

Earth: More Land or More Water?

In first grade social science, children frequently work with globes as they start to learn fundamental concepts of mapping. As local little kids, however, their world tends to be quite a bit smaller, and it can be hard to make connections to a global existence.

In this activity, an inflatable globe and the game of catch both work to give your child a more concrete idea of the relationship between water and land on our planet. Blending science, math, and geography together, this activity will also improve your child's academic skills by introducing him to the concept of collecting data for graphs in order to answer the important question: "Does our planet Earth contain more land or more water?"

This exercise can be done with an individual first grader or with a group. If you're working with a group, pair off the kids, and let each pair have their own chart.

This activity comes from 30-year kindergarten veteran Joan Barksdale.

What You Need:

- Inflatable beach ball globe, around 12" diameter
- Paper, for graphing
- Pens
- One eager first grader (Can also be done as a group)

What You Do:

1. Describe to your child that this activity is going to answer the question: "Does our planet Earth contain more land or more water?"
2. To start the activity, toss the inflatable globe to your child, encouraging him to catch it with both hands, all fingers spread wide.
3. After he catches it, ask your child to look where each of his thumbs landed. Did they end up on land or on water?
4. Have your child throw the globe back to you. Note where your thumbs have landed.
5. Start a chart for both you and your child. After each toss, note where each thumb landed, marking "W" for water and "L" for land depending on what happens.
6. Keep tossing the globe back and forth to one another for about 6-10 tosses. Don't forget to write down your results!
7. When you are done tossing the globe and recording your results, look at your chart together and describe what you see. Which one is more: land or water? How do you know?

Note for Parents:

As a matter of fact, there is more water than land on Earth; water makes up about 71% of our planet. All water on Earth is connected across the globe, though we identify separate oceans by name.

What does having such a large body of water mean for our planet and for us humans? Ask your child, and prepare to be impressed by what he figures out.

