

HABITAT HOP

Materials: music player & "bases" – could be carpet squares, hula hoops, or some other material that can be used to create designated spots for students to move between and stand on

Procedure: (Played like Musical Chairs)

1. Begin by reviewing the components a habitat must include to meet an animal's basic needs (food, water, shelter). What happens if an animal cannot meet those needs?
2. Create a large circular path using the bases, hula hoops or carpet squares, which represent wetland habitat for turtles & frogs. Explain to the students that they are turtles or frogs and that although they can travel fairly long distances over land, they need to be able to return to wetlands/bases to feed or brumate/hibernate. When the music is playing, they should follow the circular path. Turtles/Frogs walk in the grass between habitat bases. When the music stops, turtles/frogs must find a base/habitat or they are out.
3. Practice starting and stopping the music a few times, then begin to take away some of the habitat/bases so there is greater distance between bases/habitats. You can explain that the wetlands in these areas were replaced with new buildings. Continue to play for several rounds, taking away more habitat/bases each time. If students find themselves off a base/wetland when the music stops, they are out.
4. When the remaining habitat/bases get crowded to the point of becoming uncomfortable, or many of the turtles/frogs are "out," pause the game to debrief. What happens when the turtles have to travel very long distances between habitats? How might this happen in real life?
5. Finish by brainstorming some ways to restore or protect the habitat that was lost. Maybe a town can create a wildlife sanctuary or a conservation group can work to restore habitat. Return the squares and allow the turtles/frogs to play another round or two with more available habitat.