

Habitats: The California Toad

An Elementary Science Lesson Plan Designed for Group Inquiry Based on the 5E Inquiry Model

Grade Level: This lesson is a level one inquiry and is designed for use in a first-grade science classroom. First-grade students will be studying the needs of various animals and how their habitats meet their needs. This lesson will both reinforce this concept and present a connection between the habitat of the student and the habitat of the California Toad, Princess Mikey.

Science Concept: This lesson is meant to help students understand the importance of an animal's habitat. This lesson will present students with an opportunity to investigate and observe an animal's habitat and then to enforce their understanding through visual arts.

Relationship to California Science Content Standards: (1.2.a) Students know different plants and animals inhabit different kinds of environments and have external features that help them thrive in different kinds of places.

Learning Objective: Students will complete one worksheet and two drawings that will differentiate between man-made habitats and natural habitats.

Lesson Implementation Plan: Students will need to be grouped into small groups (three or four students per group). This lesson plan *must* be done when Princess Mikey is visiting the classroom.

Materials:

- White construction paper (two per student)
- Crayons (or color equivalents)
- California Toad photographs (one copy of each) (attached)
- Copies of CA Toad 1.1 (one copy per student) (attached)
- Copies of CA Toad 1.2 (one copy per student) (attached)
- SERC Animal: Princess Mikey

Engage: Ask students the question, "What is your habitat?" Then, begin a guided discussion with your students, making sure to explain a habitat, the importance of having a habitat, and what aspects a habitat must have in it for humans. Afterwards, give the students their first sheet of white construction paper, and instruct students to draw a picture of themselves in their habitat.

Explore: Explain to students that their habitats are man-made, meaning that their habitats are made for and by humans. While students are drawing their pictures of themselves in their habitat, call up students by previously chosen groups. Students will observe the

Princess Mikey in her habitat. Ask students: “Now that you know what your habitat looks like, what does the Princess Mikey’s habitat look like?” Give students the Observation worksheet (CA Toad 1.1), and tell them to write down three observations of and three questions about Princess Mikey’s habitat.

Explain: Once every group has written down their observations and questions and ample time has been given to draw their pictures of themselves in their habitat, host a guided discussion about Princess Mikey’s environment with student observations being the core of the discussion. Encourage students to ask the questions they formulated about Princess Mikey’s habitat. Explain to students that Princess Mikey’s habitat is natural in the wild. After the terms natural and man-made have been discussed, ask students: “Is the habitat in the aquarium man-made or natural?” If extra guidance is necessary, ask students: “Did the things in the aquarium just appear there? Or did someone put them there?”

Elaborate: Pass around the attached photographs of California Toads in their habitats. Then, ask students: “How are the picture of the California Toads’ natural habitats different from the man-made habitat in the aquarium in our classroom?” Write a list on the whiteboard or a large piece of paper of the differences the students come up with. Also, discuss the things that must be in both habitats (grass, water, etc.). Then, hand out the Habitat worksheet (CA Toad 1.2) for students to complete during class time as group work. After this worksheet has been completed, students will then draw a picture of the California Toad in its natural habitat on the back of the paper they used to write their observations of Princess Mikey.

Evaluate:

- (a) Summative: Collect and review CA Toad 1.1, 1.2, and both drawings to check for student understanding.
- (b) Formative: Gauge student understanding based on participation in class discussion and drawings.

Differentiation Plan:

- Behavioral: If a behavioral differentiation plan is necessary, instead of having students individually observe the California Toad and write their observations and questions, encourage class-wide discussion and take notes on the board.
- English Language Learners: Based on student reading and writing proficiency, students may orally share their observations of the California Toad in groups. Designate one group reporter in each group to share group observations with the class.

Photographs to share with the students during the “Elaborate” phase.





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