



SeaWorld/Busch Gardens Zoological Careers

4-8 Classroom Activities

What's My Job?

OBJECTIVE

Students will explore different career opportunities offered by zoological parks and aquariums.

ACTION

1. Begin the week's activities with a class discussion. Ask students to name staff positions that might be found at a zoological park. List answers on an overhead or other writing surface.
2. After completing the list, ask students to choose one position they like the best. Students can work alone or in student groups to collect more information on the chosen career.
3. Ask students to prepare and present a 3-minute report to the class. The report should include reasons for choosing the job, job description (tasks and responsibilities), education required for position, and average salary or hourly wage if available. Resources for gathering information include SeaWorld Web site at <http://seaworld.org/infobooks/ZooCareers/zoocareers.html> Students can also call 1-800-23-SHAMU to ask questions to Education Department staff member or write to shamu@seaworld.org. Or use search engines such as Google and Yahoo on the Internet to find information.
4. After students present reports, discuss as a class the most popular careers. Popularity may be dependent on different criteria such as high salary, high visibility (trainers in shows), or personal reward (animal keepers). Do some require a longer investment of time or training (ex. veterinarians or animal care specialists)? Are some positions common to other businesses or adventure parks (accounting, marketing, public relations)?

DEEPER DEPTHS

If students are familiar with zoological careers, change the focus of the reports to create a game. Students compile the same type of reports, but do not name the staff position. After the presentation, have the class guess which position the report described.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Can you turn your love of animals into a career? The good news is that there are many types of jobs that involve working with animals, most of them within zoological parks. Although only some of them involve direct contact with animals, all zoological careers play an important role, whether directly or indirectly, in caring for the animals.

The competition for any job in a zoological park is keen. Because zoos and aquariums are becoming increasingly important community resources for environmental education and species conservation, jobs in these institutions are in high demand. But hard work will be the key.

It's assumed that a person applying for a job in a zoological park loves animals, but it's more important to a prospective employer that the person is hard-working, responsible, and well educated. For instance, with more demanding technical and scientific jobs, solid research skills might be considered with more weight than how much an applicant cares for or loves working with the animals.

Another step along the way to a zoological park career is getting your foot in the door. Starting with volunteer or entry-level positions at animal shelters, animal rehabilitation clinics, and some veterinary clinics is a good way to get background experience before applying to a zoo or aquarium.

MATERIALS

For each student or student group:

- computer and printer
- access to World Wide Web
- access to telephone
- paper
- pencil or pen
- miscellaneous report materials such as binders, color markers, poster board, etc.