



Grade Level: Kindergarten

Lesson Summary:

The waters close to shore are home to many different creatures. In this activity, the class will create a “guidebook” with pictures and short descriptions of different plants and animals they might find in shallow water.

Standards:

SC.K.L.14.3 – Observe plants and animals, describe how they are alike and how they are different in the way they look and in the things they do.

LAFS.K.W.1.2 – Use a combination of drawing, dictating, and writing to compose informative/explanatory texts in which they name what they are writing about and supply some information about the topic.

Preparation for activity:

The materials and instructions for this activity are based on a class size of 15 or less. This can be easily modified to fit larger classes by printing more animal photos or using a picture book.

Print the photos for each plant/animal (included with this lesson) and cut out each plant/animal with its name. Print the identification sheets, enough so that each child can fill out at least two, depending on time.

To start activity: Explain each of the following points:

- Shallow water is home to many creatures.
- These homes are called “habitats.”
- Every type of creature is different, and there are ways of telling them apart.

Adventure in the shallows

Who lives here?

Project Activity Background

There are many different plants and animals that call the shallow waters close to shore “home!” Healthy nearshore habitats around Florida can be full of mangroves and seagrasses that make great homes. The mangrove roots create a maze that young fish can hide in and food is found easily, so some of these shallow water ecosystems can act as nurseries for young fish to grow up in. Pelicans, herons, and other birds use the canopy of the mangroves for shelter, and hunt for crabs, shrimps, and small fish hiding in seagrasses nearby. And in southern Florida, you may even see an invasive green iguana scuttling around in the mangroves.

This activity will show students the diversity of creatures living in shallow waters, including plants, fish, birds and reptiles. They will draw some of these creatures and describe a couple features that makes each animal distinct from one another. All their drawings and descriptions will be put together into a class “guidebook” that they can use to identify each animal if they saw it in the wild. And if you have the option, this activity is the perfect precursor to a mangrove fieldtrip.

Procedure:

- Show students photos of some plants and animals they might find in shallow water, either by showing the photos provided or by projecting the images on a screen.
- As you show each photo, say the name of the plant or animal, and ask the class to describe it to you. You can prompt them with questions like, “does it have wings?” and “what color is it?”
- When you have gone through all the photos, tell them they will be creating a book featuring their own artwork and descriptions, so that if they see a plant or animal outside, they can tell what it is.



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Materials:

Printed photos of animals and plants (30)

Printed guidebook pages (2 for each student)

Printed guidebook cover

Crayons, pencils

Stapler (or a 3-hole punch and binder/ribbon)

Additional Resources:

Many of the examples used in this lesson were taken from these resources:

<https://www.floridamuseum.ufl.edu/southflorida/habitats/> (and you can find many more here!)

<https://www.nature.org/en-us/about-us/where-we-work/united-states/florida/stories-in-florida/why-mangroves-important/>

<https://myfwc.com/research/habitat/>

Questions or comments?

If you have questions or comments, or if your student creates something amazing that you would be willing to share, please email BTT at: office@bonefishtarpontrust.org.

We look forward to hearing from you!

Adventure in the shallows

Who lives here? (Continued)

Procedure continued:

- Hand out the photos and the book pages so that each student gets two photos to draw and describe. Go around the room and help any students who may be struggling.
- When all the pages are done, invite students to share their drawing and descriptions.
- Staple all pages together with the cover page included in this lesson. You can photocopy the book if students want a copy, or you can display the book in your classroom.

Expansion:

- This can be an introduction to mangroves and nearshore ecosystems before a field trip. On a field trip, bring the guidebook and have students point out plants and animals they recognize. Encourage them to tell you how they identified it.

Differentiation:

- For students who are uncomfortable with their drawing or writing abilities, this activity can be done in pairs. Assure all students that they are not being assessed based on their drawing abilities.