

WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE? 10 Animal Look-Alikes

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Genre: Non-fiction, science

Themes: Science & nature
Animals
Non-fiction writing using contents, headings, glossary

Suitable for: Grades 2 – 6

What's the Difference?

This is a non-fiction book examining through pictures and text the differences between ten animal look-alikes. It includes an introduction, contents page and glossary of terms related to animal classification. This is a good book for those students who are strong readers and love to get into details.

THE FOLLOWING ACTIVITY IDEAS ...

... are only a start. There are many possibilities for helping students construct meaning from text. Comprehension activities:

- help readers to extend their general knowledge from prior experience
- develop reading strategies for comprehension
- bring relevance to the act of reading
- foster discussion and reflection through response to the text

BEFORE STARTING THE BOOK:

Activities to build the context and introduce the topic of the book, and to establish prior knowledge and interest and develop predictions of what the text will be about.

A1. Introduce the concept of animal characteristics building vocabulary such as *ashabitat*, *protection*, *care of young* and *adaptation*. Use films, field-trips, photographs, CD-ROMs, the internet, etc.

A2. Develop a chart with the students under headings of animal species:

amphibians
reptiles
insects
birds
mammals

List the characteristics of each.

As information is collected by the students through research, model the writing of a bibliography including all the different sources that students use.

WHILE READING THE BOOK

Activities to check on comprehension, stimulate interest, involve readers in reflection as they read, and encourage consideration of other readers' reactions.

B1. Choose one double page of text and illustration to study with the group. Read only the opening question.

Ask the students to write down on separate pieces of paper one thing they know about each of the two animals named.

Sort out the papers and post them on a chart under the two animals' names.

Have students read the text either in a group or silently, depending on their reading levels. Refer back to the list of facts the students contributed and have them validate or correct what was posted. Have students report back orally.

Have students, on their own, work through the same process with a different pair of animals from the book, then give a report back to the class about what they learned.

AFTER READING THE BOOK

Activities to inspire continued reflection and response to the text, bring conclusion to the experience of reading this particular text, and stimulate further extensions.

C1. Choose one double page of text and illustration to study in another way.

Display a Venn diagram on the board or chart with two large overlapping circles.

Put the name of one animal in one circle and the name of the other animal in the other circle.

Model rereading the text and writing in point form within the Venn diagram each characteristic of the animals. Does the characteristic apply only to one animal or the other, or is it common to both? Use the three spaces created by the overlapping circles to place each characteristic appropriately.

Ask students in pairs to do the same thing on their own with another double page of text and illustration, then to present their information. Students should outline which characteristics are often confused, as they enable us to tell the animals apart.

C2. Have students in pairs or small groups work on listing facts or statements about each animal look-alike. They can be as specific or as general as the students want, but each fact must be backed up with a reference to a page in the book or to other resources.

The students then develop questions, as in a game show, to test others about their knowledge of animal look-alikes.

Prepare a short survey to use before and after the game that will assess whether playing the game increased student knowledge.

When all the components of the game show are researched, rehearsed and ready, invite another class to play.

Discuss the survey results with your class. What went well with the games? What could be improved for use with another class?