

CHILDREN IN THE
WILDERNESS



World Rhino Day Lesson Plan



“Saving one animal won’t change the world, but it will change the world for that one animal”

INTRODUCTION

World Rhino Day is celebrated on September 22 every year. It is vitally important that we learn about and protect our Rhinos for future generations to come. Here are just a few reasons why:

Rhinos are very important for the environment - Scientists investigate the very important part played by rhinos in creating and preserving grasslands which many species depend upon. As a result, rhinos are now classed as a **'keystone species'** - playing a key role in supporting other animals and their environment.

Rhinos are an umbrella species - when we protect rhinos we are also protecting all the other animals living in their shared habitat including birdlife, fish, insects and other mammals.

Rhinos bring eco-tourism - In areas where rhinos and humans live alongside each other, these charismatic animals bring job opportunities through eco-tourism which, in turn, can help regenerate the local economy.

Rhinos are part of our natural heritage - As long as humans have walked the planet, rhinos have also been part of our art, our cultural history and the fabric of life. If rhinos became extinct, it would be a loss for the whole of humanity, but even more so for the communities where rhinos are part of their heritage.

LESSON PLAN

Read through the lesson plan in order to organise your Eco-Club session. Make use of the vocabulary list at the end of this lesson plan. Any word that is **bolded in red** in the lesson, will be in the vocabulary list.

Thereafter, follow the numbered steps in order to conduct your lesson.



STAGE 1 – ENERGISER



DISCUSSION

Discussion – All about rhinos

Time – 10mins

Location – Under the trees

1. Talk to the children about these important rhino facts. Do not simply read these facts to the children, but rather have them guess what the answers could be. For example, ask them how many different kinds of rhino they think there are left in the wild, or what the difference is between a black and white rhino.
 - There are five species of rhino left:
 - Two from Africa – the White Rhino and Black Rhino
 - Three from Asia – the Sumatran Rhino, the Greater One-horned Rhino and the Javan Rhino
 - Rhinos can weigh as much as two cars – that’s very heavy! (the White Rhino weighs about 2300kgs!)
 - Both black and white rhinoceroses are actually grey. They are different not in colour but in lip shape.
 - The white rhino’s name is taken from the Afrikaans word “weit,” which means “wide” and describes its mouth. Early English settlers in South Africa misinterpreted the "weit" for "white". Black rhinos probably got their name from the dark wet mud in their wallows that made them appear black in colour. Both species are essentially gray in colour.
 - The black rhino has a pointed upper lip and are browsers that get most of their sustenance from eating trees and bushes. They use their lips to pluck leaves and fruit from the branches.
 - The white rhino has a squared lip and grazes on grasses, walking with their enormous heads and squared lips lowered to the ground.
 - Rhinos are also wallowers. They often find a suitable water hole and roll in its mud, coating their skin with a natural bug repellent and sun block.
 - The oxpecker eats ticks and other insects that it finds on the rhino, and creates a commotion when it senses danger. This helps alert the rhino.
 - A rhino horn:
 - Is not made from bone and is not attached to its skull. It is actually composed of Keratin, the same stuff as our fingernails and hair. So when we cut our fingernails or hair it grows back, so does a rhinos horn.
 - Is used for defence and digging
 - The rhino calf is born without a horn. Its only protection comes from its mother. This is notable because rhinos are generally solitary animals, preferring to be alone than to move and live in a herd. However, this does not stop the female from being a loving and attentive mother to her calves.





ACTIVITY

Activity – Protect the Rhino

Time – 20mins (5mins discussion, 15mins of activity)

Materials – Two items to represent a rhino (for example, two soccer balls, two pieces of cloth, etc.)

Location – Outside in an open space

The goal of this game is to grab the other team's hidden 'rhino' and bring it back to your side - but if you get tagged in enemy territory, you're off to jail. Imagine that you are trying to protect your rhino from poachers. The game ends when one of the rhinos has been caught.

Do not be put off by these long rules – they will help you explain the game to the children as best as possible, and it is worth it! This is such a fun game!

1. The basics of the game: In **Protect the Rhino**, two teams hide an object ('the rhino') on their territory. Usually, the territory is made by splitting a playing area in half with markers (a rope, sticks, etc.). Your team tries to take the other team's rhino and bring it back to your territory before they find yours. To protect your rhino, you can tag any opponent on your territory and send them to "jail" until they are tagged by their teammate to be set free. The first team to capture the other's rhino wins the round. If the game was quick you usually switch sides, re-hide the rhinos, and play again.

2. You need plenty of space:

Find a large, open area to play. You need plenty of room to run around, and places to hide the rhino.

Lots of obstructions and obstacles, allowing you to hide as you search for the other team's rhino, can make the game more fun as well. Try to pick an area with a large obstruction near the centre so no guards can see all the way across the field.

You can play a modified version of capture the flag on completely flat ground as well. To do so, you simply place the flags at the farthest possible ends of the field in plain sight. Split the field in half, then start playing. The game then becomes more about running, dodging and tagging than hiding.

3. Steps to play the game:

3.1. Divide the children into two teams.

3.2. Choose two similar objects to be the rhinos. These just need to be two objects of similar size and shape. Some good options include: Bandanas, Old t-shirts, Balls and Frisbees (you may make a rule that they can be passed once found, or they have to be carried), a piece of cloth.

3.3. Mark all of the boundaries of the playing field together. First and foremost, designate the centre line dividing your territory. It is often easiest to use a natural line, like the edge of the school building or even with two big, noticeable trees. Then decide how far back and to the sides you be playing. This prevents one team from hiding the rhino incredibly far from the centre line.

While natural lines (trees, shrubs, building lines, etc.) may be easy to see, old shirts, athletic cones, and small markers like toys can make it easier for everyone to see the centre line if there are no good natural dividing lines.

You don't have to mark off the back and sides. As long as everyone knows not to hide the rhino past the boundaries there should not be a problem.



- 3.4. Hide your team's rhino secretly. Once the boundaries are set, each team will designate 1-2 players as "hidiers" who will run off to secretly hide the rhino away. The other team members will stay together, out of sight and make sure no one is looking where the rhinos are hidden. There are a few rules to rhino hiding, but you can modify or skip them if you want the game to be harder:
- The rhino must be visible from one angle (not underneath a covering or stuffed into something).
 - The rhino cannot be tied down or wedged - you need to be able to grab it as you run past.
- 3.5. Each team should have a few people who stay in their territory and protect the rhino. The other people on the team are the poachers, and go into the other team's territory to try and catch their rhino.
- 3.6. Pick "jails" for each team. Jail is where a player goes if they get tagged by an opponent. If your teammate is tagged, you can run over and tag them to "free" them again. Jails are usually picked right in the centre of each team's territory, and they should both be the same distance from the centre line for each team.
- 3.7. Talk about any special rules before starting the game. **Protect the Rhino** is a pretty simple game - you try and get the rhino from the other team back to your side. If you get tagged you go to jail until someone on your team saves you. But there are some small rules that are best worked out before you start playing. There is no "right" way to play, so simply pick the rules that you like the most:
- When a player is freed from jail do they need to run back to their side before getting re-tagged, or do they get a free walk back?
 - Can a player save everyone in jail at once, or just one person?
 - If you grab the rhino and are tagged, do you drop the flag there or let the other team return it?
 - Can you move your own team's rhino somewhere new?
 - How far must a player stand away from their own rhino (ie. no guarding the rhino so that it is impossible to pick up)?

Debrief: What made this game work really well (for example, teamwork, planning, communication, etc.)?

Talk to the children about how rhinos are being poached, and how important it is to protect them.



STAGE 2 – THEORETICAL LESSON



OBJECTIVES

Children are introduced to the reality of why rhinos are endangered.



DISCUSSION

Discussion – Why are rhinos endangered?

Time – 15mins

Location – Under the trees

1. Talk to the children about the facts around why rhinos are endangered:

- **Rhino poaching** has become worse in recent years and is being driven by the demand for rhino horn in Asian countries. It is used in Traditional Chinese Medicine but more and more commonly now it is used as a status symbol to display someone's success and wealth.
- Rhino horn is made from keratin – this is the same thing as our nails are made from, and as such, rhino horn **is not** medicinal. It cannot cure or fix anything!
- **Habitat loss** is a major threat to rhino populations. There are several ways in which this happens, including clearance of land for human settlement and agricultural production, logging, authorised and illegal. This is a major threat to all species, as wildlife needs space to live and survive. It is therefore also a major barrier for rhino numbers to recover and increase, if they are already being poached.

2. Talk about **why it is important to look after and protect our rhinos:**

World Rhino Day is celebrated on September 22 every year. It is vitally important that we learn about and protect our Rhinos for future generations to come. Here are just a few reasons why:

- **Rhinos are very important for the environment** - Scientists investigate the very important part played by rhinos in creating and preserving grasslands which many species depend upon. As a result, rhinos are now classed as a '**keystone species**' - playing a key role in supporting other animals and their environment.
- **Rhinos are an umbrella species** - when we protect rhinos we are also protecting all the other animals living in their shared habitat including birdlife, fish, insects and other mammals.
- **Rhinos bring eco-tourism** - In areas where rhinos and humans live alongside each other, these charismatic animals bring job opportunities through eco-tourism which, in turn, can help regenerate the local economy.
- **Rhinos are part of our natural heritage** - As long as humans have walked the planet, rhinos have also been part of our art, our cultural history and the fabric of life. If rhinos became extinct, it would be a loss for the whole of humanity, but even more so for the communities where rhinos are part of their heritage.



STAGE 3 – DIRECT EXPERIENCE



OBJECTIVES

Children should realise the importance of protecting rhinos. Children apply their knowledge of what a rhino looks like and where a rhino lives to come up with a creative way to a rhino to protect itself.



ACTIVITY

Activity – Save the Rhino!

Time – 20mins

Materials – Pens / pencils; paper

Location – Under the trees

1. Talk to the children about how the first **priority** is for humans to protect and care for rhinos, BUT that they are going to be **creative** and come up with a way in which a rhino could protect itself from poachers.
2. Split the children into groups of 3 or 4 learners. Each group should get pens/pencils and paper.
3. In their groups, they should come up with a **creative, imaginative** way in which rhinos could look after themselves if they were caught by poachers. How could they escape from poachers?
Discuss these examples with the children:
 - a. Do they grow wings and fly away?
 - b. Do the oxpeckers that live with them and eat insects off of them help them fly away?
 - c. Can they shrink to the size of an ant and run away?
4. The children should brainstorm ideas in their groups, and thereafter, draw how the rhino could escape.

Debrief: Highlight to the children that these ideas are just for fun.

Have a discussion now on **realistic** ways in which rhinos could be protected in the communities in which the children live:

- **Education** – educating people around the world about the facts: rhino horn is not medicine; rhinos are critically endangered and if we do not do something now to protect them, they will become extinct.
- **Local initiatives** – if people know the facts about rhino poaching, they can help protect the rhinos in their local communities through fundraising drives, as well as by keeping an eye on any suspicious activity they might see in their natural surroundings

Can the children add any other ideas of what they could do in their communities to help fight rhino poaching?



STAGE 4 – DEBRIEF

At the end of a lesson, ask the children to turn to a partner and tell them as much as they can remember about the lesson in two minutes. The teacher times the activity, and after two minutes, signals it is time to change roles. The second person now takes two minutes to tell as much as they can remember about the lesson.

Make sure you have summarised the key points with the children:

- Why rhinos are endangered
- What we can do to help protect them



EXTRA BITS AND PIECES

Colour in this magnificent rhino, and have the children write their names in the rhino. Place this in the classroom where children can see it and be reminded of this lesson.



VOCABULARY

- **Keystone species** – a species that plays a key role in supporting other animals and their environment.
- **Priority** - something that is more important than other things and that needs to be done or dealt with first
- **Realistic** - based upon what is actual, doable and real
- **Creative** - having or showing an ability to make new things or think of new ideas
- **Imaginative** - the ability to come up with mental images of something that is not real or to come up with new and creative ideas
- **Poaching** - illegal hunting, killing or capturing of animals
- **Habitat** - the home of an animal or a plant

REFERENCES

- <http://www.nationalgeographic.com/animals/mammals/b/black-rhinoceros/>
- www.theaustralianrhinoproject.org
- <http://www.wikihow.com/Play-Capture-the-Flag>
- <http://www.rhinosinfo.com/rhino-birth-and-care-of-the-young.html>

