



SeaWorld/Busch Gardens Baby Animals

4-8 Classroom Activities

Are You My Pup?

OBJECTIVE

The student will be able to demonstrate how sea lions use their senses of smell and hearing to locate their pups.

ACTION

1. Before the activity, prepare the scented film containers. Make two of each aromatic. For peanut butter, put a small amount of peanut butter in two containers, add a cotton ball, close the lid, and label the bottom. For the extracts, place cotton balls in the film containers and saturate the cotton ball with the extract liquid. Close lids and label bottoms. Repeat for the two perfumes. When finished, you should have 13 pairs of scent containers. Separate scents and noisemakers into two groups.
2. Begin activity by reviewing background information about sea lion rookeries. Imagine what a rookery would look and sound like. Noisy? Quiet? Crowded?
3. Divide the class into two groups with each side having 13 students. Give each student one scent container and one noisemaker. (The student's matching pair must be in the other group.) Ask students to smell their "scent" and make their noise. One group will be "pups" and the other "mothers".
4. In an open area of the room, blindfold students and ask them to slowly walk around the area trying to find their mother or their pup. When pairs meet, they should smell their containers to make sure they've found the right partner.
5. After all students have found their partners, review the activity. Have students describe their experiences. Did they find it difficult? Easy? Is there an easier, faster way?

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

When breeding and giving birth, sea lions gather in large groups called rookeries along sandy beaches. Mother sea lions leave their pups ashore while they forage for food in the ocean.

When mothers return, the mother and pup must find each other. Instead of just looking for each other, mothers and pups recognize voices (vocalizations) and smell.

MATERIALS

Per 26 students:

- 26 plastic film containers with lids
- 26 cotton balls
- 13 pairs of noisemakers (kazoos, whistles, party favors, etc.)
- 10 extracts (chocolate, strawberry, mint, lemon, anise, coconut, almond, maple, cherry, vanilla, or others)
- peanut butter
- 2 perfumes that smell different
- 26 blindfolds



California sea lion mother and pup recognize each other's smell and voice.