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Why Do Animals Become Extinct? 40 min

Objective:

Students will learn causes for animal extinction and then investigate ways to change the effect.

Big Idea:

Why do animals go extinct?

Is there a connection between different animals and causes for extinction?

1. Warm Up / Anticipatory 10 min

Have students turn and talk to a partner to answer the question, "What do you know about the word extinction?" Chart student thinking.

2. Investigation and New Learning 20 min

Day #1: Read aloud-*The Great Kapok Tree* by Lynne Cherry. Before reading review the chart of what the students think they know and then model how to put their thumb up for new learning as you read. This is a nonverbal way to hold student attention and also use as a formative assessment of student learning. As each animal approaches the man as he sleeps have the students turn and talk about how the animal is affected if they man cuts down the tree in the rainforest.

Day #2: Pull up the wonder: Why are Pandas Rare? Before reading, go back to the chart of student thinking around extinction and review what was written. Ask students to confirm or add to their thinking about extinction as you read about pandas.



3. Review & Check for Understanding 30 min

Day #1 After reading, have students turn and talk to each other about what they learned about the effects of deforestation on animal populations. Teacher listens in to partner conversations and coaches in if necessary. Reread what the animals say to the man if students aren't able to verbalize responses with evidence from the book. You can also use the Author's Note at the back of the book to reiterate the idea of how deforestation effects animal life.

Day #2 After reading the section about why pandas are rare, have students compare that to the thinking they did yesterday around rainforest animals. Ask-What is the same or different for the threat on rainforest animals and pandas? What does this make us think? What can we do? Teacher listens in to student talk to assess for student understanding of the ways human choices impact the lives of different animals. Chart thinking about similarities and differences. Then discuss options for how they can help make change. My student decided to start saving extra change to plant a tree in the Amazon rainforest and after that began saving to send money to support panda reserves in China.

Note: This lesson was used as a compare/contrast between two different kinds of text. It was also used to promote social action. It could also be used in a science unit around an animal study, specifically the topic of extinction.