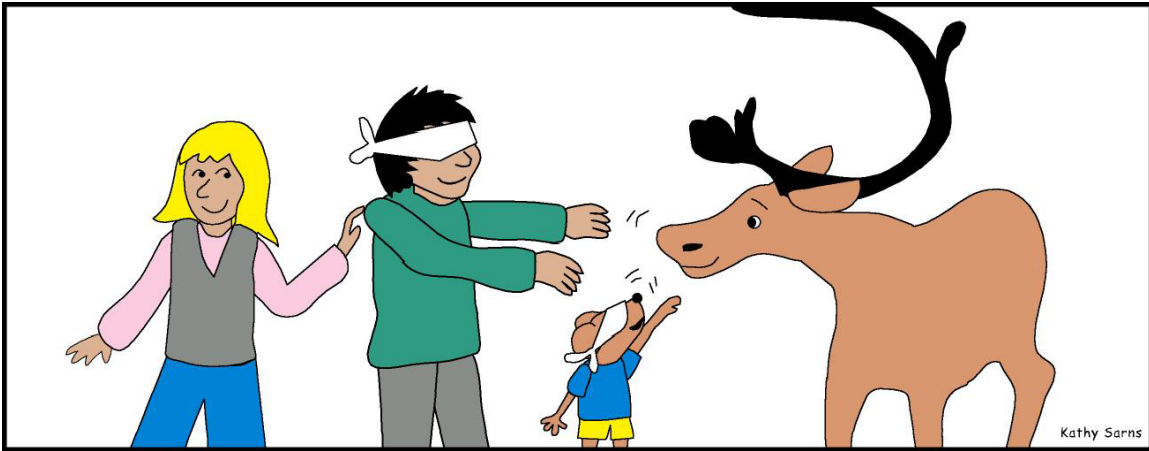


# BLIND WALK



**Grade Level:** K-12

**Alaska State Content Standards:** SA14

**Subject:** Science

**Skills:** Classification, Observation

**Duration:** 1 class period

**Group Size:** 2

**Setting:** outdoors

## OBJECTIVE

Students will observe, classify, and illustrate plants and animals of the boreal forest and tundra.

## TEACHING STRATEGY

Through a field trip, students observe a boreal forest or tundra ecosystem.

## MATERIALS

- Blindfolds (1 for 2 students)
- Blind Walk student worksheet (1 each)
- Don't Tear Me Apart or Crush My Home

## PROCEDURE

1. Before visiting the boreal forest or tundra review the "Don't Tear Me Apart or Crush My Home!" handout. Talk to the students about preserving natural areas

and why these areas should be left as undisturbed as possible.

2. Explain that the students will be divided into partners. Each person will have the chance to be blindfolded, using only the sense of touch and smell to observe his/her surroundings. Discuss the responsibility that each student has for his partner's safety. The leader should gently guide his blindfolded partner being very careful to watch for logs, low branches, uneven ground, prickles, etc.
3. Take students to your designated area and have them follow the directions on their Blind Walk worksheets.
4. After returning the classroom, discuss their observations as well as

their notebook pages. Ask the following questions:

- a) What was the most interesting thing you observed?
- b) Where your observations different without the use of your eyes? If so, how and why?
- c) Where you able to find a specific plant previously observed once the blindfold were removed? Was it hard or easy? Why?

## **EVALUATION**

Use the worksheets as an evaluation tool.

## **REFERENCES**

Adapted with permission from Alaska Wildlife Week Unit 5 Alaska's Forests... More Than Just Trees, by Susan Quinlan, Alaska Department of Fish and Game, 1987 and Alaska Wildlife Week Unit 6: Alaska's Living Tundra, by Susan Quinlan, Alaska Department of Fish and Game, 1988.

## BLIND WALK WORKSHEET

Follow the directions listed below. Remember you are responsible for your partner's safety! Leave the area as you found it. You don't want to disturb someone's home.

A. Blindfold your partner and lead him/her to any plant (plant, shrub, or tree). While your partner is exploring the plant ask the following questions. Discuss the answers.

1. What kind of plant is it? Is it a plant, herb, or tree?
2. Is this plant alive? How do you know?
3. How big is the plant? How did you make your guess?
4. What does the plant smell like? Do different parts smell different?
5. What do the leaves and stems feel like? Are they smooth, rough, oily, sticky, thick, or thin?
6. Does it have bark? Does the bark feel thick or thin?
7. Describe the texture of the leaves.

B. When you have finished asking questions, take your partner several steps away from the plant and slowly turn him around a few times. Take off the blindfold and have your partner try to find the plant he/she was exploring.

C. Write down the name of the plant.

\_\_\_\_\_

D. List three of the most interesting things you noticed about the plant.

a) \_\_\_\_\_

b) \_\_\_\_\_

c) \_\_\_\_\_

Switch places and do the exercise again.

# "DON'T TEAR ME APART OR CRUSH MY HOME"

## GUIDELINES FOR INVESTIGATING AN ENVIRONMENT



**"Yikes! Watch Out!** You almost stepped on my home! **Ouch!** You just crunched me with your big foot!"

If plants and animals could talk, this is what they might say to someone who is carelessly tromping through their home. It is important to be aware of your actions when going out to explore wildlife habitat. Here are several guidelines to follow so that minimal damage will be done to the environment as a result of your visit.

1. When visiting private property or public lands, it is your responsibility to know the rules and to follow them. Be sure to get permission from the owner before you visit private land.
2. Stay on the trail whenever possible. If it is necessary to go off the trail, try to avoid stepping on plants and well-camouflaged ground nests.
3. Do not eat any plants or fruits (berries) before asking your teacher or an adult who can positively identify that it is edible.
4. When collecting samples for the classroom, take as few samples as possible and share them.
5. When taking a sample, take from the ground before taking from the plant. If you do take from the plant, take only a leaf or a small branch from the side of the plant, not from the top. Some plants have compound leaves, so get a whole leaf and not just a leaflet for identification.
6. Carefully remove the branch or leaf to avoid tearing the bark or damaging the remaining plant.
7. Take bark from dead trees only.
8. Do not take any live eggs for classroom samples; however, broken eggshells are OK.

9. When collecting samples, carry the samples carefully so they will be good specimens when you return to the classroom.
10. If collecting a whole plant, loosen the soil around the plant and roots with a digging tool, so roots can be easily removed. Try to collect the entire root or at least a representative portion. Fill in the hole with loose soil to protect plants nearby.
11. If you are interested in viewing wildlife, you must be very quiet and move slowly so you won't frighten the wildlife away before you get a chance to see it!
12. A safe distance should always be kept from any animal for your protection and theirs.