

Animals of Canada—Unit Lesson

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Date: July 1, 2005

Description:

This unit will introduce students to the animals of Canada, their habitats and adaptations to these habitats. Student groups will become “experts” on one of these animals using the resource books from “All About...Canadian Animals” collection in the *All About Canada* series by Barb McDermott and Gail McKeown. Students will complete a research questionnaire and work together as a class to create a comparison chart of all the animals.. Students will further explore each animal by writing and illustrating a fictional story about their animal.

Grade Level:

Suitable for Grades 1-3

Subject(s):

Science, Language Arts, Performance Art

Duration:

Five 30-minute sessions—could be completed during the course of one week or one month

Goal:

The goal of this lesson is to introduce and familiarize students with the animals of Canada and how their physical characteristics help them to survive in a particular habitat.

Objectives:

Students will be able to:

- Identify the animals of Canada, their habitats and physical characteristics
- Identify the animals physical characteristics that have allowed them to live in certain habitats
- Write and illustrate a fictional story using the information they have gathered

Standards:

- California Life Science Standard 2.a.:
Plants and animals meet their needs in different ways. As a basis for understanding this concept: *Students know* different plants and animals inhabit different kinds of environments and have external features that help them thrive in different kinds of places.
- California Writing Standard 1.1:
Students write clear and coherent sentences and paragraphs that develop a central idea. Their writing shows they consider the audience and purpose. Students progress through the stages of the writing process (e.g., prewriting, drafting, revising, editing successive versions). *Organization and Focus*
Select a focus when writing.

Background Information:

Prior to this unit, students will have explored the various biomes/habitats of our earth and will be familiar with the characteristics of these biomes/habitats.

Materials:

- “All About...Canadian Animals” in the *All About Canada* series by B. McDermott and G. McKeown
- Research questionnaire –“All About...the (name of animal) (see attached)
- Overhead projector or chart paper for questionnaire and data recording activity
- Paper for story and illustration
- Word wall
- Art supplies—markers, crayons, colored pencils, etc.
- Pictures and/or stuffed animals or puppets of the Canadian animals
- Pocket chart and fact cards for matching game

Procedures:

Lesson One (Anticipatory Set): Teacher will tap student’s prior knowledge by showing them pictures or stuffed animals/puppets of the animals of Canada and asking them to identify these animals. Teacher will explain that we will be studying the animals of Canada—some of which we will be familiar with and some of which will be new to us because they live in Canada. Teacher will also define some terms found in the books that may be unfamiliar to students and will develop a word wall for this activity. The first animal to be studied will be the beaver, which is a symbol of Canada. Teacher will model the research activity for students by first reading the book about the beaver and then using the book as well as student’s input to complete the research questionnaire.

Lesson Two: Students will be assigned to groups of three and will be assigned the role of “reader”, “writer” or “illustrator” for each group. Each group will be given a book on a different animal from “*All About...Canadian Animals*” and will become the “expert” on that particular animal. The “reader” will read the book to the group and, after finishing the book, the “writer” will fill in the research questionnaire “All about...the (name of animal)” using the book and input from other group members as a resource.

Lesson Three: Each group will report the information gathered on their questionnaire at the prompting of the teacher to complete the data chart (*see attached*). This chart can be created on chart paper or on an overhead transparency. Activity will continue until all groups have reported on their animal and chart is completed. Teacher will then review the data and ask students questions about the characteristics of the animals that help them to survive in a particular habitat (e.g. “Why does a river otter have thick fur?) Also ask students to offer opinions on whether or not these animals could survive in other places.

Lesson Four: Students will gather in groups to write a fictional story about their animal, using what they have learned about the animal to write the story. All members of each group will provide input for the story as the writer records the story on the paper provided. When the story is completed, the illustrator will draw a picture to go with the story. (*Note: For younger, less experienced writers, this activity may take more than one session and may require more of the teacher’s assistance. To aid younger students, a word wall should be provided containing words used in the books.*)

Lesson Five: Student groups will share their stories and pictures with the class. Prior to this lesson, the teacher will have developed a matching game using pictures of the animals and cards containing the information gathered by students and recorded on the comparison chart. Animal pictures will be displayed in a pocket chart and students will come forward to pick a fact card to see if they can match the fact to the correct animal. This activity could be done in teams of the students groups or by students individually and will aid teacher in checking for student’s understanding in what has been learned.

Assessment:

Teacher will assess student’s learning for this unit from the following:

- Completion of the research questionnaire, “All about...the (name of animal)”
- Correct and complete reporting of data on class reporting/comparison chart
- Successful and accurate completion of the fictional story and illustration about the assigned animal which includes facts gathered through the research of the animal
- Observed student cooperation within the group setting
- Observation of correct matching of facts with the animal during the matching game