

The spice of life

Why is Biodiversity important?

"Finding out"

Learners research the importance of maintaining Biodiversity

Grading: Y Y Y

Time: ⌚

Place: Inside

Group size: Groups of 4-6

Activity Outcomes:

Learners are able to:

- understand the importance of Biodiversity
- create ways to maintain Biodiversity
- present reasons why they should care for Biodiversity

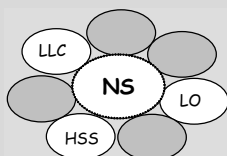
Assessment:

- Peer assessment of group presentations
- Educator assesses individual contributions

Skills:

- Evaluating concepts
- Empathy with life on Earth
- Personal responsibility

Learning Area links



Background

With so much habitat destruction, development, pollution, and species extinction going on these days, everyone needs to think about the importance of biodiversity. Having learned about biodiversity, learners decide for themselves what efforts should be made **to maintain biodiversity**, considering factors such as economics, personal responsibility, and the future of the planet Earth.

Activity Guidelines

Needed: *The six posters which state the reasons for caring about biodiversity (Pages B11 - 13).*

- ✎ Give the following questions to the whole class, either on paper or on a chalkboard. Let the learners read them and think silently for a few minutes.
 - ✎ Do people actually need wild plants and animals for either economic or medical reasons?
 - ✎ Can't scientists synthesise medicines in the laboratory or freeze genetic material for later use, therefore making the original plants and animals unnecessary?
 - ✎ Is it acceptable to let a species die out if it has no apparent medical or economic purpose?
 - ✎ What sorts of ecological processes does biodiversity help maintain?
 - ✎ Are there some species that are more important to protect than others?
 - ✎ Is it acceptable to let venomous snakes, biting insects and other unpleasant species go extinct?
 - ✎ Do people have the right to use the world's resources in any way they see fit?
 - ✎ Do people have responsibilities to other living things?
 - ✎ Why should people today do without things they want when we don't even know what future generations will need or want?
 - ✎ Will future generations really care about species that disappeared before they were born?
 - ✎ What inventions, stories, or works of art can you think of that were inspired by living things?

↳ What kind of recreational activities rely on wild spaces and species?

✂ While the learners are thinking, tape posters around the room with the 6 possible reasons why we **should care about biodiversity**.

✂ Also, put up a poster labelled Other.

✂ Learners group themselves next to the poster which appeals to them most.

✂ Give the groups a few minutes to put together their points of view. Then each group presents their reasons.

✂ To conclude, ask if the presentations have changed anyone's opinion and if there really is a most important reason or are they all important.



See Teacher Guide 2, pp 3-7

Variation

🌍 Create a Collage

Ask each group to create a collage that supports their reason for the importance of biodiversity. The effect could be beautiful!

Make a Plan

Discuss the biodiversity of South Africa and what is being done to save it. What can learners do to help? Come up with a plan of action and organise how to implement it.



See Enviro-facts nr 29





MEDICAL AND ECONOMIC REASONS

It is important to conserve the diversity of life for medical and economic reasons. Plants and animals could provide us with additional foods, medicines, and other products in the future that will save lives and benefit society.

MAINTENANCE OF ECOLOGICAL PROCESSES

It is important to protect the diversity of life because biodiversity helps maintain important ecological processes such as oxygen production, pollination, and flood control that, in turn, help support all life on Earth.





RECREATION AND LIFE ENRICHMENT

Our lives would not be as rich if we lost species such as lions, beetles, frogs, lizards, and shrews, and the habitats where they live.

The rich diversity of life also allows for important recreational activities such as hiking, fishing, camping, and birdwatching.

FUTURE GENERATIONS

It is important to conserve the diversity of life because no generation has the right to destroy the environment and resources on which future generations depend. It is our responsibility to take care of the diversity of life.





INSPIRATION FROM NATURE

It is important to conserve the diversity of life because biodiversity provides inspiration and provokes curiosity and imagination. Art, music, and poetry are often inspired by the diversity of life. And many of our technological advances, such as flight and Velcro™, have been inspired by examples found in nature.

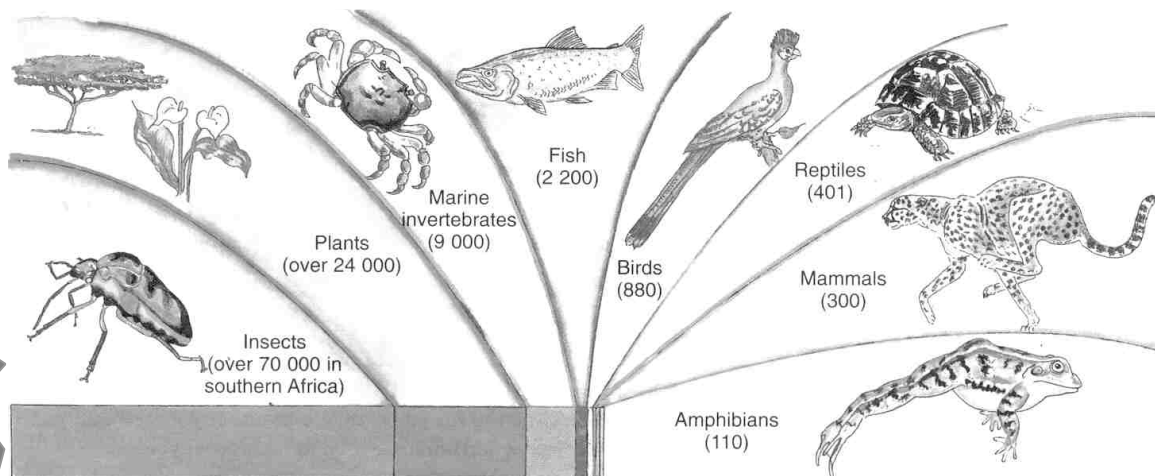
RIGHT TO EXIST

It is important to conserve the diversity of life because all species have a right to exist.





HOW MANY SPECIES IN SOUTH AFRICA?



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