



Nurture the Wonder

Preschool Inquiry Lesson Plan

Skin Coverings – Classifying Animals

Lesson Summary: This is a preschool inquiry lesson that utilizes exhibits found in The RainForest at Cleveland Metroparks Zoo. The lesson pairs observations and experiences that students had at The RainForest with classroom materials and inquiry skills to capture the curiosity of young learners to understand the natural world around them.

Goals and Objectives: Students will use observational skills to explore The RainForest exhibits and record what types of animals they see and what types of skin coverings those animals have (fur, feathers, scales, or smooth/slimy) to help classify animals into different groups.

Cleveland Metropolitan School District Scope & Sequence:

Pre-kindergarten

Strand: Science Inquiry and Application

Topic: Inquiry

- Explore objects, materials and events in the environment.
- Make careful observations.
- Engage in simple investigations.
- Describe, compare, sort, classify, and order.
- Share findings, ideas and explanations (may be correct or incorrect) through a variety of methods (e.g., pictures, words, dramatization).
- Record observations using words, pictures, charts, graphs, etc.
- Make Predictions
- Make inferences, generalizations and explanations based on evidence.

Kindergarten

Strand: Life Science

Topic: Physical and Behavioral Traits of Living Things

Content Statement: Living things are different from non-living things

- They are found almost everywhere in the world. There are different kinds of living things that are found in different places.
 - There are different kinds of living things.

Possible Comparative Questions: Were there more animals with feathers or fur in The RainForest? Were there more animals with scales or smooth skin in The RainForest?

Materials:

- Scavenger hunt – picture checklist of rainforest animals, for teacher to record data (provided)
- Pictures of animals on scavenger hunt list (provided)
- 4 envelopes or bags – each labeled separately with “fur, feathers, scales, smooth”
- Resource backpack containing real examples of animal skin coverings – fur, feathers, and scales. (provided)

Additional Resources (optional)

Furry Creatures, Feathery Creatures, Scaly Creatures, and Slimy Creature, all books by Clint Twist

Questioning

Pre Field Experience Procedures:

- Before coming to the Zoo, teachers should ask students what they already know about animals that live in the rainforest. If possible make a list of the types of animals they think they will see.
- Have a discussion about what makes all those animals similar and different. Sample student responses might include: “wings, tails, legs, fur, feathers, paws, etc”. If desired, teacher could provide pictures of different species and ask students to point out what looks different about each of the animals in the pictures.

- Start proposing guided “I wonder questions” to students about the differences of what covers animals bodies. Let students come up with their own “I wonder” questions. Create a list if desired.
- Explain to students that they will be seeing many different types of animals at The RainForest when they visit the Zoo, and to take special note on what type of skin covering these animals have (fur, feathers, scales, smooth/slimy).

Observing and Predicting

Visit The RainForest at Cleveland Metroparks Zoo:

- Ask students to recall the classroom discussion on what makes animals different, specifically their skin coverings.
- Share with them the materials in the backpack provided by the Zoo. Let the students touch and feel the different examples of skin coverings (fur, feathers, and scales)
- Tell the students they will be going on a scavenger hunt through the RainForest today and that they will need to be on the lookout for certain animals. They will need to classify what type of skin covering the animal has when they see it.
- Start the “scavenger hunt” by leading the students through The RainForest. Using the pictures and checklist provided, start searching for the animals on the list at the exhibits.
- Once an animal on the checklist is found, ask the students to closely observe that animal. Have them describe and predict what type of skin covering it has (fur, feathers, scales, smooth).
- Place the picture of that animal in the correct envelope (fur, feathers, scales, smooth) after the class classifies it.

Investigating and Communicating

Post Field Experience Procedures:

- Review the animals seen at The RainForest by looking over the animal checklist from the scavenger hunt.

- If desired, you may provide students with another opportunity to touch and explore the materials that represent different skin coverings. (provided)
- As a class, go over what animals were seen in The RainForest that they classified by skin covering and placed in the appropriate envelope.
- A graph can be created with the pictures for each envelope by counting up and comparing numbers of animals seen in each skin covering group.
- Count up the amount of animals in each group (fur, feathers, scales, smooth/slimy) to come up with results/answers for comparative questions.