

Homes for Sale: Habitat Highlights

Jill Tribell, Holt School District, Michigan

1. Head with students to the chosen habitat.
2. Spend a few minutes in silence, like you do for First Look. Then begin a class discussion of what was noticed--seen, heard, smelled, felt. Tell students to pay close attention because they will use information from this discussion in their projects. What features does this habitat have that make it different than other ones?
3. Lead the discussion to what animals might make their homes in this habitat. Be sure to include birds, insects, reptiles, rodents, fish, etc. Ask what do they need in an area to make it their home: food, shelter/building materials, safety...
4. Now move the conversation to what types of homes those animals might have in this habitat--still thinking of those necessities they need.
5. Ask what might make a creature move to a new home, what might they be looking for in a new home.
6. Depending on the age of the students, have them break into teams, pairs or singles to make a "Home for Sale" sign for a critter that might live in that habitat. (You might introduce concept of persuasive writing.)
7. Give very clear directions about what information you are requiring, including:
 - A. Type of critter and type of home (nest in tree or on ground, hole in dead tree, moist soil under a fallen tree, etc.)
 - B. Availability of food source close by
 - C. What makes it a safe place
 - D. Some specifics about the habitat (weather-sunny or shady, wet or dry, windy or protected, trees or no trees, etc.)
8. Be sure to show an example or two of what you are looking for and point out the required information so kids can see how they can get everything in their advertisement. (You should have one in your journal from today that you can fine tune.)
9. Adding a drawing of the home with lots of details will further enhance the lesson and give those artistic kids a good way to shine, as well. Using both right and left sides of the brain helps cement learning.

****If time is too short out in the habitat, this lesson could begin outside with steps 1-5. Then the project work could be done inside or back at school.*