

Common Themes in The Learning Page Lesson Plans

Making Books: including papermaking and binding; books for creative writing, poetry and journal writing, drawing and painting, scrapbooks, and for project data collecting and record keeping

Camouflage: There will be a Lesson about this survival adaptation used by all animal groups in all Units related to the natural world.

Careers: Each Unit has at least one profession that is profiled, including education needed, duties, etc.

Graphics: Posters, announcements, advertisements: products of art activities help apply knowledge to practical uses.

Families: Teaching awareness of animal groups transfers directly to teaching awareness of home, values and family.

Geography: Refer to maps to point out what is far away, foreign or exotic; pull in historical references when they arise. Drawing maps and diagrams helps students see in a linear way how things work.

Art Connections: Don't forget fine art resources, paintings and sculpture with the Unit theme as its inspiration. Many school districts have libraries of art reproductions and slides catalogued by topic available to check out as teaching aids.

Art concepts such as colors, shapes, line, contrast, and composition can be taught using zoo animals.

Music: another rich resource; use the internet to locate titles, composers, and sources of tapes and CDs.

Literature and Poetry: Aside from picture books cited here, traditional literature, poetry, and folklore are full of wonderful writing that can inspire and teach.

Theme parties: Celebrations are a fun way to conclude the study of a Unit; see Dinosaurs, Grade 1–2, [Lesson 12](#) for ideas universal to all themes: hats, placecards, invitations, costumes, face-painting, decorated cookies and special foods, games, reading, and performances for parents and schoolmates, etc. Keep the party in mind as the Unit progresses; take photos and videotape, and save all students' artwork and projects.

Alphabets, letters, sounds: Each animal word is an opportunity to introduce a letter and practice spelling. Use the Basics Worksheets for the alphabet or create your own. See Lesson 4 of either level as an example.

Patterns for Art Projects: Use the [Fact File](#) and [Cutouts](#) as patterns for art projects such as soft sculptures (see Dinosaurs, Grade Preschool–K, Lesson 10), mobiles, and puppets.

Checklists: Each Unit has a list of all the items of the [Fact Files](#) in the order they were presented; the list includes the name, a checkbox, and a small illustration. These lists have many possible uses:

- 1a.** Cut the list into strips and fold, place in a container for students to pick blindly; that animal will be the student's for the duration of the Unit to **research** and become an expert on. They could wear a button that says "Ask me about Hippos!"
- 1b.** Students randomly pick an animal; then ask students to name at least one fact about that animal.
- 1c.** Each day, one animal could be chosen at random to be the focus that day or week. Write on the board: "Today (or this week) is tiger day," and return to the tiger in some aspect throughout that time.
- 2.** Use as a **checklist** while on a trip to the zoo; add animals that are not on the list.
- 3.** Use the Zoo Animals Checklist as a **review** and **test** at the end of the Unit.
- 4.** The Zoo Animals Checklist can be a ballot sheet to vote for the class's favorite; **graphs** and **charts** can plot the results.
- 5.** The Zoo Animals Checklist can be used to **sort** the animals into birds and mammals, or African and Asian.
- 6.** Use the Checklist for alphabetizing, ordering, matching, and practicing letter recognition.

You will probably have many more ideas on how to use the Checklists from the Zoo Animals and the other Units. Please share your ideas with us!
editor@learningpage.com