

International Snow Leopard Trust

Life with Snow Leopards: a lesson in sharing habitat with a predator

(It is recommended to do this lesson after the mapping lesson)

Goal: For students to learn about how people live in two different snow leopard countries: Mongolia and India; and to raise awareness regarding why protecting a predator is a challenge

Overview: This lesson is based around personal letters written by people from snow leopard countries: one from a nomadic herder in Mongolia; and one from a village in Northern India. Students look for specific information, similarities and differences between the two. Photographs provide additional information and stimuli. As a follow-up activity students have the opportunity to establish pen-pal relations with students in snow leopard range countries.

Grade level: 6 and above

Group size: whole class size up to 25-30 students. The lesson is designed for pair and small group work but may also be done individually

Time: 45mins to 1 hour

Materials: Photocopies of the letters, enough for pair work or individual, depending on how teacher prefers to structure the lesson; enough sets of the color photographs for each group/pair

Subject: Social studies, geography, economics

Objectives: Knowledge: Students will have a greater understanding of lifestyles of people from different parts of high Asia.

Skills:

Reading for specific information, Exchanging and transferring information; Finding information from different sources: prior knowledge, text, photographs

Values:

Students will have a greater appreciation of the challenge of sharing habitat with snow leopards, and a deeper understanding of how integrated conservation and development programs can work.

Preparation: photocopy the worksheets and the reading texts. If possible print out the color photographs and have enough for 1 set per 4-5 students.

Introduction

1. Ask students if they can remember which countries contain snow leopards. Alternatively set a homework task of researching which countries have snow leopards and also which countries have conservation programs run by the International Snow Leopard Trust. Explain that students will be reading letters from two people who participate in ISLT conservation programs. Students may like to guess which countries they will be reading about.

Part 1

1. Hand out the worksheets with the tables to be filled in. See if they can guess where the two people come from by looking at their names. Ask the students how they think the names should be pronounced. (*Tsering is pronounced: tseh-ring; Narantuya is pronounced: Nah-rah-n-too-ya*)
2. Go through the information categories that they will be looking for. By having students try to predict the answers, the teacher will become aware of any areas that might not be clear.
3. Hand out the letters. This could be done in any of several different ways:
 - each student could be given an individual copy, alternating so that every other student has the same text. Students find the information for their person and then exchange the information with a partner sitting next to her.
 - *or* Students work in groups and each group has different texts. They read the text carefully and prepare to impersonate that person for an interview. They predict questions that sociologists/conservationists might ask them. Other groups prepare questions to get the information they need. They should think about follow up questions in case the information is not immediately forthcoming. Then, putting away the texts, students have to try to find the appropriate information by interviewing other students who are role-playing the person who wrote the letter.
 - *or* Students simply work in pairs, or small groups, filling in the information for their person in the chart and then exchange the information with another pair.

Part 2

1. Have students work in pairs or small groups to find the similarities and differences in the texts. You could award some kind of prize or distinction to the group who finds the most, to offer an incentive to stay on task.

Part 3

1. Discuss the photographs in the letters and have students find part of the text that refer to the information presented in the photographs
2. Then hand out the sets of photographs and have students figure out which one goes with which text. Students should be able to refer to the text to justify their choice.
3. You might like to brainstorm what they would photograph if they wanted to show some representative images of their lifestyle.

Follow up Writing Activity

If students are interested in linking with a class in a snow leopard range country, please let me know at the address below or this e-mail: Priscilla@snowleopard.org.

I will send you a package of materials to initiate a linking program. It could consist of a couple of students who develop a pen-pal relationship with students in a snow leopard range country or it could be a whole class project, where students prepare a display or presentation to send to a school.

Assessment

Students should be able to:

- describe the social and economic circumstances of at least two communities living in a snow leopard range country
- present information from a variety of sources
- discuss the challenge of predator conservation in poor countries