

Environment

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 the environment, appropriate for a first grade 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 Environment Activity Packet are ***The Great Kapok Tree: A Tale of the Amazon Rain Forest*** by Lynne Cherry and ***I See a Kookaburra! Discovering Animal Habitats Around the World*** by Steve Jenkins and Robin Page. ***The Great Kapok Tree*** tells the story of the rainforest animals who persuade a man not to cut down their tree by whispering in his ear while he sleeps. ***I See a Kookaburra!*** explores animals and habitats from all around the world with beautiful cut-paper illustrations.

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.

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.*

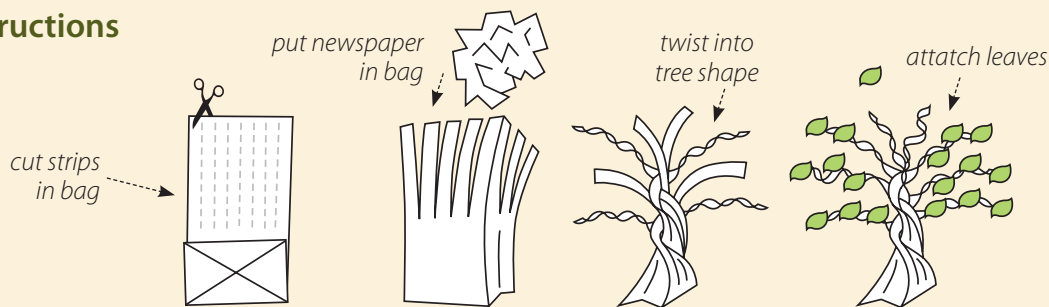
paper bag trees



It takes years for a real tree to grow from a seed, but in a few minutes, you can make your own tree out of paper!

Supplies

- >> small paper bag – the size of a bag for a lunch
- >> newspaper or scrap paper
- >> scissors
- >> glue
- >> green tissue paper or white paper and green crayon or marker

Instructions

1. While the bag is still folded shut, cut strips down from the top about 1/3 of the way down the bag to make ½ inch wide fringe.
2. Carefully open up the bag and put wadded up newspaper or scrap paper in the bottom 1/3. This will be the base of your tree (roots and lower trunk).
3. Grab the bag in the middle – with the paper-filled base below, and the fringe above your hand – and twist the middle part to make the trunk. The fringe will spread out a little.
4. Grab a few pieces of the fringe that are close together and twist them together, making a branch. Repeat with the rest of the fringe to make more branches.
5. Glue small bits of green tissue or colored paper on to the branches to cover them with leaves.

Variation If you don't have a paper bag, your child can draw a trunk and branches on paper and add leaves – either by gluing on leaves or making green finger prints with an ink pad or finger paint.

You can use yellow, red, brown, or orange paper for Fall.

Talk with your child about what trees do for our environment:

- >> Trees provide habitats – food and homes for many animals
- >> Trees clean the air and provide shade
- >> Trees protect the soil by preventing erosion
- >> Trees provide food and wood and paper for people too
- >> And they are fun to climb!

go green!



People need habitats, just like animals, but people can protect habitats, too. Get out into the world and look for habitats and ways to protect them!

Look near home

Take a walk with your child around your neighborhood and look for habitats that support many creatures (a tree, a stream, an apartment building or a house). See how many plants or animals he can name that make their home there. Talk about what would happen if that habitat was gone. Where would the things that lived there go? Would anything happen to the land, water, or air?

Look at the newspaper or around your town for a story or signs that a habitat has been destroyed. Talk about what caused the change – can you tell? Was it an accident? A storm? The result of construction or demolition? Talk about which animals – including people – will be affected.

Visit far-away habitats

Watch a nature show on PBS. Search the PBS website for upcoming shows: <http://www.pbs.org/>

Or check out these websites to see animals in their habitats:

The World Wildlife Fund: <http://www.worldwildlife.org/wildfinder/>

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

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

Or visit your local zoo or aquarium and encourage your child to think about how they try to create habitats for the animals. The San Diego Zoo website features a job that protects habitats: http://www.sandiegozoo.org/kids/jobs_science_habitats.html

Take action

All living things need clean food, water, air, and a safe place to live. Brainstorm with your child ways that you can help protect or create healthy habitats.

- >> Plant some flowers or plants to attract birds or insects
- >> Be careful with chemicals that might harm plants or animals
- >> Instead of driving, walk, take a bus, or ride a bike when you can to keep air clean
- >> Use less energy by turning off lights when you leave a room
- >> Help clean up a park or the neighborhood
- >> Reduce, reuse, recycle!

Now, pick a few and GO GREEN!

Check out these websites for ideas about ways kids can protect the environment:

<http://www.meetthegreens.org/>

<http://www.kidsrecycle.org/index.php>

Recommended books: *Where Does Garbage Go?* Revised edition by Paul Showers (A Let's-Read-And-Find-Out Science book)

Recycle! A Handbook for Kids by Gail Gibbons and *Let's Recycle!* by Anne L. Mackenzie



create our own habitats or stories



Use your imagination to travel the world and explore different animal habitats or create your own environmental tale

Explore habitats

Encourage your child to use the craft tree as a habitat for toy animals. Ask your child:

- >> What kind of tree is it?
- >> Where is it? In the rainforest, in the woods near our house? On a mountain?
- >> What kind of animals live there?

Or encourage her to make other habitats using toys you already have – like legos, blocks, stuffed or plastic animals, empty boxes. Stay close to home or travel the world. Try a coral reef, a giant cactus in the desert, a mangrove tangle, or a cave.

National Geographic magazine often shows animals in their habitat. Many library books do, too – like the books in the DK 24 Hours series. You can have a peek at how animals move around their habitats during the course of a day and then encourage your child to create her own and pretend.

Talk about the habitats your child creates and how it can provide food, water, air, and shelter for the creatures that will live there.

Create your own stories

Encourage your child to act out the story you read and to change it if he wants to. Play along or ask lots of questions when your child is done.

- >> What changes did he make? Why?
- >> What was his favorite part?

Encourage your child to write or draw about his favorite part of the story you read together, or to write his own version. Ask some questions to get him started!

- >> What was your favorite part? Why?
- >> Was there a part of the story you don't like? Why?
- >> What would animals (or trees, if they could talk) say to people if they could?
- >> What if he moved the story to another part of the world? What animals and plants would be in the story?

ENVIRONMENT



Featured titles

Fiction

The Great Kapok Tree: A Tale of the Amazon Rain Forest by Lynne Cherry

Nonfiction

I See a Kookaburra! Discovering Animal Habitats Around the World by Steve Jenkins and Robin Page

Additional fiction titles

The Sea, the Storm, and the Mangrove Tangle by Lynne Cherry

Someday a Tree by Eve Bunting, illustrated by Ronald Himler

What Planet are You From, Clarice Bean? by Lauren Child

Where Once There Was a Wood by Denise Fleming

Additional nonfiction titles

Be a Friend to Trees by Patricia Lauber, illustrated by Holly Keller (Let's-Read-and-Find-Out Science series)

The Secret Life of Trees by Barbara Shook Hazen or Chiara Chevallier (DK Eyewitness Reader)

What is a Biome? By Bobbie Kalman (Science of Living Things series)

Where Does Garbage Go? Revised edition by Paul Showers, illustrated by Randy Chewning (Let's-Read-And-Find-Out Science series)

Recycle!: A Handbook for Kids by Gail Gibbons
Let's Recycle! by Anne L. Mackenzie

Adventures in Reading:

Family Literacy Bags from
Reading Rockets



ENVIRONMENT



Featured titles

Fiction

The Great Kapok Tree: A Tale of the Amazon Rain Forest by Lynne Cherry

Nonfiction

I See a Kookaburra! Discovering Animal Habitats Around the World by Steve Jenkins and Robin Page

Additional fiction titles

The Sea, the Storm, and the Mangrove Tangle by Lynne Cherry

Someday a Tree by Eve Bunting, illustrated by Ronald Himler

What Planet are You From, Clarice Bean? by Lauren Child

Where Once There Was a Wood by Denise Fleming

Additional nonfiction titles

Be a Friend to Trees by Patricia Lauber, illustrated by Holly Keller (Let's-Read-and-Find-Out Science series)

The Secret Life of Trees by Barbara Shook Hazen or Chiara Chevallier (DK Eyewitness Reader)

What is a Biome? By Bobbie Kalman (Science of Living Things series)

Where Does Garbage Go? Revised edition by Paul Showers, illustrated by Randy Chewning (Let's-Read-And-Find-Out Science series)

Recycle!: A Handbook for Kids by Gail Gibbons
Let's Recycle! by Anne L. Mackenzie

Adventures in Reading:

Family Literacy Bags from
Reading Rockets



ENVIRONMENT



Featured titles

Fiction

The Great Kapok Tree: A Tale of the Amazon Rain Forest by Lynne Cherry

Nonfiction

I See a Kookaburra! Discovering Animal Habitats Around the World by Steve Jenkins and Robin Page

Additional fiction titles

The Sea, the Storm, and the Mangrove Tangle by Lynne Cherry

Someday a Tree by Eve Bunting, illustrated by Ronald Himler

What Planet are You From, Clarice Bean? by Lauren Child

Where Once There Was a Wood by Denise Fleming

Additional nonfiction titles

Be a Friend to Trees by Patricia Lauber, illustrated by Holly Keller (Let's-Read-and-Find-Out Science series)

The Secret Life of Trees by Barbara Shook Hazen or Chiara Chevallier (DK Eyewitness Reader)

What is a Biome? By Bobbie Kalman (Science of Living Things series)

Where Does Garbage Go? Revised edition by Paul Showers, illustrated by Randy Chewning (Let's-Read-And-Find-Out Science series)

Recycle!: A Handbook for Kids by Gail Gibbons
Let's Recycle! by Anne L. Mackenzie

Adventures in Reading:

Family Literacy Bags from
Reading Rockets



ENVIRONMENT



Featured titles

Fiction

The Great Kapok Tree: A Tale of the Amazon Rain Forest by Lynne Cherry

Nonfiction

I See a Kookaburra! Discovering Animal Habitats Around the World by Steve Jenkins and Robin Page

Additional fiction titles

The Sea, the Storm, and the Mangrove Tangle by Lynne Cherry

Someday a Tree by Eve Bunting, illustrated by Ronald Himler

What Planet are You From, Clarice Bean? by Lauren Child

Where Once There Was a Wood by Denise Fleming

Additional nonfiction titles

Be a Friend to Trees by Patricia Lauber, illustrated by Holly Keller (Let's-Read-and-Find-Out Science series)

The Secret Life of Trees by Barbara Shook Hazen or Chiara Chevallier (DK Eyewitness Reader)

What is a Biome? By Bobbie Kalman (Science of Living Things series)

Where Does Garbage Go? Revised edition by Paul Showers, illustrated by Randy Chewning (Let's-Read-And-Find-Out Science series)

Recycle!: A Handbook for Kids by Gail Gibbons
Let's Recycle! by Anne L. Mackenzie

Adventures in Reading:

Family Literacy Bags from
Reading Rockets

