

The About...series

**By Cathryn Sill and
Illustrated by John Sill**

All books: 10½ x 8¾ | 40 pages | Children's, Ages 3-8

THEMES

- Habitats
- Physical characteristics
- Classification (similarities and differences of species)
- Function and interaction in environments
- Food chain
- Life cycles
- Survival functions
- Nature
- Animals
- Animal behavior

NOTE TO TEACHERS: Most activities in this guide can be adapted to various animals.

NATIONAL EDUCATION STANDARDS

LANGUAGE ARTS (K - 12)

English Language Arts Standards provided by the NCTE.

NL-ENG.K-12.1 READING FOR PERSPECTIVE

Students read a wide range of print and nonprint texts to build an understanding of texts, of themselves, and of the cultures of the US and the world; to acquire new information; to respond to the needs and demands of society and the workplace; and for personal fulfillment. Among these texts are fiction and nonfiction, classic and contemporary works.

NL-ENG.K-12.8 DEVELOPING RESEARCH SKILLS

Use a variety of technological and information resources (e.g., libraries, databases, computer networks, video) to gather and synthesize information and to create and communicate knowledge.

SCIENCE (K - 4)

National Science Education Standards provided by the National Academies of Science.

NS.K-4.3 LIFE SCIENCE

Develop an understanding of organisms, their characteristics, environments, and life cycles.

NS.K-4.1 SCIENCE AS INQUIRY

As a result of activities in grades K-4, all students should develop the abilities necessary to do scientific inquiry and understand scientific inquiry.

MATH (K - 12)

National Mathematics Standards provided by the NCTM.

NM-PROB.PK-12.3 Apply and adapt a variety of appropriate strategies to solve problems.

TECHNOLOGY (K - 12)

National Technology Standards provided by the International Society for Technology in Education.

NT.K-12.5 TECHNOLOGY RESEARCH TOOLS

Use technology to locate, evaluate and collect information from a variety of sources.

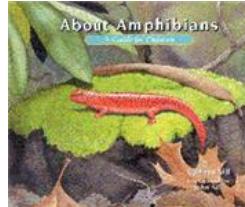
Use technology tools to process data and report results.

Evaluate and select new information resources and technological innovations based on the appropriateness for specific tasks.

ABOUT THE BOOKS

Awards and Praise for the Books

About Amphibians: A Guide for Children



Hardcover: \$15.95

ISBN: 978-1-56145-234-7

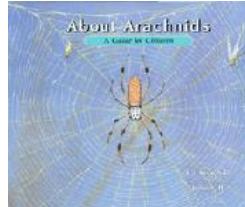
Paperback: \$7.95

ISBN: 978-1-56145-312-2

A beginner's guide to the world of frogs, toads, salamanders, and other animals that spend part of their lives in the water and part on land.

“...breathtaking... This is a very fine easy-reading introduction to amphibians that will be savored by young viewers and teachers.” —Kirkus Reviews

About Arachnids: A Guide for Children



Hardcover: \$15.95

ISBN: 978-1-56145-038-1

Paperback: \$7.95

ISBN: 978-1-56145-364-1

A first glimpse into the creepy, crawly, complex world of spiders, scorpions, mites, and ticks.

“This colorful volume is well designed for children intrigued by the eight-legged creatures and for teachers planning preschool and primary-grade units on arachnids.” —Booklist

2007-8 South Carolina Book Award

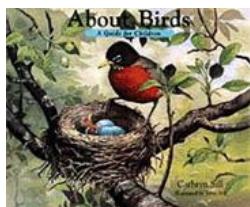
2004 NSTA/CBC Outstanding Science Trade Book for Students K-12

Texas 2x2 Reading List

2003 Honor Book

Society of School Librarians International

About Birds: A Guide for Children



Hardcover: \$15.95
ISBN: 978-1-56145-028-2

Paperback: \$7.95
ISBN: 978-1-56145-147-0

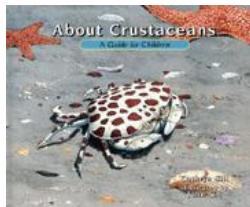
A first, thoughtful glimpse into the world of birds, from eggs to nests, from song to flight.

“Exceptionally detailed and uniformly accurate... The Sills succeed admirably.”

School Library Journal (starred review)

A Scholastic Book Club selection

About Crustaceans: A Guide for Children



Hardcover: \$15.95
ISBN: 978-1-56145-301-6

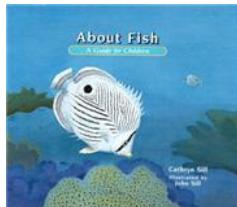
Paperback: \$7.95
ISBN: 978-1-56145-405-1

Beautiful, realistic illustrations and an elegantly simple text illuminate the basic characteristics of crustaceans for the very young.

“The clarity of layout, text, and illustration gives this book an accessible look, while the quality of the presentation makes it well worth sharing in the classroom.” **Booklist**

Kansas State Reading Circle 2005 Recommended Reading List

About Fish: A Guide for Children



Hardcover: \$15.95
ISBN: 978-1-56145-256-9

Paperback: \$7.95
ISBN: 978-1-56145-335-1

This first glimpse into the world of fish explains the basic characteristics that all fish share, while offering a look into the wide variety of animals that fall into this diverse category.

“A simple, handsome book.” **School Library Journal**

About Insects: A Guide for Children



Hardcover: \$15.95
ISBN: 978-1-56145-207-1

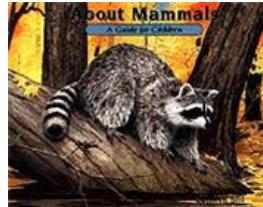
Paperback: \$7.95
ISBN: 978-1-56145-232-3

Cathryn and John Sill explain the basic characteristics that all insects share, while offering a close look at a few of the many animals in this diverse category. They tackle the fascinating and varied world of insects in this easy-to-read and educational book.

In image and text the Sills succeed in conveying a great deal of information at a very basic reading level. Excellent classroom or pleasure reading for science and nature fans and for any beginning readers drawn to nonfiction.”

-Booklist

About Mammals: A Guide for Children



Hardcover: \$15.95
ISBN: 978-1-56145-141-8

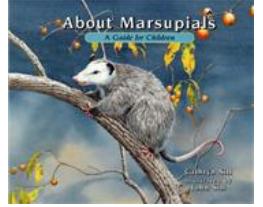
Paperback: \$7.95
ISBN: 978-1-56145-174-6

This thoughtful first glimpse into the world of mammals explains what they are, how they live, and what they do. “...recommended for all children’s collections.”

Science Books & Films

1998 NSTA/CBC Outstanding Science Trade Book for Children

About Marsupials: A Guide for Children



Hardcover: \$15.95
ISBN: 978-1-56145-358-0

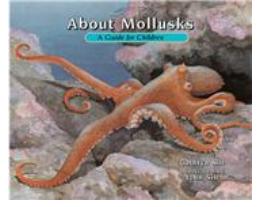
Paperback: \$7.95
ISBN: 978-1-56145-407-5

Cathryn Sill uses simple, easy-to-understand language to teach children what marsupials are, how they look, how they move, what they eat, and where they live.

“A handsome introduction to an unusual group of mammals.” **Kirkus Reviews**

- 2006 *Science Books and Film* Best Books of the Year
- 2007 Bank Street Best Children’s Book of the Year, Honor Book
- 2006 Society of School Librarians International Book Awards
- 2006 Baker’s Dozen (PA)
- 2007-8 Emphasis on Reading (AL)

About Mollusks: A Guide for Children



Hardcover: \$15.95
ISBN: 978-1-56145-331-3

Paperback: \$7.95
ISBN: 978-1-56145-406-8

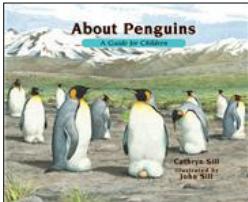
A first glimpse at the world of mollusks, including snails, clams, and octopuses.

“...this handsome look at a cast of lowly characters is a rewarding slice of the biodiversity pie.”

School Library Journal

2006 Bank Street College of Education Best Children’s Books of the Year

About Penguins: A Guide for Children

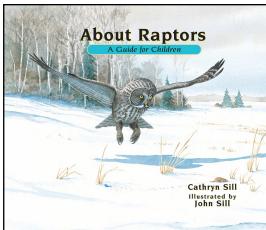


Hardcover: \$15.95
ISBN: 978-1-56145-488-4

This first glimpse into the natural world of penguins introduces readers to all seventeen varieties of penguins.

“With its simple text and lovely watercolors, About Penguins will appeal to a wide audience.” **—Booklist**

About Raptors: A Guide for Children

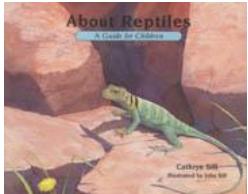


Hardcover: \$16.95
ISBN: 978-1-56145-536-2

This first glimpse into the natural world of raptors introduces readers to birds of prey.

“With a clear, simple text and handsome, sometimes dramatic paintings of birds in different habitats, this is a fine introduction.” **—Booklist**

About Reptiles: A Guide for Children



Hardcover: \$15.95
ISBN: 978-1-56145-183-8

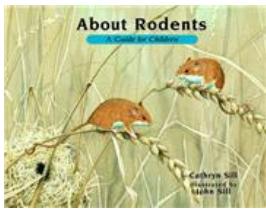
Paperback: \$7.95
ISBN: 978-1-56145-233-0

A colorful and informative first glimpse into the diverse world of reptiles.

“...attractive, realistic portraits of the animals in their natural surroundings.” **School Library Journal**

- 2000 NCTE Orbis Pictus Award for Nonfiction for Children
- 1999 ABA Pick of the List
- 1999 Parent’s Guide to Children’s Media Award

About Rodents: A Guide for Children



Hardcover: \$15.95
ISBN: 978-1-56145-454-9

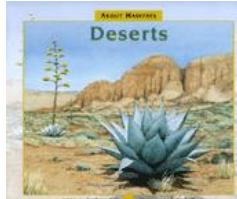
A first glimpse into the natural world of rodents. Simple, easy-to-understand language to teach children what rodents are, how they look, how they move, what they eat, and where they live.

“Beautifully illustrated with clear, well-composed paintings of animals, this book shows respect for its audience as well as its subject.” **—Booklist**

□ 2009 Kansas State Reading Circle Recommended Reading List

□ A Junior Library Guild selection

About Habitats: Deserts



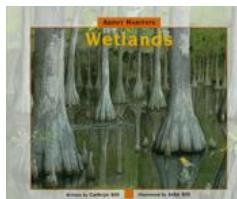
Hardcover: \$15.95
ISBN: 978-1-56145-390-0

This series highlights the defining characteristics of habitats, including the plant and animal life, using examples from around the world.

“...an informative introduction to a harsh environment and the adaptations made by the plants and animals that live there.” **School Library Journal**

- 2008 Bank Street College of Education Best Children’s Books of the Year
- 2007 Society of School Librarians International Book Awards

About Habitats: Wetlands



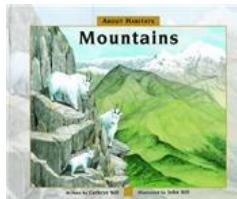
Hardcover: \$15.95
ISBN: 978-1-56145-432-7

The second title in the series highlights the defining characteristics of various habitats, including the plant and animal life, using examples from around the world.

“The artwork is stunning, filled with realistic details and a beautiful balance of colors.” **School Library Journal**

- 2008 AAUW Award for Juvenile Literature

About Habitats: Mountains



Hardcover: \$15.95
ISBN: 978-1-56145-469-3

This book explores the major attributes and majestic beauty of mountains, using examples from around the globe. In simple, easy-to-understand language, this guide teaches children what mountains are and what kinds of animals and plants live there.

“A solid introduction sure to help readers develop an appreciation for the scope and unique beauty of the mountains and mountain ranges that grace our planets.” **Kirkus Reviews**

BEFORE YOU READ

- Read the afterword to familiarize yourself with the species illustrated. This will enable you to answer questions that come up as you read to the class.
 - Show the cover art and illustrations to the listeners and have them share their knowledge about the class or group of animals featured in the book.
 - See if the students can tell you what sets this particular group of animals apart from others. (Example: Birds have feathers; mammals have hair and produce milk for young.)
1. Ask readers to answer the following questions by filling in the blanks with the appropriate animal.
 - a.) What is a _____?
 - b.) Where can we find _____?
 - c.) Do _____ only live in (select an area or place)? Brainstorm where they might live.
 - d.) What do _____ look like?
 - e.) Are _____ different colors, sizes, and shapes?
 - f.) What do _____ eat?
 - g.) Ask students which of the _____ they have seen before and prepare a list of where they saw them. (i.e. backyard, zoo, or a book)
 2. Note the different habitats for each creature. Select 5-10 new or unusual words found in the book, such as mammal, habitat, hibernate, carnivore, herbivore, omnivore, venom, prey, or hatch. Explain and discuss the words on the list. Have students draw a picture of their favorite creature/habitat to use for later discussions.
 3. Ask students if they have ever seen a particular creature or visited a certain habitat/location. Allow students to share what they know about the creature or location. Have each student sketch a picture of the creature or location.
 4. Show the cover of the **ABOUT...series** book and ask for a volunteer to describe it. Explain that there are different groups based on their characteristics (birds, fish, insects, wetlands, etc.) i.e. An octopus belongs to the Mollusk group and this book will tell us what mollusks are, what they do, and where they live. Encourage students to remember some characteristics/descriptions so they can be listed on the chart.
 5. Read the questions on the back of the book and fill out the answers as a class on a chart or individually on an anticipation sheet.
- 6. Instruct students to either agree or disagree with statements that come up during discussions to clarify information. (Can use Thumbs Up or Thumbs Down.)
 - 7. Have students fill in an individual or class K•W•L chart before reading each book.

| | | |
|-------------|---------------------|----------------|
| What I know | What I want to know | What I learned |
| | | |

Can also create a Venn Diagram or Thematic Web chart. Charts can be found at Freeology.com.
 - 8. **Anticipation Guide** – Before reading **ABOUT REPTILES**, read the following questions aloud. Have students agree or disagree by using “Thumbs Up” or “Thumbs Down.”

You are a reptile.
Fish are reptiles.
Reptiles come from eggs.
Reptiles have live babies.
Reptiles are wet and slimy.
Turtles are reptiles.
Reptiles are poisonous.
Mother reptiles take care of their babies.
Reptiles do not help people.
The first reptiles were dinosaurs.

Read the book **ABOUT REPTILES**. Afterward, review the questions to find out if students still agree with their previous answers based on new knowledge and understandings.
 - 9. **Anticipation Guide** – Before reading **ABOUT AMPHIBIANS**, read the following questions aloud. Have students agree or disagree by using “Thumbs Up” or “Thumbs Down.”

Frogs are the only amphibians.
Amphibians are mammals.
Amphibians lay eggs.
Snakes are amphibians.
Amphibians spend all of their lives in the water.
Some amphibians are poisonous.
Amphibians only eat plants.
Amphibians have many predators.
Amphibians sleep through very hot or very cold weather.
Some amphibians eat snakes and other small animals.

Read the book **ABOUT AMPHIBIANS**. Afterward, review the questions to find out if students still agree with their previous answers based on new knowledge and understandings.

AS YOU READ

You may want to share the information given in the **Afterword** in each book about the species illustrated.

1. Ask readers to think about the following questions as the book is being read to discuss afterwards:
How does a _____ move?
What does _____ eat?
How do _____ protect themselves?
2. Let students know to take note of the illustrations, and information from the different places each creature calls home for later discussion.
3. As you read aloud, have students raise their hand every time they hear a word they do not understand or know the meaning. Write each word on chart paper or on the board and use this student-generated vocabulary list for further study.

AFTER YOU READ

1. Have the students fill out the third section of their K•W•L chart.
2. Go on a nature walk and have the students look for animals from the groups. Birds and insects should be relatively easy to find.
3. Insects and spiders found inside could be used as a learning experience. Give the children an opportunity to observe them with magnifiers and make sure they understand the necessity of releasing them.
4. Have a class discussion on the importance of protecting animals and their habitats.

Interdisciplinary Connections (Classroom Activities)

LANGUAGE ARTS

Write a Report – Students may use questions from the BEFORE YOU READ section or do research online to come up with five to ten facts about a creature or habitat. (This can be done as a small group project or an individual report. This could also be a homework assignment.) Have students present their finished projects to the entire class and display their work on a bulletin board or wall.

Creative Writing – Have students draw an imaginary creature and describe or label its characteristics. Share with the class. Students could also write/dictate a story about the creature and display the pictures and stories on a bulletin board or make into a class book.

Working with Riddles – Define and briefly discuss riddles. [They are similar to jokes, but they make you think more and the answer is usually a surprise.] Read several riddles to the students and see if they can guess the answer's before sharing them.

Example:

Q: Why do cows enjoy the theater?

A: They love a good MOO-vie.

Have students work in small groups or individually to create their own riddles. Allow them to share their riddle(s) with the class.

Word Search - Prepare a word search using sight words from the book(s) and/or new vocabulary words such as: hatch, prey, scaly, hibernate, venom, or the names of common reptiles.

WRITING POETRY

Acrostic Poems – Have students create an acrostic poem using an animal from a book(s). Include facts about that animal written for each letter of the name.

Example:

R is for Rodent.

A is for Active at night (nocturnal).

T is for Templeton the rat in *Charlotte's Web*.

RAT, a furry creature that's best left alone.

Diamante (Diamond) Poems - Have students write diamante poems about an animal from a book(s). Explain to students that a diamante is a diamond shaped poem about opposites (or in this example, a contrasting object).

Lines 1 and 7 give the opposites.

Lines 2 and 6 give two adjectives that describe the opposite closest to it.

Lines 3 and 5 state "ing" words that describe the opposite closest to it.

Line 4 contains 4 nouns (the first two describe the first opposite word and the last two describe the last opposite word).

Example:

Tadpole
Small, Green
Wriggling, Swimming, Eating
Gills, Tail, Lungs, Legs
Hopping, Croaking, Sleeping
Slimy, Loud
Frog

_____, _____
_____, _____, _____
_____, _____, _____, _____
_____, _____, _____
_____, _____

Cinquain Poems – Discuss with students that Cinquain Poems have 5 lines with 2 syllables in the first line, 4 in the second, 7 in the third, 8 in the fourth, and 2 in the last line. Students can write about a specific fish species, the ocean, or other things found in the ocean such as a specific plant, seaweed, sand, or seashell.

Example of a Cinquain Poem:

Rainbow
Colorful, Fast
Swimming, Diving, Floating
You will find them in the ocean.
Fishes

“If I Were A Fish...” Activity

Ask students to imagine being a fish. Have them answer the following questions:

If I Were a Fish...
What would I look like?
Where would I live?
What would I eat?
Who would I live with?
What would I do during the day?
How would I protect myself?

Using their creative skills, and art supplies, have students design their images and write a one-page story of their life as a fish. Allow students to share their creations with the class. While working on this activity, have a large sheet of butcher paper out to create an ocean mural. Allow small groups of students to work on drawing, painting and coloring the butcher paper a little at a time until everyone has had a chance. The ocean should be colorful and informative, including plants, animals, and other things you find on the ocean floor, such as sand and shells. After sharing, have students tape or staple their fish and stories to their ocean and display work in the hallway.

Fish Poem Sequencing Activity

Read aloud to the class.

How I wish that I were a fish!
My day would begin flapping my fins.
I'd make a commotion out in the ocean.
It would be too cool to swim in a school.
In the sea I'd move so free.

With just one thought...don't get caught!

Place students into groups of six and give each student one piece of construction paper and one sentence strip. You can pre-number the strips one through six for each group before passing out strips, or have each student choose one line from the poem and form groups from their choice, or assign a line to each student once they are placed in groups. Have students write their line on their sentence strip, then draw a picture that represents this line on construction paper. Pass out a sheet of butcher paper to each group and have students put the poem in order, then paste their strips and

pictures. Hang each group's work in the classroom and read the poem aloud. Have students say their line when they come to it in the poem.

Working with Homonyms – Using the book, **ABOUT FISH**, make a list of words from the story that have multiple meanings (ex: organ, foot, filter, mantle, etc). Have students decide which meaning would fit in a given sentence. After sharing a few sentences, allow students to create their own sentences for others to guess.

Example:

My mom plays an organ for the church.
Mollusk shells grow from a special organ called a mantle.
The children hung their stockings from the mantle.

Poetry and Movement

Review how a snail carries its shell. Read the poem *Snails*, below, aloud from a chart. Next, have students stand and form a circle holding hands, then say each verse. In the first verse, have students step forward into the circle as they say each line. The leader will walk inside the circle, which will grow smaller as students step closer together, still holding hands. In the second verse, have students step backwards as they say each line, allowing the leader once again to walk freely inside the circle. Ask students, “Who does the leader represent?” (*answer: the snail*) and “Who do they represent as a group holding hands?” (*answer: the shell*). Point out that snails move by squeezing their body (winding up/moving closer in), then releasing (unwinding/moving out). You can allow students to take turns being the snail.

*Snails

Hand in hand you see us well.
Creep like a snail into his shell.
Ever nearer, ever nearer,
Ever closer, ever closer,
Very snug indeed you dwell,
Snail, within your tiny shell.

Hand in hand you see us well.
Creep like a snail out of his shell.
Ever farther, ever farther,
Ever wider, ever wider.
Who'd have thought this tiny shell
Could have held us all so well.

***Source:** www.earlyliterature.ecsd.net

SCIENCE

Rainforest In a Box – Get a refrigerator or washing machine box. Cut an oval at the base of the box large enough for a student to crawl through. Paint the box green and make large construction paper leaves. As students learn, they write facts about rain forest amphibians on the leaves and glue them. Copyright ©2010 by Peachtree Publishers. All rights reserved.

to the box. Inside the box, large pieces of brown butcher paper can be rolled up lengthwise to be trees with large green construction paper leaves protruding. Each child can make tree frogs to hang from trees inside the box. Students can also make predators (snakes, bats) and prey (moths, flies, spiders, grasshoppers) of the tree frogs to include in the box.

Camouflage – Choose an ocean animal to illustrate. Draw the background to match the animal's colors to help it hide from its enemies. Display the pictures for others to try to locate the hidden animal.

Upper Grades

Fish and their Habitat – Have each student select a type of fish to research. Using the internet and/or encyclopedia, have them find and record the following information about their fish:

1. Name of fish, size/length, weight, height.
2. Ocean zone (sunlit, open-ocean, deep-ocean).
3. Is it a carnivore, herbivore, or omnivore?
4. Is it endangered or threatened?
5. How long is its lifespan?
6. Is it a predator, or who are its predators?
7. What size are they when born and how big can they grow?

After compiling this information have students create a model of their fish in its natural habitat using art supplies and a shoebox. The model should be as realistic as possible. Allow students to share information about their fish species while displaying their model. Display the models in the classroom.

More Science Activities

Have the students do one or more of the following activities:

1. Sort a variety of animals into the categories of Reptile/Not Reptile based on the list of characteristics of reptiles.
2. Make a Venn Diagram comparing two different reptiles, such as a snake and a turtle to examine what is the same or different about them.
3. Identify and label the body parts of reptiles. Discuss how those parts help the reptile survive in its environment.
4. Compare the characteristics of reptiles to other animal groups your class has studied, such as Mammals, Fish, Birds, Insects or Amphibians.
5. Using a Venn Diagram, compare and contrast frogs, toads, and salamanders (all three, or any combination).
6. Life cycle of an amphibian. Have students make a book in which they draw and explain the different stages of a frog's growth.
7. Order classroom tadpoles. Set up a tadpole observation station. Have students start a life

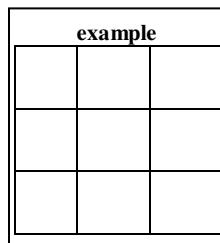
cycle journal in which they write and draw daily observations about what they see.

8. Have students compare pond and rain forest habitats for frogs. Use two large sheets of butcher paper to compare similarities and differences about the two environments. Display the chart in the classroom or hallway.

Culminating Activity – Have a pet store owner or zoo personnel bring in live reptiles for observation. Have the expert discuss the needs of reptiles and the pros and cons of keeping reptiles as pets.

SOCIAL STUDIES

Geography – Show students a large map of North America. Point out the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans on the map. Next, distribute a blank map of North America with the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. Have students label each of the oceans, then reread the afterword from **ABOUT MOLLUSKS** and have students locate and label the states mentioned and the specific mollusks found there. Older grades could research other continents and mollusks that are found near them.



Design a Pond Map – Give each student a sheet of grid paper like the example to the left. Have students correctly label their papers with the directions: north, south, east, west, northeast, northwest, southeast and southwest. Next have them draw a large pond on their map and decorate it by adding plants and animals. Using their maps, have students create a list of directions to locate specific items on their maps. Next, allow students to work with a partner and exchange maps with each other. They must read the directions aloud and have their partner locate specific items from this information on the map.

MATH

Counting and Subtraction

Going Fishing – (This activity can involve up to five students at one time.)

ITEMS NEEDED: one timer, 5 sheets of paper, 5 fishing rods (sticks), string, 5 small magnets, 25 pictures of fish, a box of paper clips, a large blue bucket (lake). To make the fishing rods, use a stick or yardstick and tie string around one end of the stick. Tape or tie a magnet at the other end. Print out pictures of fish and paste them on index cards. Cut out the pictures and attach a paper clip to the mouth of each fish. Place the fish in the bucket and give each student a fishing rod.

HOW TO PLAY:

Select one student as the counter and one student as the fisherman.

Have all students count the total number of fish in the lake and write the number on their paper.

Explain that the fisherman has 30 seconds to catch as many fish as he can. When the time is up the fisherman will stop fishing. The first fisherman keeps the fish caught, then allows the next fisherman to go until everyone has had a chance to fish. After everyone has gone fishing have students count up the fish they caught and subtract their number from the total number of fish in the lake.

On paper each student needs to write and answer the following questions:

1. How many total fish are in the lake?
2. How many fish did the first fisherman catch?
3. How many fish did the second fisherman catch?
4. How many fish did the third fisherman catch?
5. How many fish did the fourth fisherman catch?
6. How many fish did the fifth fisherman catch?
7. How many fish were left in the lake?

Students must create equations to show each answer. Variations of this activity can be to allow each fisherman to go and then count up the number of fish caught, create the equation, then return the fish to the lake for the next fisherman to go until everyone has had a chance.

Classification of Fish – Explain that you can classify fish into groups in many different ways. Ask students to share different ways. (Examples include color, stripes, polka dots, size, the number of fins on a fish, small or large mouth, etc.). Have students work in small groups and draw pictures of fish by a certain classification. Have each group share their pictures with the entire class and allow students to guess how the fish were classified.

Graphing – Research how much certain animals in a group weigh (i.e. mammals, fish, amphibians, etc.). Find pictures of the different groups and print out. On chart paper paste the pictures at the bottom of the page and create a graph showing the weights of different animals. Discuss. Other graph suggestions: how fast certain animals run, how high an animal can jump, how many young can an animal have per birth/in a lifetime, and parts of the U.S. where certain animals live or specific continents where animals live.

Sorting Frogs – Find a frog coloring sheet from the internet and print out a sheet for each student. Allow students to color their frogs and cut them out. Put students into small groups and have them sort their pictures by a certain attribute. They

must explain how they sorted their frogs. After students have sorted the cards, they may use them to make and extend patterns.

Sorting Animals

Younger Grades: Students sort animal pictures into two groups – mollusks and not mollusks.

Older Grades: Students sort animal pictures according to their animal group – mollusks, mammals, fish, insects, birds, etc.

Addition/Subtraction – Use stickers, stamps, or small pictures of animals to write addition or subtraction number sentences. Older grades could also write story problems involving animals.

Example:



Patterns – Students may use stickers, stamps, or small pictures of sea animals to make patterns. Older grades could label their patterns or make building patterns (example: a, b, a, bb, a, bbb, a, bbbb, etc.).

MUSIC

Melody & Rhythm – Ask students if they have ever been to the beach and if so, have they looked at the waves or watched the fish in the ocean. Discuss with the class how the waves and the fish in the ocean moved. Explain to the class that today they are going to move like the waves and fish in the ocean while listening to music and moving to the beat. Have students form a large circle. Play the song **WIPE OUT** by the Surfaris. Have students start by moving as waves, in different directions. They can try waving a large wave together too. Next have students become fish and move like a fish would move.

VARIATIONS TO MOVEMENT: act like a fierce wave, gentle wave, or loud wave; act like a fish taking a stroll on a Sunday afternoon or a hungry fish looking for something to eat. Express to students that they are to listen to the melody and rhythm and move to the rhythm of the song. They can use different parts of their body for movement and can move in any direction the music and “sea” takes them. Point out the melody and rhythm of the song and how the beat hits hard on certain notes.

Music & Movement

1. Using the songs below, teach the children the words and make up hand movements to go along with the words.
2. Watch a nature video, with the sound off, of different animals moving around in their natural habitat. Have the children copy the movements using both arms and legs.

***Song #1: Five Little Bugs**

(*Sung to the tune of Five Little Ducks*) Author Unknown

Five little bugs on the forest floor

Along came a lizard... SLURP!!!

And then there were four.

Four little bugs on a kapok tree

Along came a lizard... SLURP!!!

And then there were three.

Three little bugs without a single clue...

Two little bugs soaking up the sun...

One little bug knew that he was done...

Now there are none.

***Source:** <http://www.preschooleducation.com/sreptile.shtml>

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Sea Creature Tag – The instructor will choose two predators as the “taggers,” then divide the rest of the class into three different types of sea creatures (examples: rainbow fish, seahorses, and octopuses). The two predators will stand in the middle of the gym floor and the sea creatures will line up on one side of the gym on a black line. The object of the game is for the sea creatures to get to the other side of the gym and back without getting caught (*tagged*) by the two predators. If sea creature’s are tagged, they must sit down (*where they were tagged*) and become seaweed. As seaweed, they will use their arms to help tag other sea creatures running around the gymnasium. For example, the two predators call for all seahorses. All the seahorses must run to the other side of the gym, tag the wall, and then run back. If one of the predators tags a child who is a seahorse then that child has a seat on the floor and becomes seaweed. He then helps the two predators tag other creatures. The predators can rotate which sea creatures they call or can call just one type of creature to run, such as only seahorses, octopuses, or rainbow fish. They can also call “Sea Creatures” and all of the children must run. The game ends when there are only two “Sea Creatures” left who will become the next predators (*taggers*).

***Octopus Tag**

Step 1: Set up a rectangular “ocean” with boundaries marked. Can use rope or chalk to create the boundaries.

Step 2: Have all students who are the “fish” line up at one end. Have one student be the Queen or King Octopus and stand in the middle of the “ocean.”

Step 3: The Queen or King Octopus says, “I am the Octopus, queen/king of all motion. Let’s see if you can cross my ocean!”

Step 4: The fish try to “swim” across the ocean without being tagged by the Octopus. If tagged,

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they become seaweed and have to keep one foot planted where they were tagged. All seaweed can try to reach out and tag the fish swimming by them, thus turning them into Seaweed as well.

Step 4: Once the fish reach the other side, the Octopus repeats the chant and all fish must cross again. The game ends when all the fish become seaweed and the last fish tagged becomes the new Octopus.

***Source:** Octopus Tag Game was found at www.familyfun.com.

ART

Animal Puzzles – Make puzzles out of old magazines with animals on the pages.

Snake Creations – Prepare a snake cutout for students and have them glue on different colors of pre-cut diamond shapes in a pattern to make a replica of a diamondback rattlesnake. Other shapes could be added to create new patterns. Display on a bulletin board.

Rainforest Mural – Make a class mural on a bulletin board or wall by drawing a background of the rainforest with trees, rocks, water, plants, etc. Have students choose an animal that lives in the rainforest, then draw and cut out their picture. Have students answer the following questions on a large index card about their animal: Name of animal, size, lifespan, poisonous/not poisonous, diurnal/nocturnal, predator/nonpredator, what it eats, how it protect itself, where it goes to keep warm or cool, where it would go to hide from predators, and does it hibernate? Have them place their pictures and information on the mural.

HOME PROJECT/EXTRA CREDIT

(*Higher Order Thinking Activities based on Bloom’s Taxonomy*) Have students choose one project below and give them a time frame to complete it. Each project can have varying points of credit because some will take longer to complete than others. This activity can be adapted to other books in the series.

1. Pretend you are a frog and describe the world from your point of view. Draw a picture from this vantage point. (Evaluation)
2. Design an electronic slide show presentation to show what you learned about amphibians. (Synthesis)
3. If you could be any kind of amphibian, what would you be and why? E-mail your answer to your teacher. (Evaluation)
4. Using what you have learned about amphibians, design the perfect amphibian that could not be eaten or caught by predators, and has an easier time catching their prey. Draw or make a model of this creature. (Synthesis)
5. Build a model of an amphibian habitat. (Application)

RELATED INTERNET SITES

www.kids.discovery.com
www.sciencenewsforkids.com
www.kidskonnect.com/Fish/Fishhome
www.castforkids.org

RELATED READING

Check out all the **ABOUT...series** and **ABOUT HABITATS series** by Cathryn and John Sill. New books appear each year.

ABOUT...series includes: *About Amphibians, About Arachnids, About Birds, About Crustaceans, About Fish, About Insects, About Mammals, About Marsupials, About Mollusks, About Penguins, About Reptiles, About Rodents and About Raptors.*

ABOUT HABITATS...series includes: *About Deserts, About Mountains, About Wetlands, and About Grasslands.*

ABOUT THE AUTHOR AND ILLUSTRATOR



Cathryn and John Sill are the dynamic team behind the *About...Series* as well as the new *About Habitats* series. Cathryn is a graduate of Western Carolina State University and a retired elementary school teacher. John is a prize-winning and widely published wildlife artist who holds a BS in Wildlife Biology from North Carolina State University. In their school presentation **THE MAKING OF A CHILDREN'S SERIES**, the Sills cover the process of creating a book from original idea to final book, including planning, journaling, researching, writing, editing, proofing, and illustrating. Cathryn emphasizes the writing; she shows materials from actual projects and talks about the printing process. John gives a brief demonstration of the steps he goes through to illustrate books. This program is packed with fun examples of their past work experiences and facts about the creatures featured in their books. The Sills live in Franklin, North Carolina.

(Intended audience: Grades K-5) E

Peachtree Teachers Guide for the *ABOUT...series* was prepared by Denise Bush, Kim Gorius-Zies, Jana Braughton, Peggy Zeuschner, Melissa Cropper, Kenya Kilpatrick, and Kenyette Kilpatrick.

We have authors and illustrators who visit schools and libraries!

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Peachtree's Teachers Guide: *ABOUT...series*

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Updated 08.10.10

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Vocabulary Word-Study Sheet

Write one vocabulary word in the middle of the cube and fill in the boxes. Keep all your word-study sheets in a vocabulary notebook.

Write the definition in your own words.

Write the definition from the dictionary.

Write the vocabulary word.

Write about your personal experience with the word.

Draw a picture of the word.