Glue, tape
- Old magazines
- Different materials that come from plants (dried flowers and leaves, cotton, paper, toilet paper, paper towel, cereal, etc)

Preparation: Gather all necessary materials.

Procedure:

1. As an introduction to the activity, have the students brainstorm a list of the different ways people use plants. How many different uses can they think of?
2. As a homework assignment, ask the students to make a list of all the ways they use plants. Suggest that they ask their parents for help if they are stuck.
3. When the students return to class the next day, ask them to share their lists. Can you add anything new to the list you generated yesterday?
4. Have the students create a collage showing all the different ways that they use plants. Instruct the students to use “How I Use Plants” as a title for their collage (it should be written in large letters somewhere on their artwork). Students may use a variety of materials to create their

collage; they may cut out pictures from magazines, bring in pictures from home, use short descriptive words, create their own drawings, use scraps of plant material or any other means they can think of to express their ideas. You may wish to do this project over a couple of days so that students can gather their materials.

Follow-up and Discussion:

1. Display the students' work on the wall or the blackboard. Complement them on their good work but inform that there might be a bit of a problem.
2. Using sample collages, explain that people use the wood from trees for many things (this means that the trees must be cut down). Have the class make a list of all the ways people use wood (to build homes and furniture, to make paper, toilet paper and paper towels, etc.).
3. Using sample collages, explain that people (and animals) also use living trees for many things (for shade, for homes for animals, for beauty, for clean air, etc.).
4. Ask the students if they can see what the problem might be (these are conflicting uses). We often here people talk about 'Saving the Forests' but our lives would have to change dramatically if we were to stop cutting trees entirely. Introduce the term 'sustainability'. What can we do to ensure that our forests are sustainable? Ask the students to brainstorm ways that they may be able to help ensure sustainable forestry (use only recycled toilet paper and paper towels, don't waste paper, reuse the blank side of scrap paper, recycle paper, buy only wood products that are certified 'Old growth forest free', plant trees at school and at home, participate in a naturalization project with a school or community group, use alternative building products).

Extension: Choose one action that the class will undertake as a whole to help protect our forests. Create a 'Class Contract' (e.g. As a class, we commit to decreasing the amount of paper that we use.) and revisit the contract throughout the year to see if the contract is being fulfilled.

Resources:

- The Lorax by Dr. Seuss, Random House, 1971.
- The Giving Tree by Shel Silverstein, Harper & Row, 1964.
- Focus on Forests: An Activity guide for Primary and Junior Teachers on Forests and Forest Management, Ministry of Supply and Services and the Queen's Printer for Ontario, 1989.
- Science Is... by Susan V. Bosak, Scholastic Canada Ltd. and The Communication Project, 2000.
- Project WILD: Activity Guide, The Council for Environmental Education, 1999.

