

Title: Create a Critter Collage

Subject: Science

Grade Level: 3rd-5th

Time: 90 minutes

Objective: Students will create a display of animals found in the rainforest and be able to describe important details of that animal's habitat, features, characteristics, and adaptations. The students will have to group animals according to their class and define similarities and differences between animals of the same class.

Illinois State Standards and Objectives:

12.A.2b Categorize features as either inherited or learned.

12.A.3c Compare and contrast how different forms and structures reflect different functions.

12.B.2a Describe relationships among various organisms in their environments. (e.g. predator/prey, parasite/host, food chains, and food webs.

12.B.2b Identify physical features of plants and animals that help them live in different environments.

12.B.3a Identify and classify biotic and abiotic factors in an environment that affect population density, habitat and placement of organisms in an energy pyramid.

12.B.3b Compare and assess features of organisms for their adaptive, competitive, and survival potential.

Materials:

Printed pictures of various animals. (A stack of old National Geographic magazines is ideal)

Large pieces of paper

Glue

Scissors

Method:

Begin a classroom discussion on why scientists classify animals. Point out that most newly discovered animals can be classified because of similarities between physical features. Discuss how scientists agree on classifying animals:

- Kingdom (Animalia, or "animal")
- Phylum (Chordata, or "has a backbone")
- Class (Mammalia, or "has a backbone and nurses its young")
- Order (Rodentia, or "has a backbone, nurses its young, and has long, sharp front teeth")

- Family (Scuridae, or “has a backbone, nurses its young, has long, sharp front teeth, and has a bushy tail)
- Genus (*Tamiasciurus*, or “has a backbone, nurses its young, has long, sharp front teeth, has a bushy tail, and climbs trees)
- Species (*hudsonicus*, or “has a backbone, nurses its young, has long, sharp front teeth, has a bushy tail, and has brown fur on its back and white fur on its underparts)

Next have students look through pictures of different animals. Have them guess what class each animal belongs to. Have them compare four sets of animals from the same class. Have each student describe the similarities and differences found in each pair of animals.

Group each animal into their respective classes and create a classroom collage for each of the animal classes.