

YOU CAN'T GET ANY CLOSER THAN THAT!

ACTIVITY
4

ACTIVITY SNAPSHOT

Play a game that requires students to quietly walk up on another student. Perfect this important skill for hunting.

ACTIVITY TIME

30 minutes



WHAT YOU NEED

- One hula hoop or rope
- Spray bottle
- Blindfold

GEAR UP

American Indians prepared their children for adulthood by playing games to teach them life skills. Many games prepared children for hunting. One was a stalking game that involved approaching animals silently. The winner was the one who slapped the animal on the rump. This was an important skill because their bows, at the time, were not accurate at long distances. The lesson that follows is a modern take on this old game.

Educator's Note: This activity focuses on stealth and the importance of using your ears to detect other living things near you and approaching you, and being aware of your surroundings. Your students will be trying to walk up on another student, much like American Indians tried to walk up on an animal. If the student can hear people approaching, then wildlife could hear someone approaching, too. Stress to your students that these stalking skills take practice to perfect.

GETTING READY

Locate a large space outdoors that creates noise as students walk. For example, a leafy forest floor or a gravel parking lot.

LET'S GET STARTED

- 1 Explain to your students that they are going to play a game that helps them listen to their surroundings and approach animals quietly.
- 2 Teach students how to stalk:
 - When stalking, you should place the heel of your foot on the ground and then roll your foot to the toe.
 - It's also important to bend your knees and keep your legs flexed. Walking stiff-legged or moving in a rigid, upright position makes more noise and allows animals to detect your movements.
 - Have the students practice this a few times.
 - Try it on a blacktop or gym floor where it is easy to be silent.

- Next, go outside and try it where there are leaves or gravel.
- 3 To play the game, choose a student to be the “deer.”
- 4 Lay the hula hoop or rope on the ground in the middle of the area you chose.
- 5 Put the student playing the “deer” inside the hula hoop or rope. Give the student a spray bottle and blindfold them.
- 6 Have the students surround the “deer” about 20 yards away. They will try to get close to the “deer” without being detected.
- 7 When you say “go,” the students begin to approach the “deer” silently. Students cannot run up to the “deer.”
- 8 If the “deer” hears any sounds, he or she should turn in that direction and spray the water bottle at what they heard.
 - The “deer” cannot continuously spray. They can only squirt in the direction of sounds they hear.
- 9 Students squirted with water must return to the starting line and try again. See if anyone can creep up on the “deer” and tap them on the shoulder without getting sprayed. How many times did it take? Who got closest?

ADAPTATIONS

If you are indoors:

- 1 Have students wear bulky winter coats and boots, or rain clothing or nylon pants (any clothing that makes noise).
- 2 Lay a large plastic tarp on the floor, making it more difficult to move quietly.
- 3 Arrange desks and chairs so students must maneuver around and climb over them to reach the “deer.”

ENRICHMENTS

- 1 If indoors, arrange desks and chairs so students must maneuver around and climb over them to reach the “deer.”
- 2 If outdoors, use an area with obstacles such as shrubs, downed trees or playground equipment.
- 3 Have students approach while wearing bulky winter coats and boots, or with rain clothing or nylon pants (any clothing that makes noise).

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1 Where was it easy to hear people approaching?
- 2 Which habitat type made it hardest to hear others approaching?
- 3 Did your footwear make a difference? *Answer: Soft-soled shoes made it easier to walk quietly.*
- 4 Why must you be quiet when you are hunting or trying to watch wildlife? *Answer: Animals spook easily if they hear unfamiliar noises. Being quiet is essential.*
- 5 Should you be quiet when approaching your blind or tree stand? Why? *Answer: Yes, you don't want animals to hear unfamiliar noises and avoid your area. Stay silent and they will keep visiting the area.*
- 6 When would you most likely use stalking techniques while hunting? *Answer: In Western habitats that are more open and vast, making it more difficult to sit and wait.*
- 7 Do you use stalking techniques in all habitat types? *Answer: No, some habitats, such as Eastern deciduous forests, are not “stalking friendly.” There is too much leaf litter and undergrowth to work around, making it difficult to move easily and silently to get within range of animals.*