

The Seven Principles of Leave No Trace Wood Block Game

Rationale: Gamification is an excellent strategy for teaching youth and adults important information. This game teaches how the choices humans make greatly impact our environment in positive and negative ways. We put ourselves, animals, and the environment in danger when we don't make good choices when we spend time in the outdoors and in the wilderness.

Advanced preparation for The Seven Principles Jenga Game:

1. Paint the ends of 36 blocks **green** (marker works just fine). These represent wildlife (plants, animals, insects, etc.).
2. Leave the remaining blocks plain. These represent land and people.
3. Stack all the green blocks on the bottom of the stack in levels of three placed next to each other along their long sides and at a right angle to the previous level. The brown blocks need to be on the top of the stack.

Game Directions:

1. The first player picks a card, reads it aloud, and follows the instructions written on the card.
2. Players need to follow Jenga rules: Blocks can only be pulled from below the second layer from the top with one hand only. Only the block being removed or returned may be touched. (You are not allowed to hold the rest of the stack together while removing the blocks.)
3. Place removed wood blocks back on top of the tower along the long side and at a right angle to the previous level. Put the used card into a discard pile.
4. Continue to take turns removing brown or green blocks (depending on the card instructions) until the tower falls.
5. Reset to play again using the directions above.

Review questions:

1. What surprised you about playing this game?
2. What did you discover about human influences on the environment?
3. What questions would you like to investigate further?

Extension Activities:

1. Create additional cards for the game
2. Look for local social impacts that could influence your community; find solutions you can facilitate (i.e., host a cleanup day, plan a Leave No Trace awareness workshop, or write an article, poem, or story about water conservation for the school newspaper.)
3. Players can write an explanation of what happened while they were playing the game and how that correlates to what is going on in their local wilderness areas.