



Slink and Think Gallery Walk

In this activity, students will consider the importance of reptiles and amphibians to them individually, to humans as a whole and to the ecosystem through a “gallery walk.”

Materials:

- Giant Post-its
- Colored markers

Introduction:

Explain to students that there are 5 pieces of paper around the room with questions for them to answer. Give students about 10-15 minutes to walk around the room independently and write their thoughts on each piece of paper. This can alternatively be done in small groups with a leader writing a single answer for their group. Encourage students to come up with their own ideas, and that answers can be anonymous. Once the time is up, gather back together as a group and discuss all of the answers. Encourage younger students to hop or crawl between stations like an amphibian or a reptile!

Set up the Gallery Walk:

1. On each piece of paper, write the follow questions (feel free to come up with your own, as well):
 - What do you think is “cool” about herps?
 - How do you think herps can help humans?
 - Why do you think herps are important to the ecosystem?
 - Why should humans protect herps?
 - How can you help herps?
2. Introduce the activity and explain the concept of the Gallery Walk.
3. Pass out markers and disperse students or groups around the room. Give students about 2 minutes per question, making sure to give them a warning before time is up. It is okay if they don’t get to all of the questions, they will have a chance to participate in the final discussion.
4. When the time is up, collect the markers and give students a couple of minutes to walk back through and read the answers from other classmates, ask them to think about what stands out to them.
5. Gather students back together and begin discussion.

Discussion:

Review all questions and answers. For each one ask the following:

Did anything stand out to you from these answers? Did you strongly agree/disagree with any of these answers?

This is a great time to let students express themselves. Encourage students to share their thoughts, and have a respectful discussion.

What do you think is “cool” about herps?

When discussing this question, introduce the term “intrinsic value.” Examples: They have armor, they can live on land and in water, they can climb trees without arms...

How do you think herps can help humans?

When discussing this question, introduce the term “instrumental value.” Examples: Snakes act as pest control, amphibians are indicator species, toads eat bugs...

Why do you think herps are important to the ecosystem?

Explain that when herps benefit the ecosystem, it is beneficial to humans as well. Examples: Act as prey items for other animals, help keep a balance...

Why should humans protect herps?

People value wildlife for many different reasons but no matter the motive, it is important to protect them. Humans have caused a lot of damage to populations of herps and their habitats so it falls on us to help them. Examples: They are important to the ecosystem, then provide benefits to humans, because we caused them harm, because they are awesome...

How can I help herps?

There are many easy ways that you can help herps! One of the best ways that you can help herps is simply by sharing your knowledge. Many people don't realize that snakes help control rodent and tick populations or that frogs are indicator species and can tell us the health of the environment. Letting your neighbors, friends and family know all of the instrumental value that herps have might make them also see their intrinsic value! Herps are awesome! Examples: Protect their habitat, don't litter, help a turtle cross the road...

