

Animals

Adventures in Reading:

Family Literacy Bags from Reading Rockets

Contents:

- Two books – one fiction, one nonfiction
- Parent information sheet
- Three activity sheets
- Bookmark
- Parent survey

for teachers and librarians



This Reading Rockets Activity Packet is designed to support reading activities at home. We've chosen a fiction and nonfiction book about animals, appropriate for a kindergarten listening level, and included related activities to encourage some hands-on fun and learning. Just assemble the packet in a two-gallon zip top bag, and send home with your students.

Reading Rockets carefully chose books that are widely available and appealing to young readers. The titles selected should be available in your school library. If the two featured titles are not available, or you prefer another title, feel free to substitute books related to the theme. You'll find a list of alternative titles included in the bookmark.

The featured books for the Animal Activity Packet are ***Blueberries for Sal*** by Robert McCloskey and ***A Bed for the Winter*** by Karen Wallace. ***Blueberries for Sal*** is a classic children's story about a human child and her mother and a bear child and his mother looking for berries. ***A Bed for the Winter*** is a DK Reader that explores homes different animals find for winter.

The parent information sheet includes an introductory note that you can personalize, instructions about how to use the packet, and tips for sharing fiction and nonfiction books with children.

The activities are designed to encourage further exploration and learning at home:

- >> the Creativity Activity is a hands-on craft project
- >> the Imagination Activity encourages imaginative play, writing, or drawing
- >> the Get Real Activity focuses on real-world experiences for parent and child
- >> The bookmark lists both the featured titles and additional titles

Putting it all together

Print out copies of the parent information sheet, the activities, the survey, and a master for making bookmarks. Cut the bookmark page into strips. You may wish to print the activity pages and bookmark on card stock for durability.

Into a two-gallon zip top bag, place:

- >> two books – one fiction and one nonfiction
- >> parent information sheet
- >> three themed activity pages
- >> bookmark
- >> survey for parents

Send the packet home with your student. Encourage parents to keep the parent information sheet, the activities, and bookmark, and return the books and survey to you by the date you specify.

Let Reading Rockets know what you think of the family activity packets by e-mailing us through our website: www.readingrockets.org/sitecontact. Click on "Family Literacy Bags."

ADVENTURES IN READING!

Welcome

Dear _____

Exploring new ideas and enjoying books with you sends a powerful message to your child: Reading and learning are fun, and happen everywhere – not just at school. This Reading Rockets Activity Packet about _____ was created to help you and your child enjoy reading and learning together.

Start your learning adventure by reading some books with your child about this popular topic. Then explore the topic with three activities. Enclosed you'll find what you need:

- >> two books to share with your child
- >> three related activities
- >> bookmark with a list of other books to extend the fun, if you wish
- >> short survey to tell me if you enjoyed using the packet

The simple steps on the back explain how to use the packet.

The bookmark, this parent information sheet, and the activities are yours to keep.

When you've finished with the materials, please return the books and the completed survey to school in your child's backpack. Please return the Reading Rockets Activity Packet by _____.

I hope you'll enjoy reading and learning together!

To learn more about children's books, reading with your child, and information about helping kids become confident readers, please visit www.ReadingRockets.org

ADVENTURES IN READING!

Instructions

How to use your Reading Rockets Activity Packet

Getting ready

1. Before you read the books to your child, be sure to read them yourself. One book is fiction – a “make-believe” story. The other book is nonfiction, or informational and true. Reading the books first will give you the “inside scoop” to the twists and turns of the story, the interesting information inside, and the parts of the books that will appeal most to your child.

2. Next, read the three activities to see which of them you think your child will enjoy most, and which one you have the time and materials on-hand to do right away. Chances are, after you read one (or both) of the books with your child, he or she may want to do an activity right away.

Start the fun

3. When you know you’ll have at least enough time to read and talk about one of the books, grab your child and a book, and dive right in. Start with the fiction selection. Talk about the cover of the book with your child – can he guess what it is about? Have they ever read a book by the same author or illustrator or about the same topic?

Read the book to your child. Take time to ask and answer questions, explore the pictures, and wonder what will happen next. Read it again, if your child asks you to. Then, try the nonfiction book or one of the activities.

4. When you read the nonfiction book, take a moment to explain to your child the difference between the two types of books. The first book told a made-up, make-believe story, and a nonfiction book is about real people, places, and things. The information in nonfiction books can answer lots of questions.

5. Feel free to pick and choose from the activities, or change them to suit your child’s interests. Read the books again over the next few days and try different activities. Most important: have fun!

When you’re done...

6. Keep the bookmark, the activities, and this page. Complete the survey and return it with the books to your child’s school.

Make the most of the excitement the books create, and try some hands-on learning or make-believe fun. Exploring new ideas alongside you lets your child see you learning – and reading – too, and gives your child personal experiences to support her growing knowledge.

Tips for reading nonfiction books with kids:

- >> *Wonder out loud. As you are reading, or afterward, talk about facts you find interesting or questions you have.*
- >> *Show your child how to use the table of contents, section headings, index, and word list (glossary) to find the answer to a specific question.*
- >> *Don’t be afraid to jump around, reading pages that especially interest your child. You don’t have to read a nonfiction book straight through.*

Tips for reading fiction books with kids:

- >> *Take your time and talk about the story with your child. Ask your child questions.*
- >> *Explore the pictures with your child.*
- >> *Read with expression. Change your voice or how fast you read to create excitement. Ham it up!*
- >> *You don’t need to read every word. Keeping your child interested is the goal.*

mask making

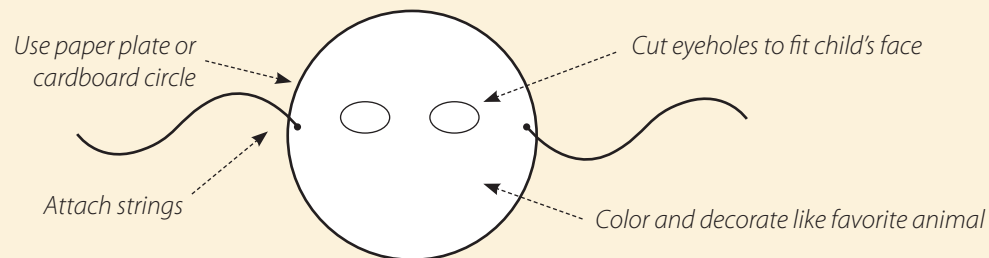


Does your child have a favorite animal? Help your child create a colorful mask for some make-believe play

Supplies

- >> paper plate or piece of cardboard (old cereal box) cut into a circle
- >> colored construction paper or white paper to be colored with markers or crayons
- >> scissors
- >> glue, tape, or a stapler
- >> markers, crayons, or colored pencils
- >> yarn, string, or ribbon or a popsicle stick

Instructions



1. If using an old cereal box, trace around a dinner plate to form your circle and cut out.
2. Hold the paper plate or circle up to your child's face and mark where her eyes are.
3. Carefully cut out holes for your child to look through.
4. Have your child color the plate to look like the animal of her choice. She can also cut ears, mane, whiskers, noses, beaks, or other parts of the animal's face out of construction paper and glue, tape, or staple them on.
5. When your child has finished the animal's face, hold it up again to her face and mark a spot just above ear level on each side to attach string or ribbon. Carefully poke a hole on each side to feed string or ribbon through – with a knot on one end – to form the ties for the mask. OR you can glue a popsicle stick at the bottom of the mask for the child to hold.

Variation Cut the circle in half for a mask that only covers the eyes and leaves the nose and mouth uncovered. Continue to decorate as described above.

Talk with your child about her animal mask

Did you make a baby or grown-up animal?
Does your animal have fur or feathers, or scales or skin?

What sounds does your animal make?
Where does it live?
What does it eat?

walk on the wild side



It's a jungle out there! Well almost. The world is full of amazing animals – take some time to check them out

Observe your pets. Does your dog walk in circles before it lies down? Does your cat pounce on toys? Even though they live with people, pets still have many behaviors from their wild ancestors.

Get outside and look around

- >> The National Wildlife Federation's Green Hour campaign can help you explore nature with your child: www.greenhour.org/section/about
- >> Look for animals in your neighborhood. Where do they live? What do they eat? How do they care for their babies?
- >> Go someplace wild! Take a walk in the woods, on the beach, in the desert, or anyplace wild. Look for signs of animals – their footprints, their homes, their droppings, their "leftovers" from dinner.
- >> Visit a zoo, aquarium, or animal sanctuary near you. Look for kid-friendly exhibits and chances for hands-on learning.
- >> Visit your local library for books and magazines about animals. *National Geographic Little Kids* and *Your Big Backyard*, published by the National Wildlife Federation, are two great magazines for kindergartners.

Watch shows about animals on PBS

Search the PBS website for upcoming shows: <http://www.pbs.org/>
NOVA has many shows about animals: <http://tinyurl.com/53u8z5>

Search the Internet for information about your favorite animals
PBS video: <http://tinyurl.com/4nst2f>
(click on "video")

The World Wildlife Fund: www.worldwildlife.org/wildfinder/

National Geographic: <http://kids.nationalgeographic.com/Animals/>

The National Wildlife Federation: <http://nwf.org/>

explore the wild kingdom



All animals, including humans, need a home, food, and to take care of their babies. Imagination is your ticket to the animal kingdom!

Creating a home

Encourage your child to grab her favorite toy animal and build a home for it. The teddy bear could have a den under the kitchen table. Build a nest for a stuffed bird with rolled up towels. Use blocks or other toys for building materials.

Put imaginations to work by changing the story you read together. Try playing “What if” about animals from your story. What if:

- >> the animals had to live in a different place, or
- >> the animals discovered a new food, or
- >> the animals had to take care of another animal’s baby

Suggest that your child to draw pictures for this new version of the story, and you can write captions for them, with your child’s help.

Caring for animals

Encourage your child to pretend to care for wild animals. Dig into your closet and toy box for make-believe uniforms, equipment, and of course, animals.

If he’s a veterinarian for a big zoo, he’ll need to take care of tigers and penguins and boa constrictors, too. Ask him: What tools will do you need? How will you help the animals who are hurt? What special care do the baby animals need?

If she’s a zookeeper, she’s in charge of food, homes, and playtime for the animals. Ask her: Which animal do you care for? Do you wear special clothes? What do you feed the animal? What do you give your animal to play with? How do you take care of its home?

Animal babies

Baby animals often look very different from their grown-up parents, and have different names. Have your child get out the crayons and paper and draw some of their favorite animal families. Label the animals, including special names for the animal babies. Eric Carle’s *Does a Kangaroo Have a Mother Too?* shows different animals with their babies, and includes their special baby names.

ANIMALS



Featured titles

Fiction

Blueberries for Sal by Robert McCloskey

Nonfiction

A Bed for the Winter by Karen Wallace (DK Reader)

Additional fiction titles

Annie and the Wild Animals
by Jan Brett

Make Way for Ducklings
by Robert McCloskey

Does a Kangaroo Have a Mother Too?
by Eric Carle

Over in the Meadow by
John Langstaff, illustrated by
Feodor Rojankovsky

Additional nonfiction titles

A Children's Zoo by Tana Hoban

Animal Dads by Sneed B. Collard III, illustrated
by Steve Jenkins

Wild Babies by Seymour Simon

Wild Baby Animals by Karen Wallace
(DK Reader)

Books from the *Animals Growing Up* series
by Jason Cooper (titles include *Cub to Panda*,
Kitten to Tiger, *Fawn to Deer* and others)

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