What is a Weed?

This activity is directly tied to the first spread, pages 1 and 2, in the What’s In Your World! publication located inside the back pocket of the activity tool kit.

What is a weed?
What does that word mean?

In this lesson students will participate in discussions, brainstorming, skits and a learning game to discover the world of weeds, how noxious weeds out-compete native plants and why noxious weeds affect our everyday outdoor activities.

Levels
Grades 4-8

Subjects
Language Arts, Science, Mathematics

Skills
Discussing, Comparing and Contrasting, Analyzing, Brainstorming

Concepts
Structure, behavior, energy needs and functions of living things; interactions of living things; diversity of life; connections of science, society and local landscapes

Objectives
Students will learn the term noxious weeds. Students will investigate how noxious weeds impact our everyday outdoor activities and lives. Students will participate in an activity to demonstrate how noxious weeds out-compete native plant species.

Materials (20 student class-size)
What’s in Your World! booklets (pp. 1-2) - 1 per student scraps of paper and pencils - 1 per student journal or notebook - 1 per student nametags with pictures or names of noxious weeds - 1 per student (bandanas or other items could be used) playing cards (small paper squares - red (20), blue (20), white (20)) flagging for marking boundaries

Time Considerations
Preparation - 30 minutes
Activity - 80 minutes

Lesson Overview
• Weeds and the Outdoor World Brainstorm (60 minutes)
• Native Plant Species Game (20 minutes)

Background
What is a weed? This word is as old as the hills, or at least as old as the weeds that grow on the hills. Weed comes from the ancient Norse and German words *wind* and *weed*. Originally, these words meant a grass or an herb, but by the Middle Ages a weed was any “useless or unwanted plant.”

Really bad weeds are called “noxious weeds.” These are plants that come from other places—they don’t belong here. They invade and harm our native plant communities, and they make our land unfit for agriculture, livestock, wildlife, forestry, recreation, and other good uses.