



Hostelling International USA

Golden Gate Council

Hostel Adventure Program

Lesson Ideas for Teachers

A **resource** for teachers to prepare
students for an **environmental adventure**

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1. About the Hostel Adventure Program

The Hostel Adventure Program is an environmental education program that introduces disadvantaged inner-city youth to the excitement of the natural world. Students love the open-air adventure, and teachers appreciate the careful attention HAP naturalists take to tailor activities that enhance classroom curriculum.

Each year more than 1,500 youth ages six through 18 encounter wildlife, tidepools, native plants and star-filled skies during overnight trips at three HI-USA hostels: HI-Marin Headlands, HI-Point Reyes and HI-Point Montara Lighthouse. The hostels are located in unique coastal settings that provide diverse habitats for learning and fun.

More than 17,000 youth have participated in HAP since it was established by HI-USA, Golden Gate Council in 1986. For many of those participants the program was the first opportunity they had to leave an urban environment and experience the great outdoors.

Goals and Objectives

HAP activities emphasize three critical developmental areas:

1. **Environmental Education:** Through investigation of natural habitats, hands-on activities and discussions, youth develop an:
 - Appreciation of and respect for nature,
 - Understanding of the principles of ecology and conservation, and
 - Awareness of human impact and dependence upon the environment.
2. **Interpersonal Skill Development:** HAP participants gain greater confidence and insight into themselves and their community of peers and adults by building trust and interpersonal communication skills through:
 - Problem-solving initiatives.
 - Trust-building exercises.
 - Cooperative games.

3. **Intercultural Understanding:** Staying at a HI-USA hostel transforms young lives through community living. Students work together to prepare meals in the shared kitchen, complete simple morning chores and learn about other countries from international travelers. HAP participants are encouraged to be aware of and sensitive to the needs of others. For example, when an African American student from Horace Mann Middle School interviewed a Czech Republic man with limited English skills at HI-Marin Headlands, it was fascinating to observe the common ground that she found through simple questions such as:
- What do you like to do for fun?
 - Do you like pizza?
 - Do you like music?

2. Pre-Trip Lessons

Lesson 1: Adapt an Animal or a Plant

Academic Subjects: Science, reading and writing

Materials Needed: Information about native plants

Procedure

1. **Research:** Students need to begin this lesson by researching one native plant or animal. In general, it is a good idea to show them online and traditional tools to find a picture of their choice to help create a concrete visual in their mind. Then they should find as much information by addressing questions like:
 - What features help it survive in its environment (*adaptations*)?
 - Does it need anything special to help keep it alive?
 - Did the Native Americans use it for any specific purpose?
 - Does it have any medicinal value?
2. **Fieldwork:** Take a walk with your class through the schoolyard or a local neighborhood to look for native plants and animals. The goal is to identify as many as you can so your students start to see that different species survive in your environment.
3. **Presentation:** Have each student present his/her findings to the rest of the class.
4. **Create:** Make a book with the information so students can use it as a resource throughout the year (this activity could be a fun post-trip activity, too).

Reflection Questions

- Would you be able to survive without any modern conveniences, using the information that you just learned?
- Why is it important to take care of plants, especially native ones?

Lesson 2: Choices

Academic Subjects: Science and reading

Materials Needed: None

Procedure

Photocopy each scenario, and read it to students.

1. When you wake up and take a shower, do you:
 - Take a five-minute shower?
 - Take as much time as you want (a 10-minute shower)?
2. Does your typical bagged lunch include:
 - A brown paper bag with a plastic bag of chips and a juice box?

- A reusable canvas bag with a reusable container for your juice (taken from a larger recyclable glass can) and container for your sandwich?
3. Do you get to school by:
 - Walking, riding your bike or taking public transportation?
 - Having your mom drive you?
 4. When the grocery store cashier asks how to bag your purchases, do you choose use a:
 - Paper bag?
 - Plastic bag?
 - Personal canvas bag?
 5. During recess one of your friends throws a candy wrapper on the ground. Do you:
 - Ask her politely to pick it up?
 - Ignore her actions?

Reflection Questions

- Why did you choose each of these actions?
- What other choices do you have?

Lesson 3: Environmental Action Guide

(Adapted from the Marin County Outdoor School Teacher's Manual)

Materials Needed: [This list](#)

Procedure

Distribute this list to students, ask them to share it with their parents and challenge them to implement as many suggestions as possible in one week.

1. Wash and re-use plastic bags, glass and plastic containers.
2. Try to buy good-quality, long-lasting toys. Plastic toys add to the disposal problem.
3. Do not litter (one of the most common causes of pollution that we can easily stop).
4. Reuse your paper by writing on both sides.
5. Donate your magazines and paperbacks to hospitals, nursing homes or similar health care organizations.
6. Buy products in returnable, reusable or recyclable bottles.
7. Pack your lunch in a reusable box or canvass bag.
8. Ride your bike, walk or take public transportation whenever you can.
9. Take short showers instead of baths (the average bath uses more water than a seven-minute shower).
10. Run your dishwasher and washing machine when you have one full load rather than doing sever small loads throughout the week.
11. Turn off lights and appliances when they are not in use.
12. Use disposable paper and plastic good only as necessary.
13. Snip six-pack rings (birds at landfills often get them caught around their neck).
14. Motivate your class to start a recycling campaign.
15. Collect unused items from home and turn it into recycled art.

Reflection Questions

- How many of these suggestions did your family implement in one week?
- What suggestions were the most difficult/easy to achieve?
- Did you think of any new home-based suggestions that benefit the planet?

Lesson 4: Visual Vocabulary

(Adapted from Project Wild)

Academic Subjects: Science, language arts and drama

Materials Needed: Glossary, small piece of paper

Procedure

1. Prepare a one-page ecological dictionary for your students for a classroom game of charades (definitions might include carnivore, predator and habitat).
2. List all the words on small pieces of paper and put them in a container.
3. Divide the class into groups of four. Each group will select a word, look up the definition on your handout and decide how to act out the word (allow five minutes for the group to prepare).
4. Collect the handouts so they cannot be used to cheat and then begin the game (allow one minute for the group to prepare).

Resource 1: Web sites for Teachers

California Regional Environmental Education Community Network

<http://www.creec.org/>

The CREEC Network is an educational project with a mission to develop a communication network that provides educators with access to high-quality environmental education resources to enhance the environmental literacy of California students. This is the premier Web site for environmental education resources.

California Academy of Sciences

<http://www.calacademy.org/>

The online home of the California Academy of Sciences includes a wealth of information for teachers. Just click on the “Teacher Services” button at the bottom of the page to be directed to resources, material kits, upcoming exhibits and much more. It is also a great tool for your students!

3. Post-Trip Lessons

Lesson 1: Animal Poetry

(Adapted from Project Wild)

Academic Subjects: Writing

Materials Needed: Paper and pen

Procedure

1. Have your students think of an animal they observed during the Hostel Adventure Program trip. Give them a few minutes to imagine where the animal travels and the way other plants and animals appear from its perspective.
2. Ask them to write a cinquain or haiku poem about the animal:
 - **Haiku:** Japanese-style haiku consisting of three rhythmic lines: line one needs five syllables, line two needs seven and line three needs five.
 - **Cinquain:** Five-line poem derived from the French and Spanish words for five (based on syllables or the number of words per line).
 - Line 1: A title in two syllables or words.
 - Line 2: Describe the title in four syllables or words.
 - Line 3: Show action in three syllables or words.
 - Line 4: Introduce a feeling in eight syllables or words.
 - Line 5: Another word for the title in two syllables (or words).

Panther
Vital, quiet
Moving swiftly to live
Endangered by human patterns
Near Lost

Lesson 2: Plastic Jellyfish

(Adapted from Aquatic Wild)

Academic Subjects: Science and environmental issues

Materials Needed: Plastic waste from home

Procedure

1. Have your students participate in a two-day, home-based field research project with their parents: Collect and save every piece of plastic waste produced and bring them to school (parents must be involved to demonstrate proper rinsing techniques for containers that included ammonia, chlorine bleach, etc.).

2. Choose a day for your class to sort the plastics into the following categories while considering whether or not marine wildlife could become entangled in the plastic and die:
 - Very likely to be perceived as food by marine wildlife as food.
 - Unlikely to be perceived as food by marine wildlife.
3. Ask your students to hypothesize the affect of plastic on marine wildlife. If you have time, photocopy clips of current research findings so they can check their hypotheses.
4. Ask your students to survey the school or community for plastic litter and to investigate its potential impact on local wildlife. If you have time, create an action plan that will increase awareness of the problem.

Reflection Questions

- After completing this lesson, how would you feel if someone dropped a plastic bag in the sand at the beach?
- What kind of impact might that have on animals?
- What can you do to prevent the death of marine wildlife from litter?



4. For Students

> Activity 1: Web sites for Kids

Redefining Progress: The Ecological Footprint Quiz

<http://www.earthday.net/footprint/quiz3.asp>

This quiz will determine how your lifestyle impacts your planet. Careful, you might be shocked about how many resources you use!

The Bridge: Mammal Links

<http://www.vims.edu/bridge/mammal.html>

This mammal links on The Bridge provide useful background information and interesting facts about marine mammals, including: dolphins and porpoises; manatee and dugong; seals and sea lions; and whales. The site receives support from the National Oceanographic Partnership Program.

Give Water a Hand

<http://www.uwex.edu/erc/gwah/>

Learn how to conserve our planet's most precious resource!

U.S. EPA's Environmental Kids Club

<http://www.epa.gov/kids/>

The Environmental Kids Club is a fun way for students to discover ways to protect the environment. Topic areas cover the basics (garbage and recycling; plants and animals; air and water) and activity rooms full of games make the material interesting to young minds.

> Activity 2: Scanned Pictures, Stories and Poems

> Content

Marin Headlands and the Presidio are invaluable natural resources to our local community: Nature allows people to feel free, smell native plants, tour lighthouses or go hiking. You might become tired from walking or running, but you will have a lot of fun because it will amaze you. Draw a picture or write a story or poem that embraces these emotions.

Here are a few examples from past HAP students:

I am the California Poppy.

My job is to make sure nobody touches me.

I can't do my job when somebody picks me and I die.

I am happiest when I am not picked because then I am free.

– A Sanchez Elementary School student

Before I walked alone at night my mind filled up with scariness and fear.

I felt like screaming and yelling out. I saw darkness and dark trees.

I heard spooky things like the wind blowing the trees.

– A Sanchez Elementary School student