

Champions of Hibernation classroom activities

For use with “Champions of Hibernation” *Highlights*, May 2014, pages 32-33

Classroom discussion questions:

What is a dormouse?

Why are they called “fat” dormice?

Are they mice?

Where do they live?

What do they eat?

When are they active? (at night during spring and summer)

Why do you think they are nocturnal? (it’s safer when predators can’t see them)

Why do animals hibernate?

Based on the story, what makes hibernation different from sleep?

If you could hibernate for seven months of the year, which ones would you choose to sleep through? Why?

Activity

Objective: To calculate the amount of weight a fat dormouse would gain in the fall if it were the size of a person.

Materials: bathroom scale (or ask students to weigh themselves prior to coming to class), pencils, paper

Procedure:

1. After reading the paper, ask the students how much weight a fat dormouse gains in the fall.
2. Weigh students or collect weights they have brought in. Write numbers on the board. If students do not wish to share their weight with the class, use an average weight for the grade (see table below) instead.
3. Ask the students to divide their weight in half.
4. Students should then add the resulting number to their original weight. The total is the amount of weight a fat dormouse would gain if it were the size of a student.
5. Discuss what it would be like to put on that much weight in just a few weeks, and then not eat again until next year!