

NAME OF THE ACTIVITY: Steal the acorn

GRADE LEVEL: Grades 3-7

RUN TIME: Initially to explain background, rules and play will take 15 minutes or more and background and rules do not have to be done together although correlating the rules with real life application to the background is advised. Subsequent games and options can be done in 5 minute increments.

EQUIPMENT NEEDED: Organism cards, copy of food web, 3 “acorns” (any easily grabbed and carried item. Nerf balls work well)

HIGHLIGHTS: Predator, prey, running safety in large group running,

OBJECT OF THE GAME: To survive

VOCABULARY: Competition

SET UP: Designate playing area, set out 1 “acorn” for every 6 players

PRIOR TO THE GAME EXPLAIN TO PLAYERS: Explain what competition is and how members of the same community compete for resources. Go over the food chain and who eats whom.

INSTRUCTIONS: The object of Steal the Acorn is take the "acorn" back to your own side without being caught. Divide players into two teams. Designate one team as the nuthatches and one as the rabbits. The members of each team are numbered. They form two opposing lines and place the acorn in the exact center between them.

The leader calls out a number. The players on each side who are assigned that number are the players for that round. No other team members may leave their side of the field. Neither player may touch the other until someone touches the acorn. Once a player touches the acorn however, the other player may tag him/her.

If a player is able to grab the acorn and carry it back over to his/her warren or nest (own side), that team scores a point. If a player is tagged after touching the acorn and before he/she returns their own side, the team that tagged him/her scores a point.

The game is over when a predetermined number of points are scored, or when all numbers have been called.

OPTIONAL PLAYING EXTENTIONS:

Option A: Add more acorns and call multiple numbers. At times have more acorns than numbers called (create a surplus situation)

Option B: Have only one acorn and call multiple numbers.

Option C: Change to foxes and snakes. If a player is tagged they are “eaten” and removed from the game.

DISCUSSION EXTENTIONS:

How do organisms compete in real life?

After options A & B: How did changing the supply of acorns change the dynamics of the game? If organisms worked together, is that realistic for these organisms ? (might require research to discover that they do not work together to obtain food. Have students research what organisms DO cooperate to obtain food)

After option C: How does adding omnivores/carnivores change the dynamics of competition?

Allow students to add new rules or options to the game based on their research of organisms. Allow them to form a hypothesis of how this rule/option will affect the play of the game, then run several trials to see if their hypothesis was correct. Make a real life application of the scenario they created.

- A. Add in natural and human influences, allowing students to hypothesize, test by playing and discuss their results. Influences can be specifically chosen or random but it is advisable to do them randomly ONLY AFTER trying them specifically.