

Activity 6

Giant Panda Scavenger Hunt

Objective & Overview:

By collecting various objects relating in one way or another to giant pandas, students can pretend that they are biologists learning more about these animals and various things associated with them.

Teacher Background Information:

Scavenger hunts are especially appropriate when you and your students explore the lives of pandas and the biologists who seek to learn more about them. This activity draws together a mixed batch of objects, some relating to the panda's colors, and some to its Chinese temperate forest habitat, which is similar to that found in the Appalachians. It highlights parallels between the U.S. and China: For example, it should be fairly easy for students to find bamboo and maple or oak trees--plants also found in China.

Materials:

- scavenger hunt list
- items picked up by students
- paper or plastic bags
- tree field guide
- masking tape

Directions:

1. Decide whether you would like your students to conduct their panda scavenger hunts at home or at school. Peruse the

scavenger hunt list and decide if students will find enough items in the schoolyard. If not, have them collect these at home and bring them in a bag to share with the class. If you think any items will be particularly difficult for your class to find or will be otherwise problematic, delete these.

2. Distribute the Panda Scavenger Hunt List to your students.
Explain that students should not bring to class anything that is too valuable or important. All pictures should be cut from old magazines or newspapers, copied, or printed from computers.
3. Give students enough time to gather their items.
4. Designate an area for each item and have students put their objects together so that students can see the various objects different people found for each category. Use the masking tape to label items with students' names, as needed.
5. Have students collect all of their personal objects so that nothing is lost, but have them leave the leaves and panda pictures so that you can discuss and compare them:
 - Are there different types of oak leaves? Can you help your class use a tree book to identify which species?
 - Are the giant panda pictures varied? Are there stylized drawings such as cartoons as well as photographs?

6. Ask your students why they think giant pandas appear so often in magazines, etc.--especially since they don't live in the wilds of the U.S. Somehow, people still usually can identify them. Why?

Panda Scavenger Hunt List

Find the following things, collecting them in a bag. Circle the number for each item as you get it:

1. a small panda object (other than a picture--such as a toy)
2. small piece of bamboo (Check the neighborhood carefully. It can be surprisingly common!)
3. something made in China (nothing very valuable)
4. maple leaf
5. oak leaf
6. panda picture from a magazine or newspaper or printed from a website
7. something all black
8. something all white
9. a small map with China and the U.S.A. on it
10. a picture of another endangered animal