

Animal perfectus: Animal characteristics



Primary Lesson Plan

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Source

Part of a Pattern: Years 2–3 (Integrated Units Collection)

Learning areas

The Arts, Science

Level

Lower primary (K–2)

Description

This unit provides opportunities for students to examine animal characteristics by studying physical features, coverings, form, structure, habitat, food requirements and animal movements. The unit involves the study of birds, mammals, fish, reptiles, and amphibians. Identification of similarities and differences is a focus, as is developing an awareness of why these animals have particular features and characteristics. The unit builds an understanding of the rights of animals and how humans care for domestic and native animals. One activity from the unit is presented here.

Purpose

Students create an imaginary creature using their knowledge of animal features and characteristics.

Duration

2-3 sessions

Possible outcomes

In relation to the *Science — a curriculum profile for Australian schools*, and *The Arts — a curriculum profile for Australian schools*, work on this activity could lead to the achievement of outcomes in the following strands:

- **Science**
Life and Living
- **The Arts**
Visual Arts

There will also be links with other learning areas such as English.

Materials required

- *Little Koala* by Margaret Roc (Angus and Robertson, 1989)
- A range of art materials including collage and construction materials
- A selection of non-fiction books on animals for student reference

Procedure

1 Setting the scene

Read the book *Little Koala* by Margaret Roc to the students. Discuss the varied features and characteristics of different vertebrates used in the story to create the 'most beautiful animal in the bush'.

2 Design an animal

Ask students to work in groups to design an imaginary animal using their knowledge and observations of animals' features and characteristics, skeletal structure, habitat and diet. Provide a selection of non-fiction books on animals for student reference.

Ask:

- What features will your animal have? Will it have legs, wings, a beak, claws, a tail?
- How will you combine these features?
- What will your animal look like?
- What will your animal eat?
- Where will it live?

Observe and assess students' attention to detail and use of art materials for their desired effect.

Have students select the materials they want to use and then make their animal. Encourage students to name their own animal, incorporating the names of animals they have met in their study.

3 Describing the animals

As students complete their work ask them to talk with other class members about their animal, its structure, covering, movement and so on. Similarly, encourage the description of the reasons for selection of certain materials in the development of their work.

Extension activity

Assist students to create, in a sand tray for example, an environment suited to a particular animal. Provide sand, water, small boxes, pipe cleaners and found materials. Encourage students to meet the challenge of replicating a river, pond or stream, if appropriate. Invite others in to view and discuss with students their creations.

This form of 3D construction, to be viewed from above, is more suited to this age than a diorama. The latter, to be viewed from the front, presents problems of perspective.

Acknowledgements

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