



LESSON SUMMARY

Students will describe the ways in which plants and trees are important to other living things through a media literacy activity. They will also explore the importance of habitat for a variety of species.

Activity Information

Estimated Duration:	Three class periods (one for introduction and discussion; one for group work; one for student presentations)
Materials:	Advertisements (magazines, newspapers), poster paper, paints, crayons, markers, scissors, glue (optional: tape recorder, video camera, digital camera)
Setting:	Indoors
Key Vocabulary:	Habitat, forest, adapt

Teacher Background

Marketing involves a wide variety of different activities including: research, promotion (advertising, public relations), customer relations and environmental activity. It aims to make sure an organization or company (in this lesson, the forest) is meeting the needs of its clients (in this lesson, plants or animals). These activities include market research to find out what groups of potential customers exist, what their needs are, which of those needs can be met, how they should be met, etc.

Advertising is an important component of marketing. It brings a product or service (in this case, the forest environment) to the attention of potential and current clients (in this case, plants or animals). There are various ways to advertise: newspapers and magazines, television and radio commercials, the Internet, signs, brochures, billboards, sky writing, etc.

All species on earth need a habitat in order to survive. A habitat is the organization of food, water, shelter and space. Often, species are identified with the habitat in which they live: a deer in a forest; a trout in a stream within or near a forest; a hawk on the edge of a forest; or even a person living in a home.

Although people might generalize habitats by saying “forest” or “field” or “wetland,” each habitat is utilized in a different way by each of the species that depends on it. A deer depends on a forest as a habitat differently than an owl does; a trout depends on a stream differently than a bear does; and so on. There are many different components of these habitats that are important to thousands of different species.

Some species can adapt to many different types of environments and make it their habitat. A raccoon, for example, normally lives in a forest, but has adapted very well to life in cities. A peregrine falcon is ideally suited to nesting on cliffs, but has been known to reside among skyscrapers.

There are reasons for a species to find a home where it does: the presence of adequate food, water, shelter and space necessary for survival.

Just think - how do developers get families to buy their homes? They offer luxury features, a ravine lot, a scenic view, quality workmanship, location, etc. Developers identify those things that a family wants and/or needs and sell their product because they include those things in the homes they build.

In this lesson, students will take what they know about marketing and media and create an advertisement to attract a species (plant or animal) to their forest. Using their knowledge about that particular species and its habitat requirements, students will market the forest environment to their species.

Teacher Preparation

Prepare species “sign up” sheet (see Step 4).

ACTIVITY

Step 1 Ask your students what they think makes an interesting advertisement. What catches their attention – a cool song, humour, celebrities, slogans? To what kind of advertisements are they personally drawn? Do they have a favourite? If they were creating an advertisement, what would they want to include?

Explain that marketing is used to sell a product or service. A familiar example might be the design of the Nike swoosh logo, which has resulted in world-wide recognition.

Step 2 Now discuss the concept of habitat (food, water, shelter, space) for both plants and animals. Ask your students to make a list of all the things that forests have to offer plants and animals. This list could include:

- Food (insects, squirrels, twigs)
- Nesting sites
- Shelter (from other animals and the weather)
- Shade (branches)
- Soil stabilization
- Clean water

Step 3 Divide your class into groups of two to four students. Explain to your students that they will represent a marketing company, hired by a forest. The forest wants to attract more plants and animals (clients) to live in it and needs their company’s help to advertise for more inhabitants.

Step 4 Prepare a sign-up sheet and have each group “sign up” for a “target” species – the one they want to try to attract to the forest as a client – ensuring that there are no duplications. For example, if a group chooses a deer, the marketing campaign could say that their forest is a terrific forest, offering delicious fresh buds to eat and plenty of large trees as safe haven from predators. Each group needs to understand the target species’ preferred habitat, predators, prey, etc.

Step 5 Ask the students to work in their small groups to research the habitat requirements of their species and prepare their presentations. The groups can create posters or billboards using creative writing skills. They can make commercials using drama, music and dance. It is up to each group to develop its own marketing approach.

Step 6 When the research and preparation is completed, ask each group to explain its marketing plans and advertisements to the rest of the class.

Step 7 Have a class discussion about each of the advertisements. What opinions does everyone have about each group's work? If they were a particular species, would the advertisement draw them to the forest? Why, or why not? Do they have any suggestions for each group?

Evaluation

Make a list of all the target species for which students created advertisements. Then carry out a quiz show activity. Students remain in their original groups. You then announce the name of one of the target species. Select a student group and ask it to explain that species' preferred habitat and to provide one way in which that species has adapted to this habitat. If the group answers correctly, providing a correct habitat description and adaptation, it receives one point. If the group answers incorrectly, move on to the next student group and repeat the question. Keep moving through all the student groups until you have covered all of the target species.

Extensions

Have each student find a recent newspaper article that relates to habitat loss. Hold a class discussion about issues related to habitat loss.

Have students consider whether certain advertising actually encourages the destruction of woodland property. Ask how marketers of SUVs (Sports Utility Vehicles), snowmobiles and ATVs (All-Terrain Vehicles) use the attraction of the forest and the wilderness to sell their products. What kind of impression does this give about the appropriate use of the forest? Students should write a brief newspaper editorial with their opinions regarding this kind of marketing.