

Healthy Habits for Man and Beast

Introduction: This unit will teach students (appropriate for grades 2nd-5th) the importance of eating healthy, exercising for at least sixty minutes per day and sleeping between 10-12 hours at night. The students will need to chart their eating, sleeping and exercising habits for one week. They will look for ways to improve their health. They will try to correct any problem areas. Being healthy is extremely important and strongly effects how well students do in school. They will learn about healthy food by studying the Food Pyramid. The guidelines have changed in recent years. It's easier to follow because you want to eat equal amounts of all food groups except fats. They should limit their fats and sugars to once or twice a week at the most. That means flaming hot Cheetos are **not** a healthy lunch choice!!

After practicing the healthy habits of eating right, they will determine if they truly are moving/exercising for 60 minutes a day-which is the minimum amount needed for elementary aged children. The students will brainstorm ways to improve their exercise habits figuring out what type of activities they can fit into their schedule to meet the required 60 minutes.

Lastly, students need to learn to get to bed earlier to get their needed 10-12 hours of sleep each night. This will probably be the hardest challenge for them. They should not watch TV or play computer games in bed before sleeping because the light from the TV or computer will keep them awake for a longer time, making it more difficult to fall asleep.

After a couple of weeks of practicing and improving their own health habits, the students will be ready to visit the Philips Park Zoo!

Assignment: Students will visit the animals at the zoo, finding an animal that interests them enough to want to learn more about that animal. Ask the students: "Do you think animals have health habits like you do?" "Do you think the animals have to eat the right amounts of healthy foods?" "Do you think the animals need to move and exercise to stay healthy?" "Do the animals need a certain amount of sleep per day?" The students will choose an animal from the zoo to research and find the answer to these questions. Another way of doing this assignment may be to compare and contrast human health habits with animal health habits (pertaining to diet, exercise and sleep). The assignment can be as detailed as you'd like. Maybe the students will simply answer the questions above about their animal and the answers can be shared in class OR they can make a Venn diagram about their health habits and their animal's health habits OR they can research information in the computer lab and write a report. There are several ways to go. There are sample food and exercise logs/diaries attached to this unit-choose one or find another that better serves your students.