

HISTORYMIAMI

CONSERVATION MIAMI Pre and Post Visit Activities

Introduction:

The following are a list of ideas of how to introduce the rich natural history of southern Florida, inquire about the threats to these special places, and discover ways that we can make a difference in their conservation. We recommend these ideas be used as pre- and/or post-visit lessons for this gallery-based program.

Grades: 3-12

Objectives for PROGRAM:

- Students will learn about the various natural environments of our area, their formation, and eventual use and damage done by humans.
- To give students an understanding of the different natural environments of our area, and their place in them.

Vocabulary:

Coastal Strand
Coral Reefs
Environment
Mangrove Forest
Pine Rockland
Saw grass Prairie
Tropical Hardwood Hammock

Introduction to the topic (for teacher to familiarize themselves with topic):

South Florida's still vast natural areas are home to some of the world's most unique creatures. Though people have populated the area for the past 12,000 years, the region was considered one of the last American frontiers at the turn of the 20th century. Today, as in the past, different people have had dissimilar interests in the land. Conservationists, farmers, developers and just about everyone else seems to want a piece. In this program learn of the struggles and compromises made by all which will dictate the future quality of life we will see.

Pre-Visit Conversations

Activity 1: What is in a museum?

Duration of Activity: *40 minutes*

Objectives of activity:

- ❖ To introduce students to collections and in particular those at HistoryMiami.
- ❖ The museum collects within 4 categories, Documents, Fossils, Artifacts and Replicas.

Instructions:

STUDENTS:

Take out a piece of paper

Fold the paper in half (vertically)

Number both halves of the paper from 1-10

Label the upper left side: My Collections and the upper right side: Museum's Collections

Write down what you collect on the left and what you think the museum collects on the right.

TEACHER:

A book, letter or map (a document), a rock or leaf (can be a fossil someday), an object that is authentic (an artifact like a family heirloom) and an object that is a replica (maybe a piece of costume jewelry)

- After everyone has done this, have students share some of their collections.
- Then have students share their ideas for a museum collection (there is no right or wrong).
 - You can then share with the students the 4 things you put aside.
 - Have them try to put them into categories (documents, fossils, artifacts and replicas)
 - You can share with them that these are the 4 categories the Museum at HistoryMiami collects in.
 - Have the students try to pull 4 similar objects from their person---their textbooks, something from their backpack---they will see how they are carrying collections with them at all times as well.
 - Have students explain WHY those pieces from the collection are in the category they are in.

Key questions for students:

- What is a collection?
- Why do people collect?
- Why do museums collect?

Activity 2: South Florida's Natural Environments

Duration of Activity: *45 minutes to research + 30 minutes for drawing activity*

Objectives of activity:

- ❖ To have students gain an understanding of the various natural environments of southern Florida.

Instructions:

Research on the main environments that exist in Southern Florida.

Use a computer to research the six habitats below and/or look in a library at some standard books on Florida ecology.

- (1) Sawgrass Prairie, (2) Tropical Hardwood Hammock, (3) Pine Rockland, (4) Coastal Strand, (5) Mangrove Forest, and the (6) Coral Reefs
- Identify at least one tree, mammal, bird, butterfly and reptile or amphibian that can be found there.

Option: Sketch out with colored pencils, markers, crayons, etc an example of each.

Key questions for students:

- What are the main natural environments of our area?
- Are these habitats still around?
- Where can they be found?
- Do these environments occur in other locations in the US, or in other countries?

Activity 3: Neighborhood Ecology

Duration of Activity: 30 minutes for natural environments research + 30 minutes for map activities

Objectives of activity:

- ❖ To determine what natural habitat might have been found at the location of your home and/or school.
- ❖ To compare findings with other students.

Instructions:

Do research on the main environments that exist in Southern Florida. (Instructions as in Activity 1)

- (1) Sawgrass Prairie, (2) Tropical Hardwood Hammock, (3) Pine Rockland, (4) Coastal Strand, (5) Mangrove Forest, and the (6) Coral Reefs
- Find, via books, internet or maps, an original vegetation map of the Miami area.
- Determine where your home or school is located on the map.

Key questions for students:

- What natural habitat was found in your neighborhood?
- Is it even possible to tell?
- Is there still evidence of the original habitat in that area?
- What wildlife can be found in your area today?
- Are some of the original wildlife still found in this area?

Post-Visit Conversations

Activity 1: Get organized!

Duration of Activity: 60 minutes

Objectives:

- ❖ To initiate civic engagement by encouraging students to inquire about the various organizations that deal with conservation issues.

Instructions:

Have students familiarize themselves with the different organizations that are concerned with conservation. Look up on a computer, the following local organizations. Have students divide into groups. Have each group research a different organization. Write a small description of that group, including what it specializes in, its history, membership, activities the organization holds, and where it is located, among other things. Try to encourage students to join and/or be involved with an organization that might hold a special interest for them. <http://www.eco-usa.net/orgs/fl.shtml> has a nice list.

Some examples:

1000 Friends of Florida

Baynanza

Citizens for a Better South Florida

Earth Justice Florida

Environmental Coalition of Miami Beach

Environmentally Endangered Lands (EEL)

Florida Defenders of the Environment

Florida Native Plant Society

Florida Panther Protection Program

Friends of the Everglades

Nature Conservancy

Reef Relief

Sierra Club of Florida

Tropical Audubon Society

Key questions for students:

- Why are environmental organizations established?
- Do these organizations help the environment? How?
- How do environmental problems get solved with the help of organizations?
- What are some things that these programs need to survive and make a difference?

Other Potential Post-Visit Ideas

Visit to a natural area: document flora and fauna, research on history of the area, and identify human-induced threats to that location.

Clean-Up Activity: Take part in and/or organize a clean-up activity in the community.

Activity 2: Log writing

Duration of Activity: *15 minutes or homework*

Objectives:

- ❖ Students will reflect on their visit and connect with their growth.

Instructions:

After the museum visit, students will spend time on writing a personal log. This will help with retention of information they have gathered.

Key questions for students:

- Where and when did you go? –Why?
- What did you see, hear, touch, do?
- What was your favorite part? –Why?
- What new piece of information changed the way you thought about the world? –Why?
- Which words and ideas stood out the most? –Why?
- What do you think about the experience?

THANK YOU!

Thank you again for your participation and we look forward to working with you again soon!

We have many programs available, as well as professional development workshops for object and inquiry based approaches to learning and the Picturing America series.

At HistoryMiami we offer more than 10 different educational programs. These are listed on our website www.HistoryMiami.org and can also be seen in our brochure.

Regards,

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If you need a sign language interpreter, or materials in accessible format, please call 305-375-5379 or email: accessibility@historymiami.org.