



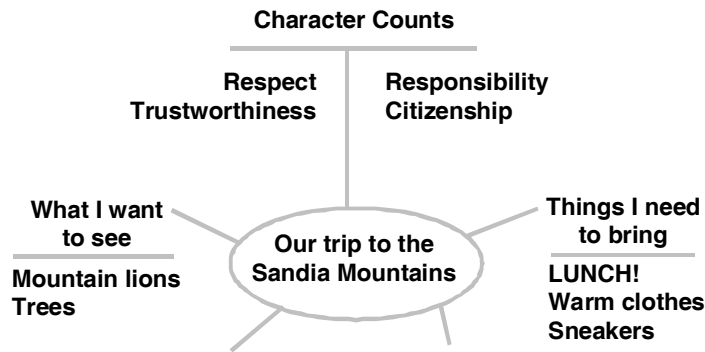
Section Two

The Field Experience

Being outside is one of the most valuable lessons for students, and reinforces many of the concepts taught in the first section of Ecosystem Explorations.

This section contains lessons and information to prepare for your field trip and lessons that may be used on your own field trip (if you aren't going to the SMNHC). Teachers from the SMNHC may use these at the SMNHC, as well.





Goal Setting

Overview

Before heading out on the field trip, students will work in teams to brainstorm academic and behavioral objectives. Students will individualize their goals by summarizing them in their journals.

Concepts

1. Students will work cooperatively as well as independently to establish goals.
2. Being in outdoor environments necessitates understanding certain safety concerns.
3. Advance preparation by students will increase their ability to fully engage in the experiential activities during the field trip.

Time

30 minutes

- Brainstorming Rotation: 20 minutes
- Organizational Journal Activity: 10 minutes

Materials

For each team:

- one large sheet of butcher paper
- one marker for each student (different colors for each team)
- chalkboard

For each student:

- Ecosystem Explorations Journals

Teacher Preparation

Write a different question on each piece of butcher paper (one per team). Make up questions that are appropriate to prepare your class for the field trip or choose from



the following list:

- What would you like to see on the field trip?
- What would you like to learn about during the field trip?
- What do we need to bring? Not bring? Make a list.
- How can we show good citizenship during the field trip?
- Why is this ecosystem important to you?
- Do you have any fears about going on this field trip (if so, what?)

Background

The visit to the Sandia Mountain Natural History Center or to another natural ecosystem is an exciting opportunity for students to experience a new environment. Often new sights, sounds, and activities will excite their sense of wonder and pique their curiosity. Much of the learning is experiential and happens through hands-on experiences, observations, and reflections. To ensure a successful learning experience, advance preparation with your students is essential.

Making behavioral and academic expectations clear in advance gives students the best chance for a successful trip. This activity helps students create mental strategies for coping with a new situation. Also, advance preparation allows students to think about what the field trip means to them personally. Having individual goals will help increase their motivation to have a successful field trip.

Some students express concerns regarding wild animals, steep cliffs, and getting lost at the Sandia Mountain Natural History Center. Although these are reasonable concerns for anyone traveling into the mountains, your students should know that their trip to the mountains will be a safe educational experience. Planning what they need to bring on the field trip will help students focus on the items necessary for a successful field trip.

Procedure

Brainstorming Rotation

1. Give each team a sheet of butcher paper with a question written on it and a marker. Each team should use a different colored marker.
2. Have the students read the question on their paper and give them about five minutes to write responses to their question.
3. After about five minutes, tell the students to stop writing. Have each team pass their piece of butcher paper to the next team.
4. Have students read their new question, as well as the responses of previous groups. If students agree with something that is already listed they should star that idea.
5. Have the team add any other responses that they might have.



6. Continue the rotation until all the teams have responded to each question. The first round will probably be the longest (5 minutes), with each successive round being shorter (2-3 minutes).

Organizational Journal Activity

1. Post the completed sheets on the wall where students can see them.
2. Begin a web on the blackboard, and have students start one in their journals. At the center of this web will be the heading “Our trip to the Sandia Mountains.” Categories, such as, “What I want to see,” “How I will behave,” and “Things I need to bring.” will be linked to this heading. Students should use the posted brainstorm sheets to help create their own personal web in their journal.

Closure

Looking at all of the student brainstorm sheets, highlight the responses that received the most stars. Ask students if these are the most important things to remember for their trip. Reiterate any points you feel need extra emphasis or were left out during student brainstorming.

Adaptations for Students with Limited English Proficiency

Make sure that groups with LEP students have a bilingual student who can translate each question for the group. If possible, translate questions before the activity and have questions available in the students’ primary language during the activity. Allow students to respond to each question and do the journal exercise in their primary language.

Journal Exercise

Journal use is an integral part of this activity.



Assessment

The use of different colored markers will facilitate assessment of responses during the brainstorm. The journal activity will show student’s individual responses.

Extensions

Working in their teams or as a class, have students develop questions that they would like to have answered while at the Sandia Mountain Natural History Center or another natural area.

