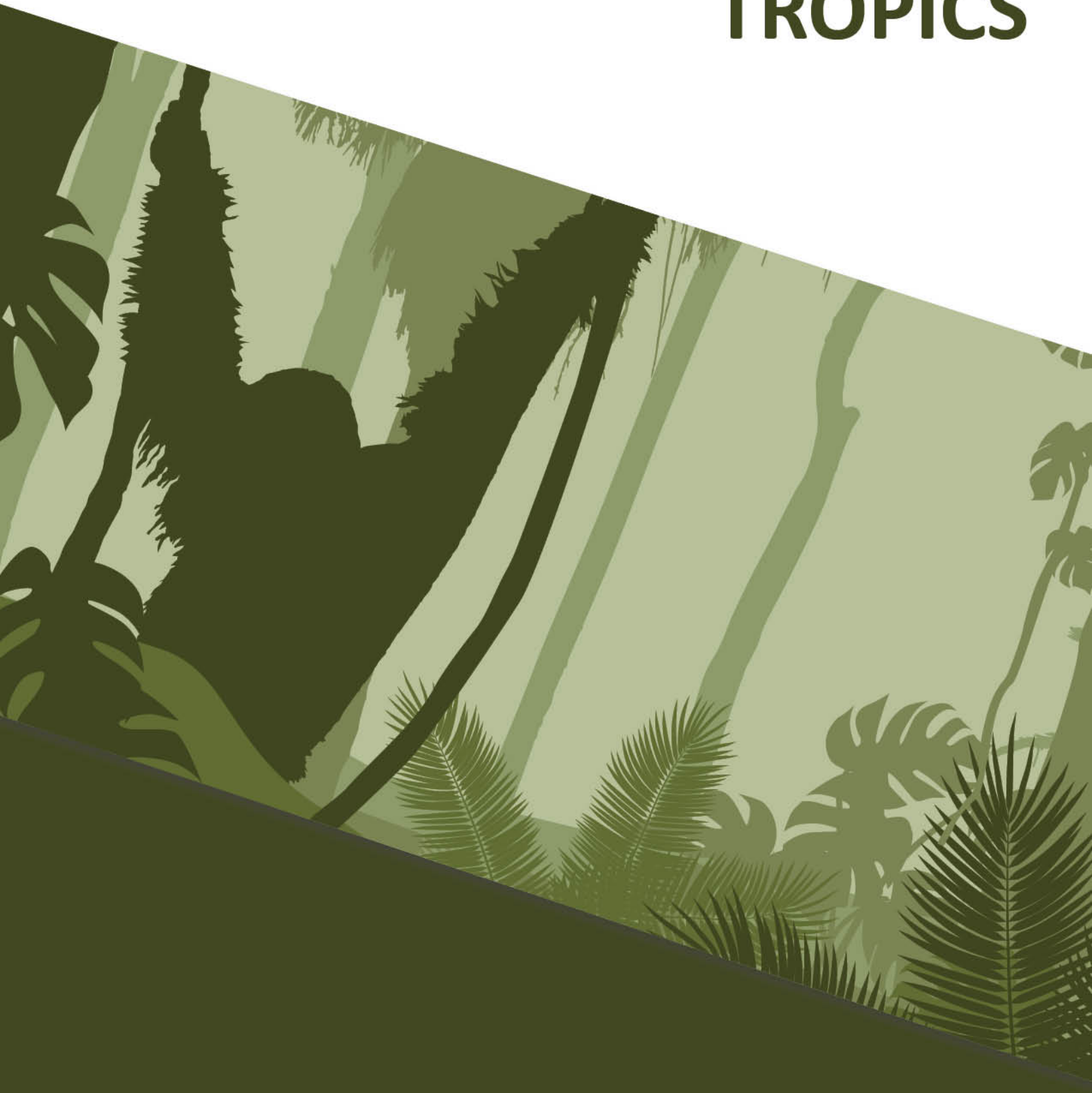
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Language and Literacy

Pipe Cleaner Letters: Themed Alphabet

EZ.016.LA.1001-1002

Activity Type:
Free Choice and Small Group

Objectives:
Students will identify and recognize uppercase and lowercase letters.
Students will recreate letters in various ways.

Each themed classroom includes a magnetic alphabet. A featured activity will be included with each themed magnetic alphabet. Using pipe cleaners, Wikki Stix, and yarn to recreate letters is a fun and tactile way to explore letter formation. These flexible materials allow students to bend and shape them into the outlines of letters, reinforcing their understanding of letter structure and improving fine motor skills. This hands-on activity engages students in a creative process, making learning letters more interactive.

WHAT TO DO

1. Cut the pipe cleaners in a variety of sizes and model how to create letters using the pipe cleaners; include a demonstration on how to bend the pipe cleaners to make curves such as in the letters Cc and Dd. Place the magnetic letters (as a letter guide) and pipe cleaners in the writing center for students to manipulate, guiding as needed.
2. Include Wikki Stix, yarn, and paper straws as manipulatives, depending on students' ability level. Cut the other manipulatives accordingly.

PLAY TIPS

- Include other ways to promote emergent writing such as using the manipulatives (pipe cleaners, Wikki Stix, yarn, or paper straws) to write their name or word bank words.
- Provide tagboard or cardboard and glue, and have students arrange and glue their manipulatives to form letters, creating personalized letter cards.

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Mathematics

Wildlife Graphing: Number Cards

EZ.016.LA.1003-1004

Activity Type:
Free Choice

Objectives:
Students will recognize numbers and identify numbers.
Students will compare data on a graph.

Each themed classroom includes themed number cards. A featured activity will be included with each set of themed number cards. Graphs and charts provide a visual way for students to organize and interpret data. Using a dual-sided graphing mat and Venn diagram, students can tally their favorite animals from the sorting bins and compare the physical features of different animals. Number cards can be used to reinforce one-to-one correspondence, helping students connect numerical values to the data they collect and analyze.

WHAT TO DO

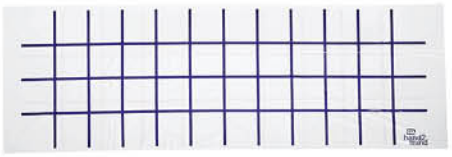
1. Introduce the object graph to the students, explaining that it is a tool for comparing quantities of items. Encourage the use of math vocabulary such as *most, least,* and *same* during the activity. Demonstrate how to use the object graph to represent the class's favorite animals as a group. Additionally, use the themed number cards to help students practice one-to-one correspondence.
2. Introduce the Venn diagram to the students. The Venn diagram can be used to compare two animals (or any other items), writing the similarities between the animals in the middle.

PLAY TIPS

- As a challenge for older students, provide them with 1-inch graph paper. Label the vertical axis with numbers 1 through 10 and give each student a set of Unifix Cubes. Have them sort the cubes by color and use mathematical vocabulary to make comparisons and observations.
- Print out pictures of animals; include the animal's identification. Students can graph by animal type, animal color, and by the first letter in the animal's identification.

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Mathematics

Counting and Measurement

EZ.016.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.

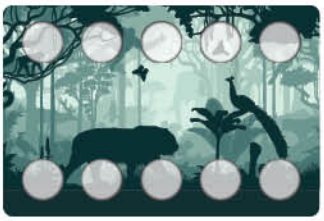
PLAY TIPS

- 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.016.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.

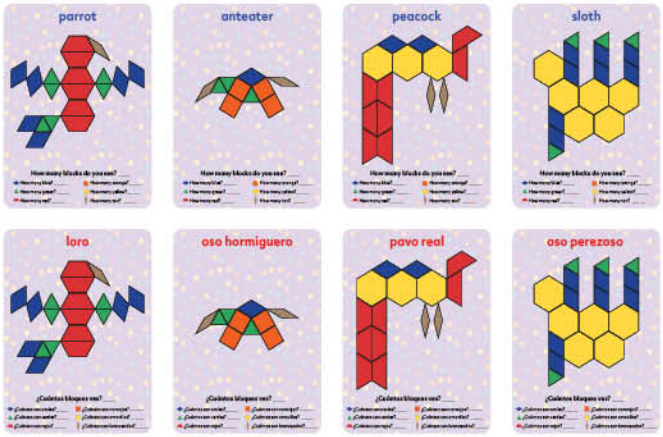
WHAT TO DO

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.

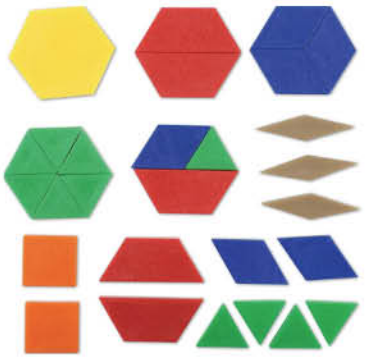
PLAY TIPS

- 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.016.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.016.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.016.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.

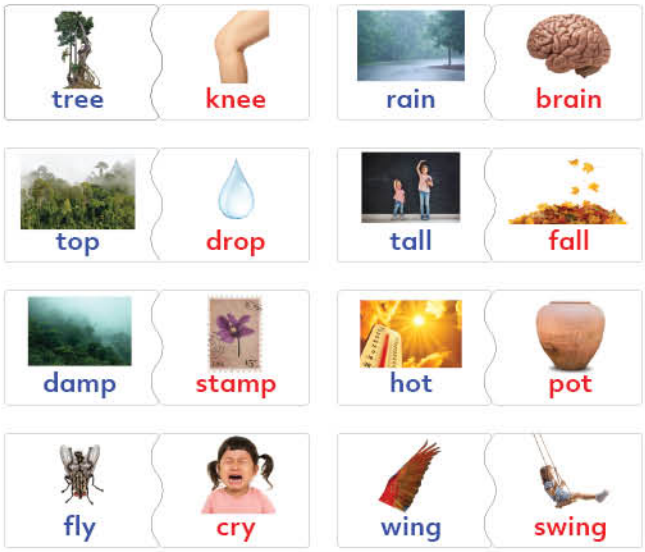
WHAT TO DO

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.016.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.

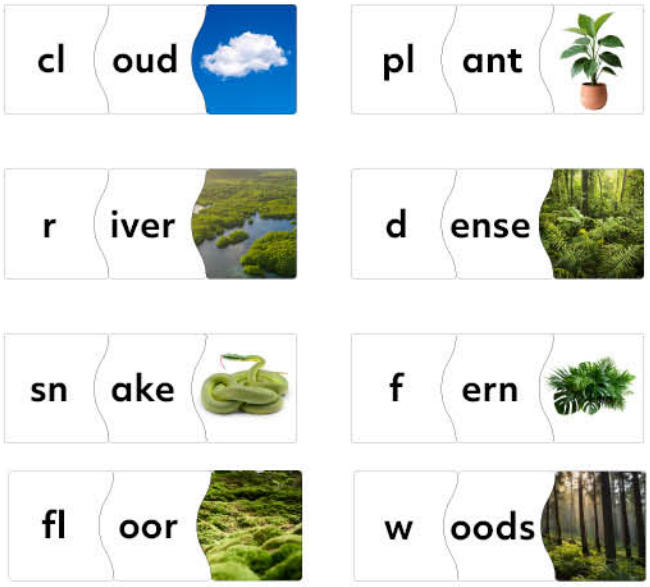
WHAT TO DO

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

Sand Writing Trays: Word Bank Words

EZ.016.LA.1012

Activity Type:
Free Choice and Small Group

Objectives:
Students will identify word bank words.
Students will begin to understand the shapes, characteristics, and purposes of written language.

Each themed classroom includes a word bank. A featured activity will be included with each themed word bank. Sand and sand trays are valuable tools for fostering pre-writing development in young learners. By using their fingers to trace letters or simple shapes in the sand, students engage in a kinesthetic learning process that reinforces their recognition of letter forms. Educators can tie this activity to conversations about animal habitats that include sand, such as deserts, beaches, or riverbanks.

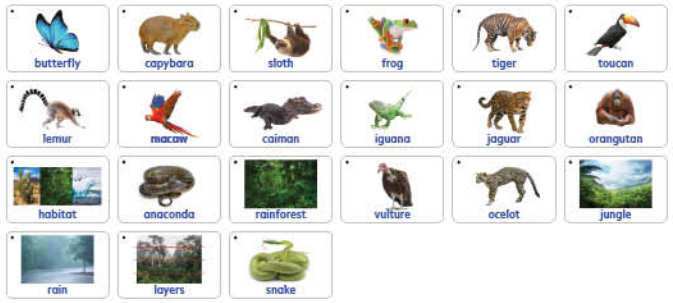
WHAT TO DO

Pour the sand into the sand tray. Provide students with a brief demonstration and encourage students to write letters, lines, and shapes in the sand using their finger. Students can use alphabet, line, and shape cards as references. They can also refer to word bank words as models to recreate words.

PLAY TIPS

- As an added support, tape several cards onto the bottom of the tray and encourage students to trace the letter, shape, or line.
- Create additional laminated cards to include words and numbers as students become comfortable with alphabet, line, and shape tracing.

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Language and Literacy

Great Kapok Tree Charades

EZ.016.LA.1013

Activity Type:
Small Group

Objectives:
Students will listen to and follow directions.
Students will apply understanding and new information to situations.

Read *The Great Kapok Tree* by Lynne Cherry, focusing on the significance of the tree to the story's characters and the role in the rainforest ecosystem. Afterward, have students choose an animal from the story and use animal cards to guide them in acting out animal's behaviors. This interactive activity encourages students to explore the unique needs of each animal within its habitat, such as food, shelter, and social interactions. By stepping into the roles of rainforest animals, students gain a deeper appreciation for biodiversity and the importance of conservation efforts.

WHAT TO DO

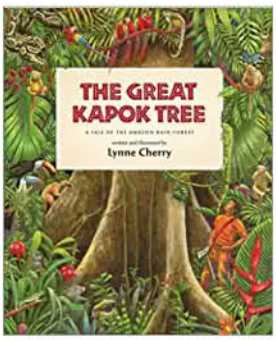
1. Read *The Great Kapok Tree* by Lynne Cherry, discussing new vocabulary throughout. After reading the story, talk about the setting of the story, characters, point of view (who is telling the story), and sequence of events.
2. Review the animals from the story using the animal cards: bee, monkey, toucan, macaw, cock of the rock, jaguar, porcupine, anteater, and sloth. Talk about the animals' behaviors and needs within the rainforest habitat. Ask the first student to choose an animal card and think about ways to mimic the animal's behavior using their body. As the student performs the behaviors, the remaining students guess the animal from the story.

PLAY TIPS

- Talk about the benefits the tree provides each animal and the consequences if the tree were cut down. Ask students to think about pros and cons to cutting down trees in general.
- Rainforests have four different layers: forest floor, understory, canopy, and emergent. Create a classroom tree on butcher paper, label the four different layers, and ask students to sort the animal cards by layer in which they live.

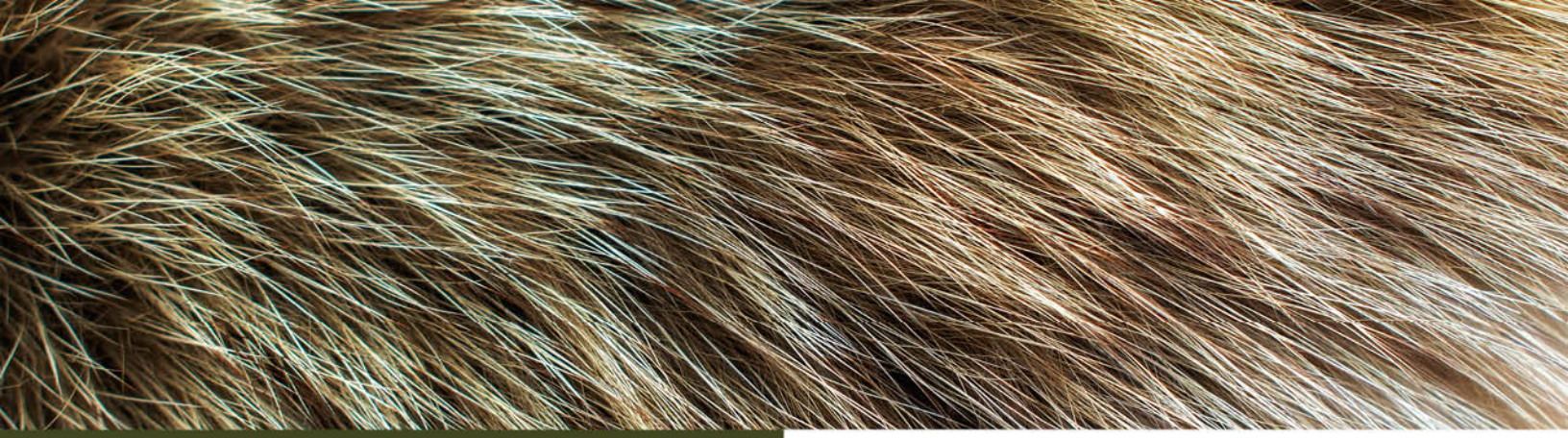
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Science

Animal Exploration

EZ.016.LA.1014

Activity Type:
Small Group and Free Choice

Objective:
Students will make observations and compare animal features and characteristics.

Students explore animal coverings and features by making tactile and visual observations of fur, skull, and claw replicas. With guidance from the educator, they compare these features and draw connections to how each animal's traits are uniquely adapted to its habitat. This hands-on activity not only deepens students' understanding of animal adaptations but also enhances critical thinking and observational skills.

WHAT TO DO

1. Ask students why animals have fur, feathers, or scales and reinforce the importance of animal coverings. How are animal coverings like body coverings (hair, skin, and clothing) of humans? Share that animals need different coverings to help them survive in different environments. Place the fur, feather, and scale replica in a classroom sensory box for students to explore.
2. Include the claw and skull replica in the learning center for continued discussion on animal features. Ask students the following questions: "How are the claw replica (comparing all replica) the same and different and why?," "How are the feather replica (comparing all replica) the same and different and why?," and "How are these features important to animals?"

PLAY TIP

Start an "Animal Coverings Collection." Label sections on chart paper with mammal/fur, reptile/scales, birds/feathers, and other coverings. Ask students to draw or cut out pictures of animals that represent each category as they continue having animal coverings conversations.

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Science

Animal Camouflage

EZ.016.LA.1015

Activity Type:
Small Group

Objective:
Students will explore how animal features and habitat are related.

Animals use camouflage to blend into their surroundings, helping prey avoid predators. Students can explore this concept by interacting with images of habitats and camouflaged animals. By moving animal pieces around on the habitat, they can observe how the animals blend into their environment. This activity enhances critical thinking and reinforces understanding of survival strategies in nature.

WHAT TO DO

1. Read T*he Mixed-Up Chameleon* by Eric Carle; focus on the changes the chameleon makes throughout the story. Introduce the word camouflage using the words disguise and blend. Ask students if they can think of any animals or insects that camouflage in the wild.
2. Introduce the habitat puzzles in the learning center. Encourage students to move the animal puzzle pieces around in the habitat to find the best location to camouflage. Facilitate discussions around the relationship between habitat and animal features (i.e., the white coat of a polar bear blends with the ice and snow from the animal's natural habitat).

PLAY TIPS

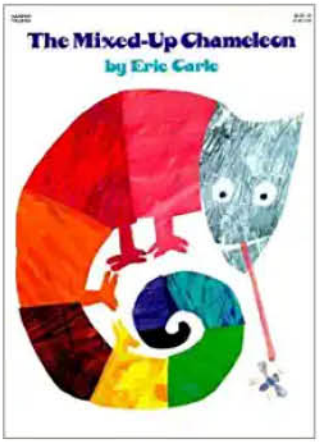
- Using the book, create yoga poses for each chameleon action. For example, the opening page reads, "On a shiny green leaf sat a small green chameleon." Ask students to sit on their heels and bring their forehead to rest in front of their knees.
- Participate in camouflage outfit day. Pick a habitat mural in the classroom and encourage students to come dressed for school in an outfit best to camouflage.

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Social and Emotional

Animal Charades

EZ.016.LA.1016

Activity Type:
Large Group and Small Group

Objectives:
Students will explore animal behaviors, including actions and responses.
Students will use their body to describe animals.

Using animal charade cards that offer specific directions, students actively engage in recreating animal behaviors and movements through imaginative play. By using their bodies to mimic actions such as flying, crawling, or hunting, they bring animals into the classroom. The observing students analyze the movements and make predictions about the animal's identity. This activity not only encourages creativity and physical engagement but also develops critical thinking, observational skills, and an understanding of animal behavior in a fun and interactive way.

WHAT TO DO

1. Review animal behaviors using the charade cards. Decide how you will determine whose turn it is to perform a charade. One suggestion is to write students' names on craft sticks and pick from a container.
2. Draw a name and ask the student to choose a card without showing their peers. Student demonstrates the behavior as the other students guess the animal's identity. Offer suggestions to the demonstrator, if needed, until the animal's identity is guessed correctly. Continue until all students have a turn.

PLAY TIPS

- Incorporate animal sounds in adaptations of charades.
- Incorporate animal movements into routines and transitions. For example, ask students to hop like a kangaroo over to a learning center or fly like a hawk to the lunch table.

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Social and Emotional

Rainforest Animal Hunt

EZ.016.LA.1017

Activity Type:
Free Choice and Small Group

Objective:
Students will engage in associative and cooperative play for creative expression.

Role playing activities provide children with opportunities to step into the shoes of others, fostering empathy and enhancing their ability to understand and relate to different perspectives. Engaging in these activities with peers encourages cooperative play, promoting teamwork, communication, and social skills. Incorporating an assortment of rainforest animals and protective gear into these activities allows students to explore animal behaviors and patterns, bridging the gap between new information and experiential learning.

WHAT TO DO

Set the scene for a rainforest animal hunt by introducing the protective gear and rainforest animal figures. Encourage several students to hide the rainforest animals. Their peers can search for the rainforest animals using the exploration gear. Add crumpled construction paper rocks to inspire children to make additional scenery.

PLAY TIPS

- Enhance the rainforest dramatic play by encouraging children to create scenery. Children can make sponge painted giant leaves with vines and flowers out of tissue paper, paper plates, and construction paper. Provide a box filled with various supplies, such as faux fur, pieces of cloth, paper, craft foam, and feathers. Allow the children to use their imagination to create unique rainforest pieces.
- Add a few low-maintenance houseplants like pothos, snake plants, and spider plants to the Rainforest classroom. Children can take turns watering the plants while enjoying the addition to dramatic play.
- Make DIY binoculars using paper towel rolls cut in half. Punch or poke holes through the outer sides of each roll and then thread a piece of yarn through the holes, knotting it at the ends.

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Fine Arts

Rainforest Layers

EZ.016.LA.1022

Activity Type:
Free Choice and Small Group

Objective:
Students will use materials to create artistic and realistic representations through hands-on exploration and creativity.

Each layer of a rainforest has unique characteristics that support specific plants and animals based on their water, sunlight, and air needs. Students can explore and experiment with various plants, animals, and materials in the sensory table to recreate these layers and understand their functions. This hands-on activity enhances students' understanding of ecosystems while fostering critical thinking and collaborative problem-solving skills.

WHAT TO DO

Review the following with students: A rainforest is a place where it rains often and there are a lot of trees and other plants. The rainforest has layers in which different kinds of animals live. Set up the sensory table with the rainforest manipulatives, while also drawing attention to the rainforest layers activity board. Encourage children to create layers in the sensory table and move the animals up and down from one layer to another.

PLAY TIP

- Encourage students to sort the animal manipulatives by where they might find an animal in the rainforest layers.
- Ask students to sort animal cards on the rainforest layers activity board.

WHAT YOU'LL NEED















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