

30
Minutes

Henry the Heron

PDF Guide

K
-
1st

Students will understand the impact of litter on animals. Students will improve their reading comprehension by listening to a short story and making predictions. Students will engage in a hands-on activity to understand the challenges animals face when they become entangled in litter.

Program Details

Targeted SOLs

- English K.1, K.7, K.10, 1.2, 1.11
- Science K.1, K.6, K.10, 1.1, 1.8
- History K.1.

Supplies Needed

- Henry the Heron Storybook
- 1 rubber band for each student

Program Outline

1. Discussion

- What is litter?
- Where does litter come from?
- What places do you see litter?
- What types of litter do you usually see outside?
- Where should our trash go?

2. Introduce Henry the Heron and his story

Read the story aloud (included below). Include some discussion and questions between each page or two. Ensure students remain engaged and understand what is happening in the story.

3. Trapped in Litter Activity

How would it feel to be an animal tangled in litter?

1. Pass out one rubber band to each student. Ask students to put their hand out like they are high fiving a friend. Guide students to hang the rubber band on their thumb then pull the other side of the rubber band to loop around their pinky. The rubber band should stretch across the back of their hand, not on their palm.
2. Once everyone is ready, tell the students to remove the rubber band as fast as possible. This is what it's like for humans when we get something stuck on ourselves. We can use our fingers and hands to help us remove it.
3. Help students to reset the rubber band across the back of their hand, as they had it before. Once everyone is ready, have them put their hand in a beak shape, bringing their fingers together. Have them place their other hand behind their back. This models how a bird has a beak and no hands.
4. Ask them to remove the band without using their teeth or other hand.

4. Post-Activity Discussion

- Was it harder to remove the rubber band without using your other hand?
- How do you think animals would feel/what would they have to do if they were trapped in litter?
- How can we prevent this from happening to animals?
 - Never litter! Always put your trash where it belongs.
 - Encourage others not to litter. If you see something, say something. Tell your friends and family why it is important to never litter.

5. Thank You

Thank students for listening and learning.

Supplemental Activities for Henry the Heron

Litter in Shared Spaces

- Help students identify places they share with other people (parks/playgrounds, streets, sidewalks, parking lots, etc.)
- Discuss how litter affects the spaces we share with others. We wouldn't be happy if someone came into our yard and threw their trash in it.
- Spread trash and recycling out on ground. Discuss with students how they would feel if they were playing in that space with all the trash.
- Challenge students to pickup and sort the trash. Team work!
- Check the recycling to see what they got right and explain any mistakes.

Recycling Race

1. Set up one recycling bin and one trash bin far enough away that the students can run to them.
2. Have each student take a turn by grabbing one item and running it to the correct bin.
 - You can set a timer to encourage students to place as many items in the bins as possible.
 - You can allow each student to have a set amount of turns.
 - You can allow the students to play until all items have been placed in the bins.
3. Once the game is over, check each bin and explain any mistakes.
4. Play again if time allows so that students can learn from any mistakes.

HENRY THE HERON

A LITTER STORY



Henry is a heron. He likes to hang out at the lake in the park. He often stands as still as a statue and waits for minnows to swim by so he can grab a quick snack.



Henry is a very curious heron and always explores the nooks and crannies of the lakes and rivers he visits. One day, Henry saw something stuck in the grass near the edge of the lake. “I wonder what that could be?” he thought excitedly as he went closer. “Oh, it’s only a soda can.” He sighed. “Another piece of trash left by a lazy person. I don’t know why people can’t be neater!”



Just as he was about to fly away, Henry saw a minnow skimming through the water. He did exactly what comes naturally to herons. His head went down and came up with the minnow in his beak. “Yum!” he said as he swallowed the minnow. “I love good food.”



Then, Henry noticed he had caught more than just the minnow. The minnow had gone beneath a plastic six-pack ring and as Henry had reached to get it, his head had gone through the ring. It was stuck on his long neck!

Henry shook, he wiggled, he rubbed against the grass, he stuck his head into the water....but nothing he did would remove the plastic ring. “This is terrible, horrible, and awful,” Henry announced to the world. But no one was listening. Henry gave one more long shake of his head.



Morning dawned and Henry stretched, but it wasn't very comfortable. The plastic ring pulled and squeezed his neck, and made it very hard for Henry to breathe. Then some park visitors saw Henry. They chased him, trying to catch him. We know they wanted to help Henry, but all Henry knew was that he was scared and wanted to get away. He wished he could disappear. He flew away to try to escape.



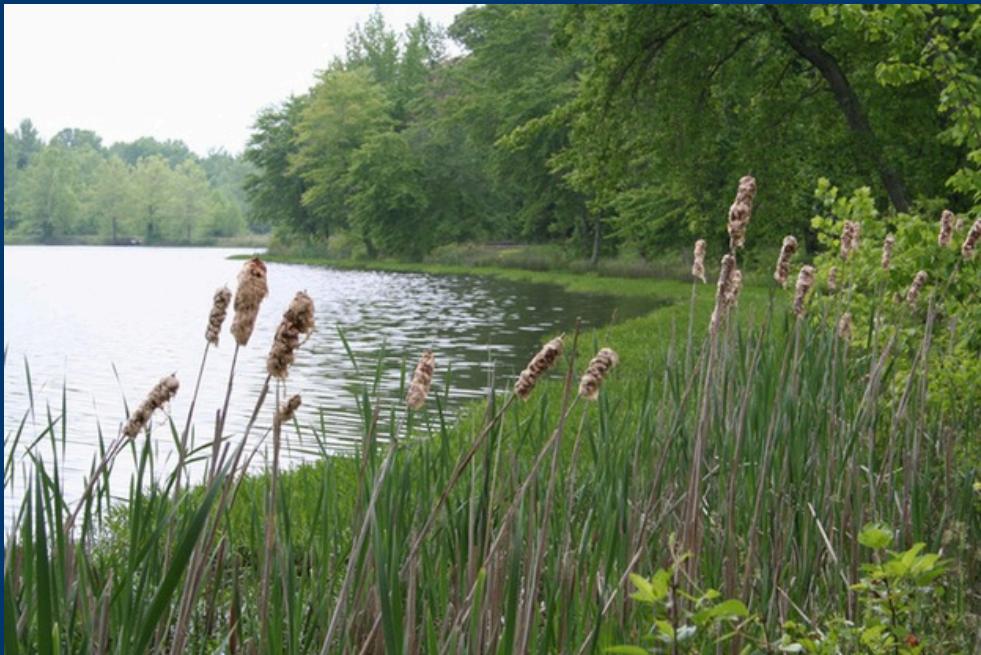
After a while, Henry got hungry and came out to the middle of the lake. He tried to catch some fish, but the plastic ring kept getting in the way or it moved, and scared the minnows away. How could he catch some fish? He flew to the shore, still hungry. When he got there he was again chased by people. This time, the people were in uniform. Who could these people be?



The next day Henry was tired, hungry and terribly sad. He went over to the other herons. They also chased him away. “You’re scaring all the fish away!” You’re making people chase us!” “You look silly with that plastic ring around your neck!”



“I didn’t get it stuck on myself on purpose,” Henry said. “I tried to get it off.” But the herons just flapped their long wings and left Henry.



How does Henry feel? How can we help him?

Henry was resting quietly when suddenly he was covered with a net! He flapped and struggled, but he couldn't get away. When hands reached for him, he snapped at them with his beak. The people wouldn't give up. They finally got a good hold on Henry and tried to calm him. They held his neck very still and clipped the plastic ring and then pulled it off.



When they released Henry he flapped his wings until he could see the lake. Once he had calmed down, he realized the people had helped him and removed the plastic ring!



“Yes!” he said. “I can eat again! I can drink!” and he dipped his head into the water. “I can sleep and eat and do almost anything!” Henry was so excited!

The End