**The Amazing Animal World**

**In this second six-week unit of first grade, students read informational texts about animals and learn how each animal is unique.**

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**Overview**

* + Building on the informative writing in the first unit, students focus on constructing stronger informative writing pieces. Then, students revise their work with an adult. They also learn about the creative process through the artist Henry Matisse, and create a piece of art to go with their informative writing. The class explores explanatory writing by explaining the technique used to create their own artistic works. As they read fictional texts, they learn to retell a story using details and focusing on a central message.
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**Focus Standards**

* + These Focus Standards have been selected for the unit from the Common Core State Standards.
    - **RL.1.2:**Retell stories, including key details, and demonstrate understanding of the central message or lesson.
    - **RI.1.2:**Identify the main topic and retell key details of a text.
    - **RL.1.5:**Explain major differences between books that tell stories and books that give information, drawing on a wide reading of a range of text types.
    - **L.1.5:** With guidance and support from adults, demonstrate understanding of word relationships and nuances in word meanings.
    - **L.1.5(b):** Define words by category and by one or more key attributes (e.g., a *duck* is a bird that swims; a *tiger* is a large cat with stripes).
    - **W.1.2:**Write informative/explanatory texts in which they name a topic, supply some facts about the topic, and provide some sense of closure.
    - **SL.1.2:** Ask and answer questions about key details in a text read aloud or information presented orally or through other media.

[Common Core State Standards, ELA](http://commoncore.org/free/resources/CCSSI_ELA_Standards.pdf) (1.5 MB)

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**Suggested Student Objectives**

* + - Retell stories demonstrating understanding of the central message or lesson.
    - Identify the main idea and key details of an informational text.
    - Describe how the text groups information into general categories.
    - Write an informative text about an animal, supplying factual information and providing a sense of closure.
    - In a revision process and under the guidance and support of an adult, add details to an informative text.
    - Confirming understanding of information, present orally by restating key elements and answering questions about key details.
    - Write an explanatory text telling how Matisse created the mural, *The Snail.*
    - Use sentence context clues to help determine word meanings.
    - Define words by category and by one or more key attributes (e.g., a duck is a bird that swims).
    - Use common, proper, and possessive nouns in speech and writing.
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**Suggested Works**

* + (E) indicates a CCSS exemplar text; (EA) indicates a text from a writer with other works identified as exemplars.

**Literary Texts**

**Stories**

* + - *Are You My Mother?*(Philip D. Eastman) (E)
    - *Mouse Tales* (Arnold Lobel) (EA)
    - *Uncle Elephant* (Arnold Lobel) (EA)
    - *Mouse Soup* (Arnold Lobel) (EA)

**Poetry**

* + - "Fish" (Mary Ann Hoberman)

**Stories (Read Aloud)**

* + - *Finn Family Moomintroll* (Tove Jansson) (E)

**Poetry (Read Aloud)**

* + - "The Fox's Foray" in *The Oxford Nursery Rhyme Book* (Anonymous) (E)
    - "The Owl and the Pussycat" in *The Complete Nonsense of Edward Lear* (Edward Lear) (E)
    - "I Know All the Sounds that the Animals Make" in *Something Big Has Been Here* (Jack Prelutsky)
    - "The Pasture" in *The Poetry of Robert Frost* (Robert Frost)
    - "The Purple Cow" in *The Burgess Nonsense Book Being a Complete Collection of the Humorous Masterpieces of Gelett Burgess* (Gelett Burgess)

**Informational Texts**

**Informational Text**

* + - *Starfish*(Let's-Read-and-Find…Science) (Edith Thacher Hurd and Robin Brickman) (E)
    - *A Nest Full of Eggs*(Let's-Read-and-Find…Science) (Priscilla Belz Jenkins and Lizzy Rockwell) (E series)
    - *What’s It Like to Be a Fish?*(Let’s-Read-and-Find…Science) (Wendy Pfeffer and Holly Keller) (E series)
    - *What Lives in a Shell?*(Let's-Read-and-Find…Science) (Kathleen Weidner Zoehfeld and Helen K. Davie) (E series)
    - *Where Do Chicks Come From?* (Let's-Read-and-Find…Science) (Amy E. Sklansky and Pam Paparone) (E series)
    - *Big Tracks, Little Tracks: Following Animal Prints*(Let’s-Read-and-Find…Science) (Millicent E. Selsam and Marlene Hill Donnelly) (E series)
    - *Where Are the Night Animals?*(Let’s-Read-and-Find…Science) (Mary Ann Fraser) (E series)

**Informational Text (Read Aloud)**

* + - *Earthworms* (Claire Llewellyn and Barrie Watts) (E)
    - *What Do You Do With a Tail Like This?*(Steve Jenkins and Robin Page) (E)
    - *Biggest, Strongest, Fastest*(Steve Jenkins) (EA)
    - *What Do You Do When Something Wants To Eat You?* (Steve Jenkins) (EA)
    - *Never Smile at a Monkey: And 17 Other Important Things to Remember* (Steve Jenkins) (EA)
    - *Amazing Whales!* (Sarah L. Thomson) (E)
    - *How Animals Work*(DK Publishing)
    - *Creature ABC* (Andrew Zuckerman)

**Art, Music, and Media**

**Art**

* + - Albrecht Dürer, [*Two Squirrels, One Eating a Hazelnut*](http://www.1000museums.com/enlarge/201066/) (no date)
    - Marc Chagall, [*I and the Village*](http://www.moma.org/collection/object.php?object_id=78984) (1945)
    - Paul Klee, [*Cat and Bird*](http://www.moma.org/collection/object.php?object_id=79456) (1928)
    - Henri Rousseau, [*The Flamingoes*](http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Henri_Rousseau_-_The_Flamingoes.jpg) (1907)
    - Susan Rothenberg, [*Untitled (Horse)*](http://www.ecbloguer.com/letrasanonimas/wp-content/uploads/2009/08/susan_rothenberg.jpg) (1976)
    - Henri Matisse, [*The Snail*](http://www.tate.org.uk/imap/pages/animated/cutout/matisse/snail.htm) (1953)
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**Sample Activities and Assessments**

* + **Class Discussion/Reading/Informational Text**

While reading a book such as *What Do You Do With A Tail Like This?* (Steve Jenkins)*,* make a chart to record the name of each animal mentioned. Write where the animal lives (i.e., its habitat), what the animal eats (i.e., whether it is an herbivore, carnivore, or omnivore) and an interesting fact (e.g., its method of adaptation) on the chart. Ask students to supply at least one piece of information on a Post-It when you are finished reading. Create and add to similar charts about animal facts as you read to the children and as they read independently. Use these charts to create oral and written sentences about the animals. (RI.1.2, L.1.5b, L.1.1j)

**Class Discussion/Reading/Informational Text**

Before beginning this lesson, ask students what they are experts at doing (e.g., bike riding, roller skating, or back flips). Allow some time to share. Remind the students than an author is a real person who has worked hard to know the information to fill a book such as *What Do You Do With a Tail Like This?* (Steve Jenkins).  Using the essential question for this unit, ask the students to think about how authors become experts on a topic, such as the tails of animals. If possible, invite a speaker who has an expertise in something. Talk about how they became an expert. (W.1.2, SL.1.3, RI.1.2)

**Explanatory Writing/Art Connection**

Display the Tate’s site for Matisse’s *The Snail* using a projector and computer. Encourage students to comment about the colors and what they see in the artwork. As you read the background information and move through the site, students will see the process used by Matisse to create his work. Students will then create a work of their favorite animal from this unit using torn pieces of painted paper. Later, do a shared writing to explain the steps taken to create an art piece in the style of Matisse. This could be a model for an explanatory piece of writing later. (W.1.7) (SL.1.2)

**Informative Writing/Revision**

Since the students have now completed an artistic masterpiece of their favorite animal, extend the work into a writing assignment. Give the students this prompt: “Write about your favorite animal. Be sure to include interesting facts about your animal and end with a solid closing. Allow your students to begin by working in teams to gather information. Using non-fictional texts, remind them to use the index or table of contents to locate more information about the animal. When they have some basic information, have them write the first draft. Ensure that adults are available to help with revision of the writing.  Display the published writing with the Matisse-style artwork (see Art Connection / Explanatory Writing). (W.1.2, W.1.5, RI.1.5, RI.1.10, RF.1.4)

**Literary/Vocabulary**

Read a fictional animal story, such as *Are You My Mother?* (Philip D. Eastman). Discuss the vocabulary in the story and work on retelling. Ask the students (if, for example, discussing *Are You My Mother?*), “What word was funny in the story because of the way it was used?” (Possible answer: “Snort”) How did you know what it meant? Divide the students into groups of three and have them tell the story to each other, taking turns as each tells a part. Let them know that if they are stuck on a part of the story, you will come and allow them to use the book to solve the problem. Encourage the students to try to remember as many details as they can to tell the story because that is what makes it interesting. When they are finished retelling the story, talk about what lesson might be learned from the story. (L.1.4a, RL.1.2)

**Literary/Language**

Follow up on a book read previously in class, such as *Are You My Mother?* (Philip D. Eastman). Go back and reread the story. As you read it this time, read for the purpose of finding all of the animals and things that baby bird thought might be his mother. As students find the words, write them on index cards (e.g., kitten, hen, dog, cow, boat, plane). Sort the words into categories (e.g., animals, modes of transportation,). Think of more words for each of the categories. (L.1.5a, L.1.1b)

**Literary**

As students read independently, remind them that different characters often tell the story at different times in a book. Using a book such as *Mouse Tales* (Arnold Lobel), allow the students to re-read parts of the text where the weasel speaks, where the mouse speaks, and where the narrator tells the story. Provide a bowl of raw elbow macaroni at each table. Ask students to use the macaroni to cover the quotation marks in the book, reminding them that it means someone is speaking. Assigning the parts to three readers will show others how dialogue works in literature. (RL.1.6)

**Literary/Read Aloud**

Choose a fantasy read-aloud, such as *Finn Family Moomintroll* (Tove Jansson). Continuing to focus on the retelling of fiction, give the children the opportunity to retell the previous chapters by allowing them to choose an object to prompt the retelling. For example, when the black hat appears, find a small black hat (or cut it out of black paper) and put it into the retelling basket. Before each reading time, have the students retell the story using the gathered objects as prompts for remembering characters and events. By the time the book ends, you will have an object for each chapter or key event in the book—and the students will be efficient storytellers. (RL.1.2)

**Class Discussion/Art Connection**

Select three or four works to view. Ask the students the following questions:  What animal do you see in this work?  Does anyone see a different animal? What color is the animal?  Is this the real color of this animal?  Why do you think the artist chose the color he or she did?

**Writing/Art Connection**

Ask the students to draw an animal of their choice. They will then choose to color it using the animal’s real colors, or they could choose to use imaginary colors.  Ask the students to write an informative text based on their drawing, and their choice of realistic or imaginary coloring.

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**Reading Foundations**

* + **A Pacing Guide for Reading Instruction**

This guide is based on the “reading foundations,” writing, and language standards in the CCSS and is customized to the maps. Completed for Kindergarten and first grade (more grades to come), the guide tracks curriculum map units, as indicated in the first row of the document. Concepts of print, phonological awareness, and text reading fluency are all addressed and woven into a developmental progression that leads to word recognition and text reading. Accomplishment of these milestones can be achieved with daily practice and brief activities, suggestions for which are highlighted in the guide.

[Reading Foundations and Activities (1: Units 1-3)](http://commoncore.org/free/resources/1st_Foundations_U1-3_(8.19).pdf)

[Reading Foundations and Activities (1: Units 4-6)](http://commoncore.org/free/resources/1st_Foundations_U4-6_(8.19).pdf)

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**Additional Resources**

* + - [Animal Study: From Fiction to Facts](http://edsitement.neh.gov/view_lesson_plan.asp?id=240) (National Endowment for the Humanities) (RL.1.5)
    - [Investigating Animals: Using Nonfiction for Inquiry-based Research](http://www.readwritethink.org/classroom-resources/lesson-plans/investigating-animals-using-nonfiction-187.html) (ReadWriteThink)(W.1.7)
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**Terminology**

* + - categories
    - context clues
    - informative
    - lesson
    - main topic
    - message
    - retell
    - revision
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**Making Interdisciplinary Connections**

* + **This unit teaches:**
    - **Art**: Henri Matisse
    - **Science**: Animals (e.g., habitats, unique adaptations, and the food chain)

**This unit could be extended to teach:**

* + - **Geography**: Oceans
    - **Science**: Animals (e.g., undersea life, habitat destruction, Rachel Carson)