



SeaWorld/Busch Gardens Wildlife Regulations

9-12 Classroom Activities

Write Proposed Legislation

OBJECTIVE

The student will identify the steps of how a bill becomes a law. The student will demonstrate presentation and debating skills during a mock session of congress. The student will identify causes as to why animals become threatened or endangered.

ACTION

First Class Session

1. Divide the class into groups of four.
2. Explain that each group will create a fictional species by completing a *Species Profile Funsheet* along with a picture or three-dimensional model of their species' image. Students may use clay, paper and markers, or other mediums to create their models.

Second Class Session

3. Announce to the class that all the fictional species created have just been categorized as threatened for various reasons.
4. As a class, brainstorm 10 reasons why species may be threatened with extinction; for example, habitat destruction, unregulated wild pet trade, poaching, pesticides or pollution. Write the reasons on small slips of paper and mix the slips in a bowl. Ask one representative from each group to draw a reason from the bowl. This reason identifies why their fictional species has become threatened.
5. To protect their species, student groups will write a bill using the *Proposed Legislation Funsheet*. Student groups may need to research how a national bill is passed in congress in order to complete the funsheet.

Third Class Session

6. When students groups have completed their *Species Profile Funsheet* and their *Proposed Legislation Funsheet*, it is time to present and debate the proposed bills in a mock session of congress. Instruct each student group to prepare a brief synopsis of their bill along with a copy of the *Species Profile Funsheet*. Depending on the number of proposed bills and the depth of debate, the mock session may carry over to other class sessions.

During the mock session of congress, each student group will either be acting as congressmen in favor of a bill, congressmen opposed to a bill, or as congressmen that are impartial to either side. (All groups will have an opportunity to play each role).

7. To hold a mock session, the teacher chooses one student group to present their bill and assigns the remaining student group(s) as either congressmen opposing the bill or as congressmen impartial to either side. Arrange the classroom desks and chairs accordingly. The student group presenting gives copies of their bill synopsis and species description to the opposing congressmen group.
8. The mock session of congress begins with a five-minute overview by the student group presenting their bill. After the overview, the opposing congressmen will debate their views. After the discussion, the entire mock session of congress (the whole class) will vote on the bill.
9. Keep a tally of the votes on the classroom board. Were most bills passed? Why or why not? Discuss as a class after the mock congress.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Now that your students have experience reading proposed legislation, it's time for them to try it themselves with a fictional species. Next, students will defend their legislation piece through a mock session of congress. It's important to remember that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is not the only agency working to ensure the survival of endangered species. They partner with several other government agencies, universities, museums, zoos, and non-government conservation organizations. Together, they all make a difference.

MATERIALS

For each student group:

- *Species Profile Funsheet*
- scrap paper
- bowl
- access to art supplies (modeling clay, paper, markers, glue, old magazines, etc.)
- *Proposed Legislation Funsheet*
- access to Internet or Library resources

Species Profile Funsheet

Place or draw a picture of the animal or plant on the back side of the funsheet.

Common Name: _____

Genus species: (Remember to capitalize the genus and make the species lower case).

Genus: _____ species: _____

Range: _____

Habitat: _____

Height: _____

Weight / Plant Group (flowering plant, lichen etc.): _____

Description: _____

Diet or Optimal Plant Growth Guidelines: _____

Reproduction Information (Gestation or Incubation for animals)

Life span: _____

List five adaptations: _____

List five not commonly known facts: _____

Proposed Legislation Funsheet

Answer the following questions on how laws are made.

1. Identify the two chambers of Congress.
2. True or False: Laws may be initiated by either chamber of Congress.
3. True or False: Either chamber of Congress can make amendments to a bill.
4. Who receives the bill after it has been passed by both chambers of Congress?
5. How can a bill become a law if the President vetoes it?

Fill in information for your proposed legislation

Create a Legislative Number (please write H.R. for bills introduced to the House and S. for bills introduced to the Senate. ex: S.756): _____

Detailed bill description: _____

Summarize bill in five bullet points: _____

Describe how this bill will protect the threatened species. _____

