

IT'S ALL IN THE CHALLENGE

ACTIVITY
1

Learning Objective

Students are inspired to discover the excitement and challenge of bowhunting.

Activity Time

90 minutes

Materials List

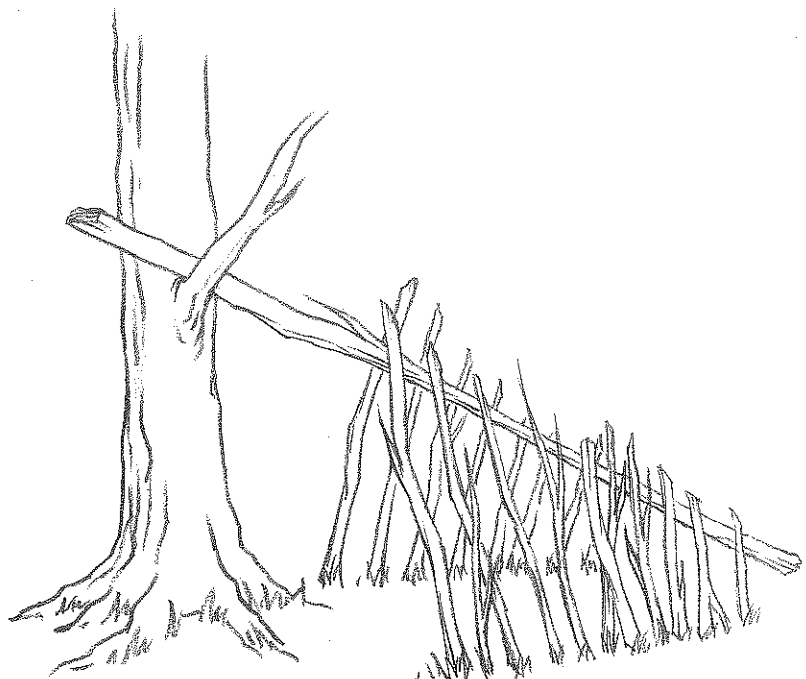
- * Spray bottles, 1 per team
- * Bandanas, different colors for each team, 3 per team

BACKGROUND

A blind is a structure that conceals people who are bowhunting or trying to photograph or observe wildlife. Many types of blinds are used for these activities, and can be placed on the ground or built in trees. Ground blinds can be made from natural materials found in the area, purchased as portable or "permanent" structures, constructed from building materials, or a combination of all three features.

In this activity, students will build a ground blind using natural materials found in the area. Allow the students to discover (on their own) how to build an effective blind. The instructions that follow describe how to build one type of ground blind so students have an example to follow:

- 1 Find a tree with forked branches about four to six feet above the ground.
- 2 Lean a fallen limb into the fork to serve as the anchor post. Make sure it's long enough to allow at least one person to sit under it comfortably.



BACKGROUND *Continued*

- 3 Lean as many short limbs as you can find against the anchor limb, angling the limbs to create a triangular lean-to. Make sure the limbs are placed close together and extend far enough to the sides to accommodate a seated or kneeling bowhunter. For bowhunting, ground and tree blinds must have space for the bowhunter to sit, kneel or stand comfortably, and also provide enough space for the bowhunter to hold, draw and shoot a bow and arrow.
- 4 Pile leaves, twigs and other debris atop and against the limb framework. Limbs with leaves attached or evergreen branches can be cut in 6- to 8-foot lengths and used to lean against the sides of the blind. This will hide the bowhunter inside.
- 5 Create "windows" in the blind to see and shoot from.

As students become comfortable with the concept of the blind, a discussion about the "shooting window" can teach lessons about camouflage and disguising the presence of the bowhunter. Making a blind with many small shooting windows can be more effective than a blind with one large shooting window that "frames" the bowhunter's face. A smaller window breaks up the bowhunter's image yet allows the bowhunter to shoot through any of several smaller windows.



Getting Ready



Find an area suitable to build the blinds, preferably a wooded area with fallen branches, leaves and other natural materials students can use freely. An area with thick undergrowth of shrubs and/or dead or dying autumn weeds can be used to make a ground blind. Blinds can also be made in cornfields or alongside haystacks.

PROCEDURES

- 1 Divide students into teams of at least three, but no more than five. Give each team three bandanas.
- 2 Explain to students that each team will build a blind that's hidden from the other teams to use in a game.
- 3 Each team finds a spot away from the other teams to build their blinds.
- 4 Each team decides where to make a window or several windows in the side of the blind to "shoot" from. Remind each team they will be shooting a spray bottle from the window(s).
- 5 Give the teams 30 minutes to build their blinds.
- 6 Once the teams have finished, gather all students together away from the blinds.
- 7 Explain the rules of the game:
 - * One student from each team is a Captain. The Captain's goal is to protect the team's bandanas. The goal of the other students is to retrieve the bandanas from opposing teams. The Captain places the bandanas within 6 to 10 feet of the blind in visible locations. The bandanas cannot be hidden. They must be in plain sight.
 - * All other students are deer. Each deer's goal is to retrieve the bandanas of an opposing team. (They cannot retrieve their own team's bandanas).
 - * Students can walk or crawl but not run.
 - * Captains must remain in the blind at all times.
 - * Captains can squirt students anywhere except the face with water when they get close to the team's bandana.
 - * When students get hit with water, they are out of the game. Determine an area that will be designated as the "Dead Zone" where all students go to after being hit.
 - * Anyone who damages a blind is automatically out of the game.
 - * Anyone who squirts another student in the face is out of the game.
- 8 Allow Captains 5 minutes to get back to their blinds.
- 9 Give students 10 minutes to play. Whichever team retrieves the most bandanas wins.
- 10 When the game ends, students should dismantle their blinds.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1 Were the blinds hard to see?
- 2 What materials did you use to build your blind?
- 3 Would you have liked to use other building materials? What type of material and why?
- 4 Did you sit, kneel or stand in the blind? Was it comfortable?
- 5 Were you able to maneuver inside your blind? Could you turn in all directions and position yourself to take a shot?
- 6 Could anyone anticipate your shot? Were they able to duck out of the way before you shot?
- 7 If you shot, was anything in your way? If so, what was it?
- 8 If you moved, did the others hear you?
- 9 What would have made you more successful? Could you have created more shooting opportunities?
- 10 Did the bandana's location affect whether you got a clear shot?
- 11 If you could play the game again, what would you do differently?
- 12 Is it enough to build a blind to be a successful bowhunter?
- 13 If you were actually bowhunting, do you think you would have enough room to pull back your bow? Would you have room for all of your equipment?

Educator's note: *This introductory activity is designed so students learn that to be successful hunters, they need to be camouflaged, quiet, have room to take a safe and accurate shot, and have a clear shooting lane. Refer to this activity often throughout your classes. Students will be better able to piece together the importance of each skill if they have this reference point as they move forward. In the Discussion Questions, guide students on the importance of camouflage, noise control, clear shooting lanes, and providing room for safe and comfortable shooting if they are not realizing this on their own.*

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What students should know after the discussion:

- 1 Animals can see hunters who are not properly camouflaged, especially if they move.
 - 2 The animal's sense of hearing is much greater than ours. Even the slightest noise can alert them of nearby danger, and cause them to flee that area.
 - 3 Animals can see images like a face that is not disguised or is "framed" in the window of a blind.
 - 4 Room to maneuver in a blind is critical. It's essential that bowhunters be comfortable and able to move into position to take clear, safe shots.
 - 5 Importance of shooting lanes:
 - * Be sure your shooting lane is set up facing the direction animals will most likely approach from, or have several options available.
 - * Be sure to clear all obstacles (twigs, branches, leaves and plant material) to ensure a clear shot.
 - * Consider using many smaller shooting windows instead of one or a few larger windows.
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ENRICHMENT

- 1 Either build two blinds or set up a manufactured blind before class. Use one blind as a decoy and have someone sit in the other with bandanas set up. Is it easier to get deer when their attention is focused on the other blind? Explain to students that you can do something similar while bowhunting, drawing your bow when deer are distracted by a decoy or while browsing for food.

ADAPTATIONS

- 1 If you have access to and would prefer, you can use manufactured blinds. Manufactured blinds are best for use in the winter, spring and summer when conditions are not similar to normal bowhunting conditions.

RESOURCES

- 1 Wigginton, Eliot and Margie Bennett. *Foxfire Series*. Anchor Books, 1984.

Reading Connections

- 1 "Brian's Hunt," by Gary Paulson (2003).