

Lesson Plan for Henrico 21 Awards

Lesson Title: Bigfoot in Our Backyard?

Target Grade/Subject: 3rd Grade/Science

Length: 135 minutes (Three 45-minute Sessions)

Summary:

This lesson was not in my plans at the beginning of the year. But when the students showed a natural and genuine interest in stories about Bigfoot, it presented a perfect opportunity to let students apply their knowledge of animals and communities to a real life mystery. They started seeking out books, websites and TV shows at home to share stories and ideas with their classmates. This lesson was created with the help of the students to guide them in answering the burning question they all had... Is Bigfoot real? Through three investigation stations, students were presented with various concepts to research and analyze to help them form an opinion that they are able to support with specific reasons. Although the favorite part of the day was the investigation stations, Bigfoot seemed to walk his way into our other content areas, such as reading and math, which made the lesson even more authentic to the students.

Essential questions:

Science:

3.4 What is an adaptation? How do various adaptations help an animal to survive?

3.4 What is camouflage? Why is it important for survival of predators or prey?

3.4 How can you compare and contrast animals in the same environment?

3.4 What do animals and plants need to survive?

3.5 How do animals and plants depend on each other?

3.5 What is (animal's) place in its' food chain?

3.5 Can an animal be both a predator and prey?

3.6 Describe a lake ecosystem.

3.6 What populations are part of the community around our school?

3.6 How can humans help preserve the habitats of plants and animals?

Technology:

How do I find information on the internet?

How do I get a picture on to thinglink?

How do I add touch points to a picture on thinglink?

How do I add my own background to photobooth?

What is a QR code? What do I need to use one? How do I use one?

Lesson Development:

Process/Tasks/Assessment:

This Bigfoot research started naturally in class when students began talking about Bigfoot at our morning meeting. We had a reading group book about the Yeti and the students had been watching Bigfoot TV shows. We realized that our animal studies could help give us background knowledge to research and make our own opinions. Bigfoot reading and math activities were integrated throughout the day in addition to the investigation stations. During this lesson, students applied our animal unit studies during three rounds of investigation stations:

Investigation 1: Is Virginia a Suitable Habitat for Bigfoot?

During these stations, students researched native Virginia animals and their adaptations.

- Food – research and create a **database** of what consumers in Virginia eat
- Water - use **google maps** to identify water features and watersheds in Virginia
- Shelter – create a **thinglink** that explains how animals depend on living and nonliving features in their habitats

Once all of the investigation information is shared on the **class blog**, the findings were analyzed and students were able to support their answer to: “Is Virginia a Suitable Habitat for Bigfoot?”.

Investigation 2: What Signs do Living Things Leave?

During these stations, students identified how we know that animals are around us.

- Students make a connection to a well-known **ebook** version of “Goldilocks and the Three Bears” to begin thinking about how we know something living has been there.
- Students then seek out evidence in real life by **taking a picture** on the playground, and using an **app of their choice** to present their example.
- Students **chat with a biologist** that has tracked and trapped animals before, discussing tracks, scat, bones, shelters, etc.

Once all of the investigation information is shared on the class blog, the findings were analyzed and students were able to support their answer to whether or not they believe Bigfoot has left enough signs of existence to possibly be living in Virginia.

Investigation 3: What Adaptations Would a Bigfoot Need to Survive?

During the third and final investigation, students research animals and make inferences on what adaptations an animal that size would need.

- Students research adaptations of native animals and create a **popplet** to compare other animals to what they envision Bigfoot needing and why.

Once all of the investigation information is shared on the class blog, students responded to a final survey and groups were created based on their beliefs on Bigfoot. The groups then had choices, including a “**viral video**”, to catch viewers attention and explain their viewpoint after all three investigations.

TIP Chart Assessment:

Categories:

Research and Information Fluency: Students performed in multiple levels of the TIPC chart for research and information fluency, including ideal/target. While much of the research was guided in the beginning, the students often selected their own tools to present the information that they learned and also used a variety of research materials.

Communication and Collaboration: Students were working in the Approaching and Ideal/Target during all of the investigation stations. Not only did they work together for all of the tasks, they also selected the best ways to communicate information and met with professionals outside of the school.

Critical Thinking and Problem Solving: This lesson came directly from the students and their own curiosity. They were genuinely curious about the Bigfoot legends and wanted to find the answer. They eagerly asked questions that guided much of the development of the project. This is still a real mystery that we have today, so students were in the same boat as the rest of the population. They enjoyed being able to express themselves in ways that they chose and tried to make sense of the mystery. I was proud of the fact that they were reflective along the way and were not afraid to change their opinion because they were comfortable supporting it. This type of responsibility and maturity indicated that they worked in the highest levels of the TIP-C chart.

Creativity and Innovation: Students met many of open-ended challenges in this lessons that presented many opportunities to be creative, requiring them to work in the Target/Ideal level for the majority of the lesson.