

“Flying Fish Race” lesson plan

Duration: 20-40 minutes

Objectives:

- Students will be introduced to five different fish species found in the Ottawa area
- Students will learn to match different local fish to their respective habitats
- Students will demonstrate an understanding of the natural environment as a place where living and non-living things are interconnected

Background:

Different habitats found in the Ottawa area are home to different fish. Habitat features such as spawning beds made of rock, shaded areas of water, and brush bundles provide fish with food, shelter, a safe place to lay their eggs, and protection from predators. This activity will encourage students to work together to match local fish to their proper habitat.

Materials:

- Five plush fish (one of each species): Largemouth Bass, Walleye, Yellow Perch, Brook Trout, and Sunfish
- Five “Fish Habitat” posters (one for each species)
- Tape (to hang the “Fish Habitat” posters on a wall)
- Large space for running such as a gymnasium or outdoor yard

Procedure:

1. Tape the five “Fish Habitat” posters at least one metre apart from each other on a wall.
2. Explain to the students that different habitats found in the Ottawa area are home to different fish. Why else are these habitat features important? What might happen to a fish that is not in its proper habitat?
 - a. Walleye live near spawning beds made of rock because they can safely lay eggs in the spaces between the rocks.
 - b. Brook trout prefer areas of the water that are shaded by tall trees because it makes the water cooler.
 - c. Sunfish, Yellow Perch, and Largemouth Bass enjoy brush bundles made of tree branches because this underwater ‘tree fort’ gives them a place to rest and hide from predators.
3. Divide the students into five teams and assign each team a local fish using the plush fish. Ensure each team understands which “Fish Habitat” poster belongs to their fish.
4. Tell the students they must work together to help their fish find its way home! To do this, students will participate in an over-under relay race. At the designated start line, have students line up behind each other spreading out one arm’s length apart. The student at the front of the line starts with the plush fish.
5. When the game begins, students pass the fish back either over their head or under their legs to their teammates, alternating methods with each person (first person passes over their head, second person passes under their legs, third person passes over their head,

and so on). When the last person in line gets the fish, they must run or jump to the front of the line and start passing the fish back again.

6. The play continues until the fish reaches its habitat (designated as the finish line). The first team to return their fish to its habitat wins!