The Science Behind Algonquin's Animals

Create a Pond

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Grades: 1- 6
Subject: science
Skills: visualizing, colouring, drawing, brainstorming
Duration: 45-60 minutes
Vocabulary: Painted Turtle, pond, basking

Objectives:

Students will be able to: 1) describe Painted Turtle habitat.
2) identify and describe a Painted Turtle.

Method:

Students create their own Painted Turtle habitat.

Background:

One common turtle found in Algonquin Provincial Park is the Painted Turtle. They have a 12 to 17 centimetre shell that is olive-brown in colour. The orange, red and yellow markings on the edge and side of the shell, and on the head and legs, are characteristic of Painted Turtles. Painted Turtles can often be seen sunning on logs, rocks, beaver lodges, bog mats and other structures in beaver ponds and shallow sections of lakes. Painted Turtles can live in any shallow, soft bottomed pond, lake, rivers, and creek in Algonquin Park.

Materials:

✓	Items Required	Quantity
	picture of Painted Turtle	one
	Painted Turtle drawing	one per student
	blank paper	one per student
	pencils	one per student
	pencil crayons, crayons, markers	class set

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Procedure:

1) Ask the students how many of them have seen a turtle. Have them describe what a turtle looks like. Write these characteristics on the black board or chart paper.
2) Next, ask the students where turtles live. You may get several answers, pond, ocean, land, etc. Expand on the response to a pond. Ask them what things you might find in a turtle pond. Items should include logs, stumps, rocks, lily pads, etc.
3) Ask those students that have seen a turtle what the turtle was doing when they saw it. Some answers might be swimming, walking, eating, or sitting on a log or rock. Tell the students that turtles will often be found sitting on a log, stump, or rock to get the warmth of the sun. This is known as sunning or basking.
4) Ask the students if any of them have seen a Painted Turtle. Show the class a picture of a Painted Turtle. Explain to them that in Algonquin Park this turtle is one of the common turtles that people can easily see in ponds. As well, wildlife researchers have been studying Painted Turtles in Algonquin for over 25 years to learn more about them.
5) Explain to the class that they are going to each colour in their own Painted Turtle and then get to draw a pond for their turtle.
6) Hand out the Painted Turtle drawing to each student and have them colour it in.
7) When finished colouring in the drawing hand out a blank piece of paper and have the students draw and colour a turtle pond. Make sure they also include a Painted Turtle in the drawing.
8) When finished the drawing have the students put their name on it and post them around the classroom.

Variations:

Using books or the internet have students find out what different habitats other types of turtles use. Have them choose one different habitat and turtle and create a drawing and post it beside their drawing of the Painted Turtle habitat.

Extensions:

Have the class draw and colour one large pond. Use a good length of rolled brown paper to draw on the pond. Before drawing, brainstorm with the students what other animals might also be found in a Painted Turtle pond and make a list. Tell the students that in a turtle pond there are several turtles. Assign individual or groups of students to drawing and colouring different components of the pond. When the pond is complete hang the drawing in the classroom or in the hallway outside of the classroom.

Evaluation:

Ask students to:

1) Describe what a Painted Turtle looks like.
2) Create a habitat for a Painted Turtle.