

THUMBLESS RELAY PRIMATE PERSPECTIVE TAKING

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Content Areas: Adaptations, Primates, Evolutionary advantages

Materials List: Masking tape, a series of activities to do thumbless (some examples below), and a baton item.



Empathy Best Practice: Perspective taking



Conservation Connection: Several species of primates are endangered due to human actions.



Tangible Action: Be conscientious of your online footprint- don't like or share posts that portray wild animals as pets. Learn more at notapet.net



Background Info: This activity allows students the opportunity to explore and understand the advantages of having opposable thumbs and have fun!

- Primates are some of the only animals that have opposable thumbs.
- For most primates, the use of opposable thumb is an adaptation that has allowed them to thrive while living in the trees.
- For other primates, such as humans, we use our thumbs to grab onto things, write things down, tie our shoes and most other of our daily tasks.



Procedures:

1. Choose a large outdoor area to do the relay.
2. Choose 3-5 activities that we commonly need our thumbs for (ie. tying shoes, writing, drinking from a water bottle). Be creative! These activities will become stations for the relay and each team will need their own set of activity stations.
3. Explain to students that the goal of the relay is complete the activity at each station *without* using their thumbs. If a student uses their thumbs, that individual must start the relay over.
 - a. Give them the option to use masking tape to keep their thumbs out of use.
 - b. Tape option: using one piece of masking tape, tape their thumb to the side of their hand or to their palm.
 - c. No tape option: students must hold their thumbs to the side of their hand while completing each relay activity.
4. Split students into teams (base team size on how long you want the activity to last, i.e. two very large teams would take longer than 4 smaller teams to complete the relay).
5. Have students line up, one team behind each set of relay stations. Give the first student in each relay line a baton item. Each student will carry this baton with them to each station. After a student has completed all of the items in the relay they must return to their line, hand the baton off to the next person and sit down at the end of the line.
6. Let the relay begin!
7. The first team with all of their teammates sitting down wins.

Discussion:

- After the game is over, gather back together as a class and review opposable thumbs as adaptations.
- Discuss which activities were more difficult or easier to do without thumbs.
- Discuss what other primates may use opposable thumbs for and why it is an important adaptation to their survival as well as their own.

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