

Elementary Animal Classification

Summary

An early Elementary exploration into the simple classification of different animals. Included in this lesson are mammals, birds, fish, reptiles, amphibians, insects, mollusks and spiders.

Time Frame

5 class periods of 45 minutes each

Group Size

Large Groups

Life Skills

Thinking & Reasoning

Materials

magazines containing pictures of various animals in all groups; construction paper; scissors; glue; access to internet; bulletin board for finished work.

Background for Teachers

This course is a fairly basic unit. The background of animal interaction during a youngster's life up to the second grade will enable him/her to be able to understand many parts of this lesson but will also present many new ideas to them.

Intended Learning Outcomes

After this series of lessons, the child will know eight basic animal groups, be able to tell differences and similarities between animals in different groups, and identify the different groups through knowledge of animal characteristics, changes, and life cycles of each group.

Instructional Procedures

A good introduction to this unit would be to ask the children if they have a pet-what kind, how big, where does it live, what does it need to live. Do they know of other pets that other people have? This should probably include dogs, cats, possibly hamsters and gerbils, fish, lizards, even snakes or insects. Write the names of each different animal on the board. Using the list of animals you have developed with student response, ask if they could help you to try to gather animals that are alike in some ways together. Make groups of very general characteristics i.e. four legged animals, animals with fur, animals that live in water, animals with scales, animals with feathers, animals that lay eggs, animals with shells. Do not try to define the groups more specifically. Have a bulletin board area free for an ongoing and changeable display. Using magazines with pictures of animals, have children cut out the picture and mount it on a piece of colored paper. This can be done at home and brought to school, done at school, or done with pictures found on the internet and copied and mounted. Encourage children to find many different kinds of animals with examples of all of the groups you made with them in step 1. If possible, place the pictures on the floor in random order. Allow the children to group them together according to whatever method they choose-i.e. animals with four legs, animals with fur, animals that live in water, animals that lay eggs, etc. This should be loose and not too defined. More definition and direction will come with the other lessons. Using these pictures and the children's definitions of the groups, pin, staple or tape the pictures on the bulletin board. This

is the first stage of the bulletin board display. Display the word MAMMAL. Define mammal as an animal with these characteristics: hair or fur, breathes with lungs, babies are born alive, mothers feed babies with milk, babies look like their parent. In winter, some mammals hibernate. Display the word FISH. Define fish as an animal that has scales to cover its body, lives in water, uses gills to breathe, and lays eggs. In winter, fish slow down their body processes to survive in the cold water. Look at your bulletin. Are there any animal pictures that fit into the group MAMMALS? FISH? Move pictures of any animals they say. Have them displayed around the word fish or the word mammal- Discuss ways that mammals and fish are the same. Discuss some of the ways that mammals and fish are different. Could you put this (mammal) into the fish group? Can you put a fish in the mammal group? What about dolphins or whales? Conclusion-Fish and mammals are separate types of animals and are not in the same group. There are some similarities, but more differences between them that make them separate groups. Display the word BIRD. Define a bird as an animal that has feathers on its body, has wings, breathes with lungs, and lays eggs. In winter, birds often migrate to a warmer area, then return in the spring when the weather warms up. Display the word MOLLUSK. Define mollusk as an animal that often has a shell outside their body, has a soft body, and lays eggs, and many times lives in water. Look at the pictures the children have prepared and find animals that seem to belong in these groups. Move them to be together with the name of the group by the pictures. Discuss whether a bird could be included in the mollusk group. Could a mollusk be in the bird group? Each of these types of animals is so different that they could not be in the same group. They must have separate groups. Display the word REPTILE. Define reptile as an animal that has scales on its body, lives on the land, breathes with lungs, lays eggs with a thick leathery shell, and babies hatch looking just like their parent. In the winter, reptiles hibernate. Display the word AMPHIBIAN. Define amphibian as an animal that lives part of its life in the water and part out of the water. They change a lot as they grow from baby to adult. They lay eggs. In winter, Amphibians hibernate. Look at the pictures the children prepared and choose the animals the children see as being in these groups. Are there any things that are the same in these two groups? Are there any differences in these two groups? Do they each need their own separate group, or should they be together in one group? Allow for discussion. Display the word INSECT. Define insect as an animal with six legs, a hard outer covering on its body, antennae, egg laying, and babies often look very different from the parent. In winter, most insects die, leaving their eggsacs to hatch in the spring. They change as they grow. Display the word SPIDER. Define spider as an animal with 8 legs, a body with a hard covering around it, spins webs to catch food, egg laying, with babies that look just like the parent. Most spiders die in the winter, also leaving their eggsacs to hatch in the spring. Are there things that are the same with these two types of animals? Allow for discussion. Are there things that are different? Allow for discussion. Should these two types of animals be in the same group, or in separate groups? With all the different groups defined and some of them separated into groups, go back through the groups that have been made and look at each group. See if the children will change their minds about which group the animal in the picture belongs to. Any questions should be written down. Have some of the children look up the animal in a child's encyclopedia or other reference book. Put any animals they question in the group they belong in after they explore the reasons why. Before class, take down two or three pictures in each group and place one picture of another group in with them. Have the class look at one group of the pictures you prepared previous to the lesson. Which ones belong together and which ones don't? Discuss why the animal is different from the others and why it is alike. Go through the different groups with similar discussions.

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