



Ohio Snake Services

Virtual Classroom Extension

Objectives

These activities are designed to start your at-home students in recognizing themselves as scientists and in thinking critically about problem-solving. The goal is to teach concepts through discovery and to encourage using scientific thought processes. Feel free to adapt the lessons provided to better suit your students' abilities. Take these ideas, make them your own, and your at-home students will have a greater chance of success.

Materials

Smart phone or video camera (if available), paper, writing utensil, computer or tablet with internet access.

Background Information

Ohio has around 27 species of snakes. Of those, five are endangered within Ohio and two are threatened. There are only three venomous species of snake in Ohio: the eastern copperhead, the massasauga, and the timber rattlesnake. Both the massasauga and the timber rattlesnake are endangered in Ohio and the eastern copperhead is uncommon. Most snakes you will see in Ohio are not venomous; nevertheless, it is always best to respect all snakes and enjoy wildlife from a distance.

Snakes play an important role in the ecosystem. Snakes eat a lot of small animals that may become pests if populations are not kept in check. For instance, rat snakes eat mice, rats, and other rodents. Garter snakes eat worms, slugs and leeches.

Procedure

1. Begin by discussing snakes with your students. Ask them what they think of when they hear the word snake. Do they like snakes? Why or why not?
2. Explain that some people are afraid of snakes. Ask your student if they are also afraid of snakes. If they are, ask them why they think snakes are scary. If they are not, ask why they think other people may be afraid of snakes. Tell your students that in this activity, they will create a commercial or advertisement to help people gain an appreciation for snakes, instead of finding them scary.
3. Explain that snakes play an important role in nature. They eat rodents and other animals that may be pests. Snakes are especially useful for gardeners and farmers who want to protect their crops from mice, rats, slugs, and other animals.
4. For this activity, your students will need to create a commercial or advertisement for a fictional company called Ohio Snake Services. Through this pretend company, people can hire snakes to come live in their farms, gardens, and yards to help control rodent and invertebrate populations.
5. If you have a smart phone or other video recording device, you can have your students create a television commercial. If you do not, you can have your students create an ad that might be in a newspaper or a magazine. The commercial/advertisement should explain why snakes are beneficial and why the public should hire the services of Ohio snakes.
6. Students should start by choosing a snake that lives in Ohio. If you are from a different state, you can choose a snake from your area instead and change the name of the fictional company to wherever you

live. Some examples of Ohio snakes are common garter snakes, plains garter snakes, gray rat snakes, and blue racers.

7. Next, students should research the snake that they chose. Have them focus on the snake's diet and ecosystem role.
8. Once your students have enough information about their snake, they should design their commercial/advertisement. They should think through what information they would put in the advertisement and how they would convince people to "hire" their snake.
9. Finally, your students should film their commercial or finalize their written advertisement. If your students want to share their finished project with Cleveland Metroparks Zoo, you can upload your student's project on Zoo's Online Resource Library under the "Share Resources" tab (<https://resourcelibrary.clemetzoo.com/Share/Details>).

Ohio's Learning Standards

Science Content Standards
Grade 3 Life Science Standards: Behavior, Growth and Changes 3.LS.2: Individuals of the same kind of organism differ in their inherited traits. These differences give some individuals an advantage in surviving and/or reproducing.
Grade 5 Life Science Standards: Interactions within Ecosystems 5.LS.1: Organisms perform a variety of roles in an ecosystem.