

# Rainforest Lesson - 1st & 2nd grade

## The Great Kapok Tree

### **Objective**

This lesson integrates science and language arts skills. Students will not only be learning about the rainforest ecosystem and how trees benefit our planet but they will also apply writing skills. Students will understand how an ecosystem works and how trees and animals depend on each other. Students will also gain an understanding of the rainforest layers.

### **Standards - Indiana State Standards**

#### **(Science)**

*1.3.4 Describe how animals' habitats, including plants, meet their needs for food, water, shelter and an environment in which they can live.*

*1.3.5 Observe and describe ways in which animals and plants depend on one another for survival.*

*2.3.2 Compare and contrast details of body plans and structures within the life cycles of plants and animals.*

#### **(Language Arts)**

*2.RV.1 Use words, phrases, and strategies acquired through conversations, reading and being read to, and to literature and nonfiction texts to build and apply vocabulary.*

### **Time**

1 hour

### **Vocabulary**

Forest floor, understory, emergent, canopy, rainforest

### **Materials**

- *The Great Kapok Tree* by Lynne Cherry
- White Board
- Construction Paper
- Scissors
- Markers, crayons, color pencils
- Whole punch
- Yarn

### **Procedure**

The teacher will begin the lesson on the rug or by a white board to conduct a read aloud. Students will listen to the teacher read *The Great Kapok Tree* by Lynne Cherry. As the teacher is reading out loud stop at parts in the book to discuss and reflect. Let students brainstorm different ideas such as the different animals they encountered in the book, or what they learned about the kapok tree. Write these ideas on the white board for students to see. This part of the lesson should take about 20 minutes. Make sure students

understand the relationship among the rainforest ecosystem (ie: the Kapok tree is the home of many animals).

The next part of the lesson will include a craft for students to incorporate their own creativity and thoughts. Explain to students it is now their turn to think of an animal from the story or other rainforest animals they choose to represent, and have them speak up for the rainforest. Tell students they will be drawing an animal on construction paper and then cutting it out. Next, students will cut out a speech bubble and attach it to their animal. In their speech bubble they must write down a reason why their animal does not want "the man" from the story to cut down the Kapok tree. The teacher can hold up an example of a rainforest animal and its speech bubble telling the reason for protesting the rainforest deforestation.

Once all of the students have created their animal craft have them whole punch the animal and to tie on a piece of yarn in order to hang up their animals around the classroom.

### **Assessment**

This formative assessment should be during the read aloud and at the end of it during whole class discussion. After prompting students with questions, look for their understanding of what they connected with or understood from the story.

For summative assessment, check all students' final craft by checking each student's speech bubble with their reason for not cutting down the Kapok tree.

### **Differentiation**

To scale this lesson up, have students expand on their writing skills by requiring a paragraph written response to the story and their animal. If students finish early they can write down questions they have or would like to learn more about from the rainforest or their animal they chose.

To scale this lesson down, provide students with a model animal and write down the first part of their sentence on the board. For example, "Please don't cut down the Kapok tree because....." and then have the student continue this sentence.

### **Multiple Intelligences**

- Linguistic intelligence is applied in listening and writing. Students will be working on their writing and critical thinking skills for their speech bubble writing and working on listening skills during the read aloud.

A Naturalist intelligence is also applied in this lesson because the entire theme is related to nature and our rainforests. Students must identify relationships in an ecosystem and demonstrate a passion and care for animals, plants and animals.

### **Learning Domain**

- Sensorimotor skills are applied throughout this lesson while students are working on their animal craft. The craft is for students to apply their creativity in multimodal ways of art and writing skills. They are showing their knowledge through a hands-on approach.

- Cognitive skills are also applied throughout this lesson. Students must demonstrate a deeper and reflective thinking process by answering "why" questions. They will also be thinking about how one living thing affects another living thing in an ecosystem. Students are demonstrating a challenging question in a creative and imaginative way.