# POLAR



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Language and Literacy

# Alphabet Ice Painting: Themed Alphabet

EZ.015.LA.1001-1002

**Activity Type:**
Free Choice

**Objectives:**
Students will identify uppercase and lowercase letters.
Students will represent letters in a variety of ways.

Each themed classroom includes a magnetic alphabet. A featured activity will be included with each themed magnetic alphabet. Students reinforce letter recognition by painting ice letters, making learning interactive and hands-on. As they paint, students identify each letter and search for the same letter in various locations around the classroom, which enhances their letter familiarity, special awareness, and observational skills.

## WHAT TO DO

1. Before setting up the experience, fill the alphabet mold with water and freeze overnight. Once letters are frozen, they can be placed inside the sensory bin.
2. Place the washable paint inside the art tray and encourage students to “paint” the ice. As they are painting the ice, you can draw attention to each letter and reiterate other locations in the classroom to find letters. Encourage students to spell their name and other word bank words.

## PLAY TIPS

- Mix the water with food coloring before freezing. Once the letters are frozen, students can “paint” on paper with the colored ice, describing how the letter changes as it melts.
- Encourage students to mix primary colors on the ice and describe their observations.

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Mathematics

# Rolling Arctic Blasts: Number Cards

EZ.015.LA.1003-1004

**Activity Type:**
Free Choice or Small Group

**Objectives:**
Students will recognize numbers 1-10.
Students will develop one-to-one correspondence.

Each themed classroom includes themed number cards. A featured activity will be included with each set of themed number cards. Students begin to develop one-to-one correspondence by participating in frequent number recognition activities. Using dice, students can make observations about the number they roll compared to the fixed numbers on a math game board.

## WHAT TO DO

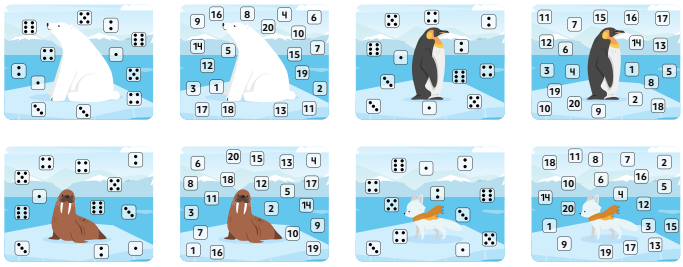
Provide students with a game board, counters, and a die. Students can work alone, in pairs, or as a small group with 1 die roller. Have the die roller roll the die and call out the number. Students find the corresponding number on the game board and place a math counter on the number. Continue until the game board has been filled.

## PLAY TIPS

- Try using traditional dice with dots rather than numerals.
- Use the number cards to reinforce the number rolled on the die. Ask students to find other places around the classroom with the rolled number.

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Mathematics

# Counting and Measurement

EZ.015.LA.1005

**Activity Type:**
Free Choice and Small Group

**Objectives:**
Students will count items up to 10 with one-to-one correspondence.
Students will begin to add to and take away items.
Students will begin to use nonstandard measurement tools.

Students use counting manipulatives, non-standard forms of measurement like Unifix Cubes, and themed counters, to practice one-to-one correspondence and early practices of measurement using themed math cards. Measurement can be an abstract concept for young children. Manipulatives like blocks, cubes, or cups provide a tangible way to understand concepts like length, and height. By physically comparing and ordering objects, they can build a foundation for understanding measurement units later.

## WHAT TO DO

After modeling how to use the mats, place the counting and measurement mats in a learning center as a teacher-directed or student-directed experience. As a teacher-directed experience, guide students to use manipulatives to show one-to-one correspondence and length. As a student-directed experience, allow students to freely explore the manipulatives and mats.

## PLAY TIPS

- Use the math manipulatives to reinforce sorting by color and type. Encourage students to count how many are in each category. Encourage students to think of other ways to sort the manipulatives.
- Ask students to use the manipulatives to create patterns. Create simple pattern mats (ABAB, AABB, ABB) for additional support and guidance.

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Mathematics

# Making Patterns

EZ.015.LA.1006

**Activity Type:**
Free Choice and Small Group

**Objectives:**
Students will recognize common 2-D shapes.
Students will sort by features and attributes.
Students will recognize patterns.

Students explore patterns and properties of shapes as they create whole images using pattern blocks and themed pattern block mats. Pattern blocks boost students' ability to think critically, make predictions, and test their predictions.

## WHAT TO DO

Pattern block mats and pattern blocks work well as a self-directed activity. The intuitive nature requires little direction. Place the mats and pattern blocks out for students to explore freely, encouraging students to match the pattern block shape and color to the correlating space on the whole image.

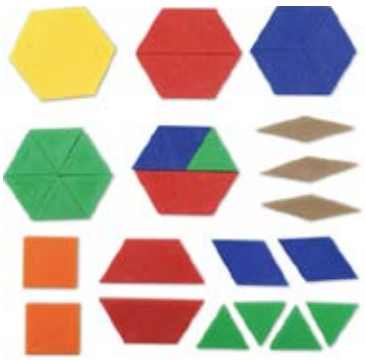
## PLAY TIPS

- You can make your own pattern block cards by simply tracing pattern blocks on paper. Create a design using the pattern blocks and place the design on paper. Trace around the outer edge of your design and allow students to fill in the design with pattern blocks.
- Have students take a two-handed scoop of pattern blocks and sort by shape or color. Use graphing paper or a graphing mat to visualize the sorting process.
- Students can use mirrors to create patterns and make observations in the reflections. Ask students to describe what they are seeing as they create patterns in the mirrors.

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Language and Literacy

# Pre-Writing Line Tracing

EZ.015.LA.1007

**Activity Type:**
Free Choice and Small Group

**Objectives:**
Students will build pre-writing skills by tracing curved, notched, and zigzag lines. Students will recognize directionality in print and writing.

Students work on emergent literacy and transition to letter formations by tracing lines, patterns, and shapes with a theme in a dry erase, reusable format. To connect to fine motor development, students are encouraged to add detail. Themed templates are included for tracing.

## WHAT TO DO

1. Place the dry erase templates in the writing center. Students have the choice to use dry erase markers on the dry erase templates or place paper on the template and trace using a pencil/crayon. Remind students to start from left to right and top to bottom.
2. Encourage students to make their own tracing templates using the dry erase templates as a guide. Students can work on tracing shapes, lines, and numbers by repetitively tracing the same shape, line, or number using a different color crayon each time.

## PLAY TIPS

- Include the themed tracing patterns in the writing center to align with other free-choice writing exercises. Using a clipboard will help students control the writing utensil.
- Tape the template vertically, on an easel or teacher board, to encourage the strengthening of fine motor development.

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Language and Literacy

# Syllable Awareness

EZ.015.LA.1009

**Activity Type:**
Free Choice and Small Group

**Objectives:**
Students will understand and use recognizable and new vocabulary.
Students will begin to blend and segment syllables in words.

Phonological awareness is the ability to recognize and manipulate the sounds of spoken language. It is an essential skill in the process of learning to read and write. Young children participate in various sound activities to build sound awareness. Recognizing that words can be broken down into syllables or units of sound is a phonological skill.

## WHAT TO DO

Introduce the vocabulary cards as a guided activity or free choice center activity. Have students clap the number of beats on the vocabulary card and indicate the number by moving the clip.

## PLAY TIPS

- Provide simple instruments to reinforce the number of syllables. Rather than clap the number of syllables in a word, students can shake the number of syllables.
- Students can use their body to emphasize syllables in a word. Have students jump up and down, tap their toes, march in place, do jumping jacks, or tap their head to count syllables.

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Language and Literacy

# Rhyming Awareness

EZ.015.LA.1010

**Activity Type:**
Free Choice and Small Group

**Objectives:**
Students will understand and use recognizable and new vocabulary.
Students will begin to recognize rhyming words.

Phonological awareness is the ability to recognize and manipulate the sounds of spoken language. It is an essential skill in the process of learning to read and write. Young children participate in various sound activities to build sound awareness. Rhyming activities help children listen for ending sounds in words, a precursor to phonics activities in late preschool.

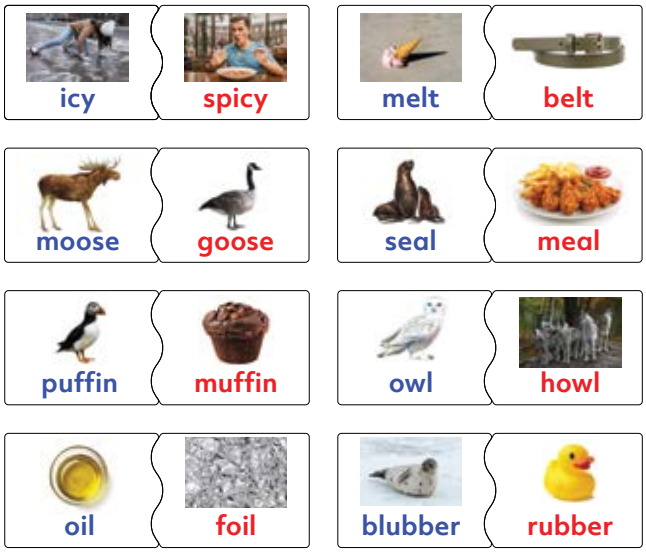
## WHAT TO DO

Introduce the rhyming cards as a small group or free choice activity. Say the words on the cards together and help students to identify the rhyming pairs. Students can connect the rhyming pairs by placing the cards side by side on the table.

## PLAY TIPS

- Play rhyming words with body parts. Have students touch their head, nose, arm, etc. and think of a word that rhymes with the body part.
- Play, *I Spy with My Little Eye*, using target items in the classroom. For example, decide on something in the classroom, like *door* as the target word. Then state, "I spy with my little eye something that rhymes with *floor*." The students look around the classroom for something that rhymes with floor.

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Language and Literacy

# Onset and Rime Awareness

EZ.015.LA.1011

**Activity Type:**
Free Choice and Small Group

**Objectives:**
Students will understand and use recognizable and new vocabulary.
Students will begin to identify and segment one-syllable words.

Phonological awareness is the ability to recognize and manipulate the sounds of spoken language. It is an essential skill in the process of learning to read and write. Young children participate in various sound activities to build sound awareness. Onset and rime activities help children identify patterns in words.

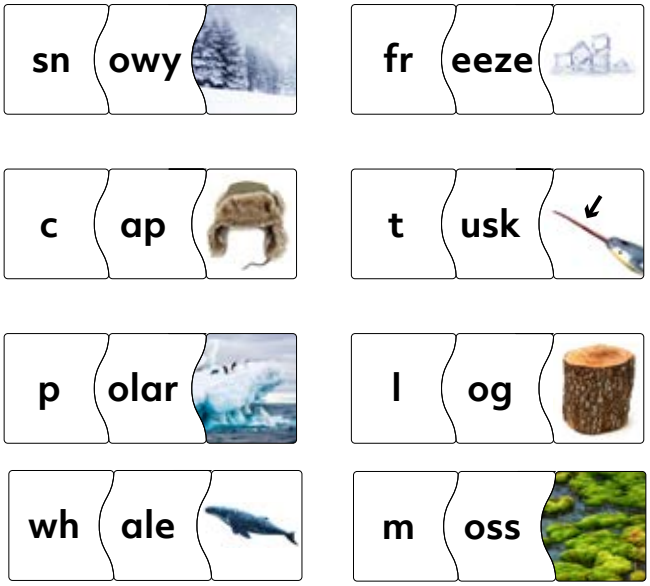
## WHAT TO DO

Introduce the picture puzzles as a small group or free choice activity. As a small group exercise, model saying the onset together, the rime together, and the picture that identifies the word. As a free choice exercise, have the students put the pieces together to create a word.

## PLAY TIP

Attach beginning and ending sounds to a set (2) of large dice. Have students roll the dice and say the word created, putting the onset and rime together.

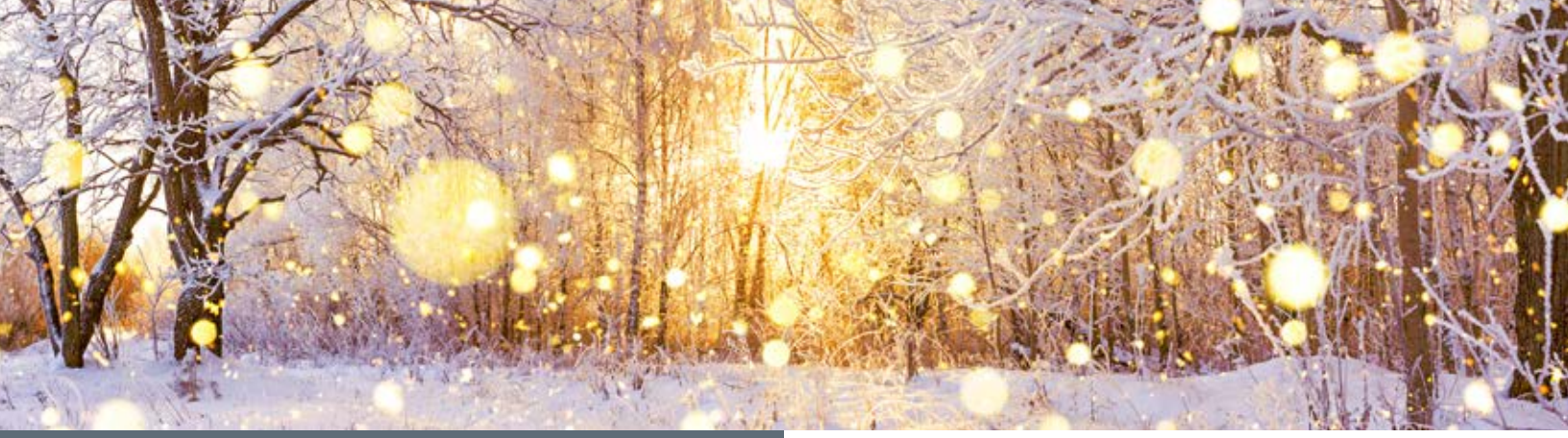
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Language and Literacy

# Winter Words: Word Bank Words

EZ.015.LA.1012

**Activity Type:**
Large Group and Small Group

**Objectives:**
Students will recognize beginning sounds in words.
Students will demonstrate understanding of print directionality.

Each themed classroom includes a word bank. A featured activity will be included with each themed word bank. Students identify and begin to recognize common winter-themed words as they place a marker (bingo chip, manipulative, etc.) on the word or picture when called out by the educator. Using the winter word cards to search for matching items around the classroom strengthens students' vocabulary and reading skills.

## WHAT TO DO

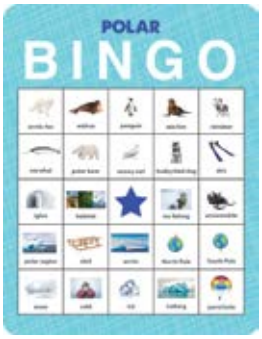
1. Pass out the winter word cards and go over the words and pictures on the cards. Explain that each box will be covered with a chip as an item is called out. A box may be covered once and some boxes may be left over.
2. As you call out items from the caller cards, be sure students are using the chips to cover an item. Decide what constitutes a full card and remind students that a full line is vertical, horizontal, or diagonal.

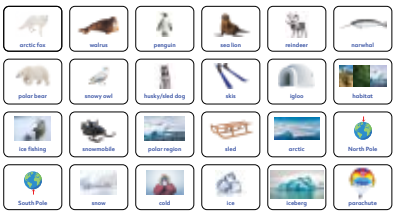
## PLAY TIPS

- Reading and reciting new vocabulary regularly helps students learn about word families and teaches students the sound of the English language. Share the word bank words during group time often; provide a rhyming word with each and ask students to think of any additional rhyming words.
- Photocopy the winter word Bingo cards and cut out the individual photos/words. Place them around the room and encourage students to find the matching photo using the Bingo winter word cards.

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Social and Emotional

# Penguin Problems

EZ.015.LA.1013

**Activity Type:**
Large Group and Small Group

**Objective:**
Students will identify emotions and express feelings.

After reading *Penguin Problems* by Jory John, students review the problems the penguin has shared. Students can discuss the difference between a problem and negative thinking and share things they are thankful for on a gratitude chart. Understanding and naming emotions is the first step towards managing them effectively.

## WHAT TO DO

1. Ask students to name some emotions and describe what they know about emotions. Explain that emotions are the way we feel. Practice showing emotions using facial and body expressions (i.e. show me what sadness looks like). Read *Penguin Problems* by Jory John, stopping throughout to name the emotions the penguin is feeling.
2. Ask students to think about the things they are grateful for. Use the dry erase gratitude chart to write/draw responses. Continue to add items as students reflect on their gratitude.

## PLAY TIPS

- Start each day with a feelings check-in. Place the feelings meter close to the classroom door or morning meeting area and have students point to the emoji that most closely matches how they're feeling.
- After creating gratitude charts, move toward the idea of creating weekly compliment circles. Arrange students and educators in a circle. Start by giving a compliment to a student to model the activity. The student who receives the compliment then gives a compliment to another friend, and so on. Students can sit criss-cross once they receive a compliment.

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Language and Literacy

# Does It Belong?

EZ.015.LA.1014

**Activity Type:**
Free Choice and Small Group

**Objectives:**
Students will use familiar and new vocabulary words.
Students will sort items that are the same and different.

Students sort a variety of recreation and clothing flashcards based on region of use. Students can have educator-led discussions about where, when, and how to use the items, building vocabulary around the polar regions. Sorting activities reinforce vocabulary and provide the opportunity to introduce new words.

## WHAT TO DO

Introduce the sorting cards as an educator-led or student-led activity. Students can sort recreation items and articles of clothing by season, weather, region of use, and other educator or student-initiated categories.

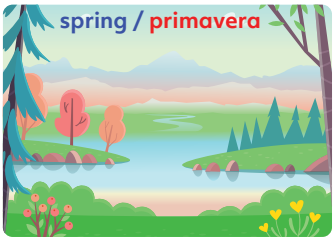
## PLAY TIPS

- Ask students to think of other items that might fit into a specific category that are not included with the sorting cards.
- Write down any new or infrequently used words associated with the polar region on chart paper. Students can begin to create a polar region word wall which can be referenced often during activities and conversations.

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Language and Literacy

# Snowflake Drawings

EZ.015.LA.1015

**Activity Type:**
Free Choice

**Objectives:**
Students will explore marks, letters, lines, and symbols as forms of writing.
Students will share the meaning of their writing.

Children benefit from the opportunity to practice fine motor skills and finger dexterity in multiple ways throughout the day. A vertical light table (light box) can help students practice the procedural knowledge that is essential in emergent writing. Snowflake and other polar related transparencies provide a start for the drawing, scribbling, and mock handwriting stages.

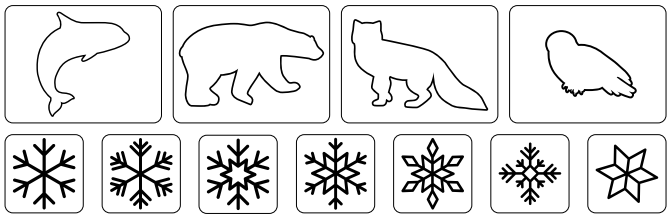
## WHAT TO DO

Place the tabletop light table, tracing transparencies, and dry erase markers on a table for a center-based experience. Students practice tracing strokes and lines to help refine pre-writing skills. Students can draw letters, words, and images of their own on the open-ended transparencies.

## PLAY TIPS

- No two snowflakes are the same, but each snowflake is symmetrical. Have students make snowflakes out of strips of paper, focusing on the symmetrical nature.
- Ask students to measure the snowflakes using standard and non-standard forms of measurement and make comparisons.
- Wrap the tabletop light table with plastic and drip colored water over salted ice and watch as the colors mix and match into a gradient.

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Science

# Parachute

EZ.015.LA.1016

**Activity Type:**
Free Choice, Small Group, and Large Group

**Objectives:**
Students will construct parachutes out of open-ended items and make observations about movement.
Students will test and re-test their designs.

Parachutes help supplies and materials land safely in polar regions. The parachute material traps air and slows down movement. Students can create a variety of parachutes using different material, test their parachute, make observations about speed, and draw conclusions. This activity introduces fundamental engineering concepts. Students learn how to design and build a structure (the parachute) to accomplish a specific goal (slowing down the descent).

## WHAT TO DO

1. Using the parachute photos as a guide, tell students that parachutes are used to slow moving objects. Ask students the following questions: “Where have you seen a parachute before?” and “How does a parachute slowly move objects?” Ask students to construct a parachute using the open-ended items. Students can construct parachutes individually, in a small group, or as a large group. Attach a small object (counting bear or similar) to the bottom of the parachute and test each parachute from a predetermined drop height (using the tape measure). As an added challenge, create a target on the ground using paper or tape.
2. Make observations and talk about how the parachutes fall to the ground as they are dropped. Discuss the variables in parachute design and drop, including material and drop height. These observations and discussion help students reflect, redesign, and test again.

## PLAY TIPS

- Try dropping the parachutes from different heights and timing as they fall. What designs are most effective?
- Ask students to make containers to hold payloads using a paper cup or other small container. How does the added weight affect the parachute’s speed?
- Bring in a tabletop fan and make comparisons between the addition of wind and no wind. Ask students how the parachute moves differently with the addition of wind.

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Science

# Arctic Animal Life Cycle Sequencing

EZ.015.LA.1017

**Activity Type:**
Free Choice and Small Group

**Objectives:**
Students will make discoveries about animal life cycles.
Students will apply new information to activities and experiences.

A life cycle is a series of changes in living things from birth to adulthood. All living things, from plants to animals, have a life cycle. Students can learn about the transformation occurring during animal life cycles by manipulating life cycle sequencing cards. Sequencing activities promote language development. Children learn and practice vocabulary related to order, such as "first," "next," "then," "last," and "after."

## WHAT TO DO

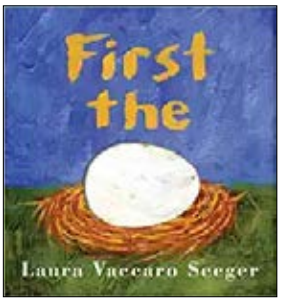
1. Read several books about animal life cycles such as *First the Egg* by Laura Vaccaro Seeger and *Little Penguin: The Emperor of Antarctica* by Jonathan London, emphasizing the changes throughout the text.
2. Introduce the life cycle sequencing cards during small group or as a center-based activity. Students can arrange the cards on the activity board, taking into account new information from the non-fiction read alouds.

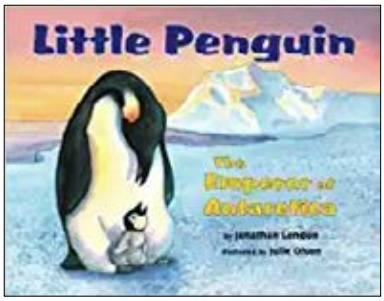
## PLAY TIPS

- Photocopy the life cycle cards, cut out each photo, and staple together to create a flip book. Each student can make an individual flip book to take home and share with families.
- Help students make connections to the human life cycle and the stages of human development.

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Science

# Camouflage Coats

EZ.015.LA.1018

**Activity Type:**
Free Choice

**Objectives:**
Students will investigate the connection between animal characteristics and their habitats.
Students will explore scientific vocabulary.

Many arctic animals and birds have white fur or feathers, which provides camouflage against predators in the snowy landscape, enhancing their survival. White fur also acts as an effective insulator because it lacks pigment, trapping air for added warmth. By exploring arctic animals, white insulators like quilt batting, paper strips, and tissue paper, and comparing them to other animals, students can investigate the concept of camouflage and insulation, gaining insight into how these adaptations help animals thrive in extreme environments.

## WHAT TO DO

1. Create an arctic ecosystem in the inflatable pool. Fill the pool with cotton balls, white paper strips, and crumpled white tissue paper. Add the arctic animal photos and arctic animal figures. Ask students the following questions: “What do they notice about the animals held up to the arctic scene?,” “Why is it important for the arctic animals to blend into (camouflage) with their environment?,” and “Which animals camouflage the most?”
2. Provide opportunities for students to use the arctic animals, arctic photos, and arctic scene in play-based situations.

## PLAY TIPS

- Participate in camouflage outfit day. Pick a habitat mural in the classroom and encourage students to come dressed for school in an outfit best to camouflage in an arctic scene.
- Ask students to look for examples of camouflage in the classroom murals.

## WHAT YOU’LL NEED




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Fine Arts

# Life in Antarctica

EZ.015.LA.1019

**Activity Type:**
Small Group

**Objective:**
Students will recall and recreate habitats through artistic representations.

Students learn about life in other regions by reading fiction and non-fiction books in the classroom. Students can engage in dramatic play after reading books using arctic related materials and props, reenacting scenes and creating new situations and stories. Through role-playing, children ask questions, give instructions, and engage in conversations. Role-playing also strengthens turn-taking abilities and confidence in expressing themselves.

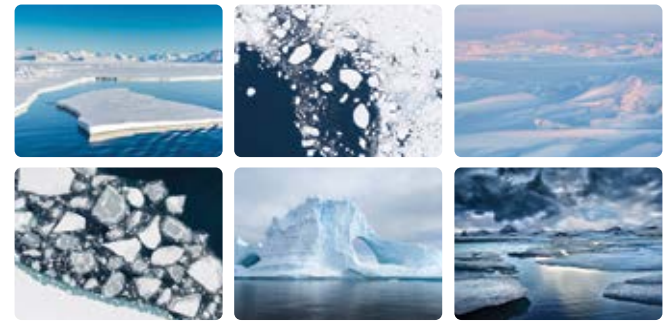
## WHAT TO DO

1. Read *Dreamy Antarctica* by Maya Sara Karthik, discussing life in the arctic as you read each page. Make comparisons to life at home and in their own community. After reading the story, review items people need to live and survive in the arctic.
2. Introduce students to the dramatic play items and arctic scenery photos. Encourage students to build igloos, have an arctic picnic after ice fishing, and observe arctic animals. Students can re-enact scenes from the read aloud or create new scenes from their understandings.

## PLAY TIP

Add additional materials as the play continues, such as white felt to simulate snow and cold weather clothing.

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Mathematics

# Polar Prints

EZ.015.LA.1020

**Activity Type:**
Free Choice

**Objectives:**
Students will make comparisons between print sizes and comparisons to human prints.
Students will create their own prints.

Students practice fine motor skills as they trace laminated polar animal prints and compare them to their own handprints and footprints, helping them develop precision and control. They can also use the prints as sorting mats, matching animal manipulatives to the corresponding print, which reinforces recognition and classification skills.

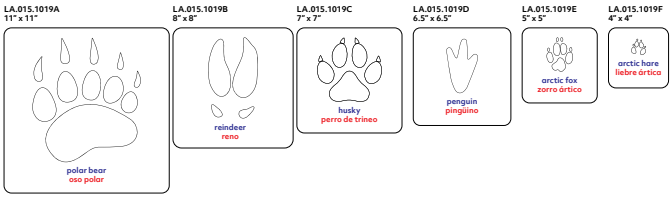
## WHAT TO DO

Place the polar prints, dry erase markers, and erasers in a free-choice center. Encourage students to trace their hand over the prints and make comparisons. Ask students to make comparisons between arctic animal prints.

## PLAY TIPS

- Have students trace their hand onto a piece of paper and make comparisons between each other.
- Ask students to use non-standard and standard forms of measurement to make comparisons between the prints. Encourage students to record the measurement next to the corresponding print.

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Science

# Ice Rescue

EZ.015.LA.1021

**Activity Type:**
Free Choice and Small Group

**Objectives:**
Students will investigate the fundamental properties of water.
Students will develop fine motor skills.

Students observe and describe what happens to ice when left out in room temperature. Educator freezes a variety of polar region animals in ice for exploration in the sensory table. Topics of conversation can include temperature of materials, animal similarities and differences, and the importance of caring for our planet. Experimenting with the materials allows students to make predictions, observe results, and ask questions. Through this play, they gain a deeper understanding of scientific concepts.

## WHAT TO DO

Freeze the arctic animals in a bowl(s) of water with liquid watercolor and place in the Flora and Fauna Sensory Table. Provide students with a bowl of warm water, eyedroppers, and tweezers and encourage students to investigate ways to melt the ice. Can they melt the ice without using water?

## PLAY TIPS

- Freeze water with arctic animals (or other items) in various shaped containers such as milk cartons, plastic food containers, disposable gloves, balloons, and ice cube molds. Ask students to observe how the ice melts differently depending on shape.
- Freeze water with items found outside like pinecones, leaves, rocks, and feathers.
- Encourage students to make predictions and observations about melting by adding salt, flour, and cornmeal to the ice. Students can have discussions about chemical reactions.

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