Bridging the curriculum through literature

Glennis Esta Mensinger

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BRIDGING THE CURRICULUM
THROUGH LITERATURE

A Project
Presented to the
Faculty of
California State University,
San Bernardino

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts
in
Education: Reading Option

by
Glennis Esta Mensinger
June, 1993
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THROUGH LITERATURE

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Approved by:

[Handwritten signatures and dates]
ABSTRACT

This project promotes the use of literature groups based around a theme. In trying to meet the requirements of the California state framework, to integrate the subjects, this project contains two thematic units.

Although the themes were designed for second and third grade, the two thematic units may be used as a guide to help teachers implement the thematic teaching approach into their classrooms. Both themes included in this project integrate subject matter such as math, language arts, science, social studies, and art.

Language arts is not a separate subject to be taught in the thematic approach but rather an approach used to search for information about the theme.

The two themes are built around very general but important concepts. Through the selected literature, the children will gain a greater understanding of the concepts.

The literature review discusses different approaches to thematic teaching, the positive effects of the thematic approach, and structures of literature groups.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank my family and friends for their understanding, patience, and support. I would also like to thank all the professors from California State, San Bernardino in the reading department who made the reading program meaningful and enjoyable.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ABSTRACT</td>
<td>iii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</td>
<td>iv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STATEMENT OF PROBLEM</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THEORETICAL FOUNDATION</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LITERATURE REVIEW</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GOALS</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIMITATIONS</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REFERENCES</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPENDIX A</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Animals From Around The World</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPENDIX B</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good Planets Are Hard To Find</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
INTRODUCTION

For many years teachers have been teaching their students in isolated fragments. One subject has little or nothing to do with another subject. A typical morning's lessons include a spelling, handwriting, English, reading, and writing lesson. After the completion of four or five separate language arts lessons, the class might continue with math, science, and social studies. Once or twice a week an art project, music lesson, and/or P.E. activity would be included.

It is no surprise teachers have taught this way and continue to do so. Most of the universities' teacher programs are set up to teach each subject separately. Teachers' required method classes such as language arts, math, social studies, science, and so forth are taught in isolation. Many teacher programs are still implementing fragmented subjects. Teachers have also experienced this approach to education in their own childhood and many may find old habits hard to break.

An interdisciplinary curriculum addresses this problem of fragmented schedules that shatter curriculum into isolated pieces of knowledge. Implementing interdisciplinary curriculum units helps children acquire targeted concepts and skill of various disciplines more effectively. (Jacobs, 1991, p. 22)
In recent years the focus in education has been towards integrated thematic units. Although thematic units are not new in education, until recently they have not been encouraged. Creating a classroom where children are actively involved in meaningful learning experiences is an exciting challenge for today's teachers.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Recently thematic teaching has been highlighted in the California framework along with the focus on whole language. Many schools have been trying to implement the thematic unit approach either in preparation of a Program Quality Review or as a result of the review.

As a result of my school's last Program Quality Review and self study, the faculty has attempted to implement thematic units into their program. This project will serve two purposes. First, it will describe ways to implement thematic units into the classroom to satisfy the review team's recommendations. Secondly, this project will be a guide for other teachers who are interested in using thematic units in second or third grade with an emphasis on literature.

With the growing awareness of thematic units several
books of varying quality have recently been published to help teachers prepare units. Although some of the ideas and activities in these books may be creative and fun for the children, many of these books are not well developed and are nothing more than workbooks centered around a theme.

A major misconception about integrated thematic units is that after a subject is chosen, the teacher simply needs to collect books and activities related to the subject. However, for the thematic approach to be most successful, concepts need to be developed carefully and activities need to be meaningful. "A thematic unit is an integrated unit only when the topic or theme is meaningful, relevant to the curriculum and student's lives..." (Routman, 1991, p. 278). When preparing and planning an integrated thematic unit, it is helpful to focus on main ideas and concepts the teacher wants to develop in the unit. The teacher can then proceed to build a theme with meaningful and purposeful activities which will reinforce the major concepts. The themes developed should be designed to provide for the needs of the students. The concepts are the roots of the unit. As often as possible, the students should be encouraged to help plan the unit's direction.

Because I believe children should be given choices, each unit will include literature which will provide the students
with a variety of options. The thematic literature approach
will encourage students to share their own experience on the
subject while being motivated to read the literature their
peers have enjoyed. According to Goodman (1986), "Kids need
to feel that what they are doing through language they have
chosen to do because it is useful, or interesting, or fun for
them" (p. 31).

Literature will provide the foundation for learning and
understanding of the concepts of each unit of this project.
Goodman states (1986), "If language is learned best and
easiest when it is whole and in natural context, then
integration is a key principle for language development and
learning through language" (p. 30). The literature books in
this project will span across the curriculum to integrate
elements of math and concepts of science and social
studies. The literature in each theme could be used to incorporate
reading, writing, speaking, and listening as the teacher and
students determine.

Although the thematic units included in this project may
appear to be planned step by step, it is recommended that any
teacher using these units consider the needs of their own
class and the teacher's orientation and style, and plan from
there.

Unfortunately, with the growing popularity of thematic
units and whole language, the two are commonly thought to be the same. However, thematic units that are a collection of worksheets based on a similar idea or subject are not whole language. (Routman, 1991) The thematic units in this project will encourage the students to take an active role in their class and in their own learning. They are also developing and planning the curriculum based on their interests and needs. The students will engage in meaningful, authentic activities, with high quality literature that center around a theme.

THEORETICAL FOUNDATION

The theoretical foundation of this project is based upon a holistic philosophy. Whole Language is a philosophy which holds that language is a process and should always focus on meaning. Whole language does not include a set of rules and guidelines to follow, but rather an approach to language which should be natural and enjoyable. Johnson and Louise (1990), states “A whole language philosophy suggests that all components of language must be harmoniously integrated into the instructional program” (p. 9).

In a whole language class, children are encouraged to share ideas, and talk about a story they have read or
written. The students and teachers are active learners. Students are continuously learning from their peers as well as the teacher. They are learning to respect the opinions of others, while they develop social skills of sharing their ideas. Working together builds a sense of community which is an important aspect of a whole language classroom environment. "Children move towards full literacy with ease and joy when their learning is based on communicating with others, on solving problems, and on facing new and interesting challenges. They pursue reading for the joy of it" (Forester & Reinhard, 1990, p. 287). The literature study groups which will be the foundation of each thematic unit in this project will engage children in situations that require problem solving and communicating with peers. The invitation or culminating activity for each literature group will provide new challenges for the students to complete in cooperative groups.

Crafton (1991) believes that "Compared to more traditional teaching whole language is student-centered, process-driven, and language based. Whole language and traditional teaching exists as philosophical opposites, standing in stark contrast to one another" (p. 7). The thematic units in this project will be of a whole language approach based on literature. The children will be involved
in reading quality literature of their choice. The activities will focus on the meaning of the literature and not on isolated skills. The concepts which will be the purpose of the unit will be discovered by the children through reading the literature, conducting research, communicating with peers, or through the activities.

The classroom will be a learning environment filled with resources of a variety of reading materials. The children will also be encouraged to bring in books from home on the subject and use the library. There will be time for the children to explore and research the subject free from distractions. "Children cannot be taught to read. A teacher's responsibility is not to teach children to read but to make it possible for them to learn" (Smith, 1985, p. 7). Literature groups and reading research will provide children with a reason for wanting to read. Writing and reading for authentic reasons will allow children the practice needed to become fluent. Making it exciting will motivate children to become life-long readers.
LITERATURE REVIEW

Creating a classroom where children are actively involved in meaningful learning experiences is an exciting challenge for today’s teachers. Recently, with the move towards whole language, teachers and students have more opportunities to plan their curriculum. The focus in education is becoming the process of learning and not the product. Therefore, students are involved in meaningful, purposeful activities which are child-centered. The students deserve more than a product orientated approach. Students deserve the right to be creative, to be involved in authentic, meaningful learning, to be in an environment which fosters a community of learners. Children deserve the right to be literate. Zarry (1991) reminds us that it is “Better a child who can’t read but wants to, than a child who can read but doesn’t want to” (p.15).

The whole language approach integrates the areas of reading, writing, listening and speaking. Crafton (1991) believes “that language arts are not areas to study rather tools to use while in the process of learning” (p.55). Literature demonstrates how thematic teaching integrates subjects across the curriculum. Based on one theme, the days activities and projects naturally proceed from one to the
next. The students are not being shuffled from one subject to the next, constantly having to redirect their attention.

According to Jacobs (1991)

...interdisciplinary curriculum... shatter[s] curriculum into isolated pieces of knowledge. Implementing interdisciplinary curriculum units helps children acquire targeted concepts and skills of various disciplines more effectively (p. 22).

A whole language thematic approach will get children and teachers excited and motivated to be life-long learners.

This literature review will focus on the following aspects of thematic teaching.

1. Positive effects of thematic teaching
2. Structures of effective thematic units
3. Structures of literature study groups based around a theme

**Positive Effects of Thematic Teaching**

"By third grade, children view subjects as changes in behavior, teacher attitudes, areas of the room, and times of day" (Jacobs, 1991, p. 22). Many of the opinions or attitudes of the teachers may be passed on to the students about a subject just by the time allotted for the subject. According to Zarry (1991) "In thematic teaching, many subject areas—all related to the theme—are integrated, and the theme is enhanced by literature—stories and poems—songs, and
drama" (p.104). The literature and activities blend the subject areas together, creating a sense of unity.

Lehr (1988) studied student children’s sense of theme. She read with sixty students in kindergarten, second and fourth grades. The groups read three books and chose the two that had a similar theme. Before the study, Lehr had college students complete the same task. “The major purpose of this study was to characterize the nature of the child’s sense of theme in narratives as it develops across three age levels and to determine the role of literature in that development” (p.340). The study concluded that children usually chose the same two out of three books as the adults. Therefore, it is natural for students to be engaged in thematic units, rather than learning isolated bits of knowledge from several subjects. Traditionally “…students [were] jumping from one story to the next, one chapter to the next, one topic to the next, most of them at a pace that doesn’t give students a chance to come to terms with specific content or make the critical connections among language expression” (Crafton, 1991, p.49).

Young children can begin to make connections about similarities and differences. With the thematic teaching approach children are encouraged to concentrate on major concepts that possess unity. Clark (1990) states “Life is
shaped either by an assumption of separateness, in which the essence of reality is fragmentation, or an assumption of wholeness, in which the essence of reality is unity" (p.47). Thematic units not only integrate the language arts areas for wholeness, but the units integrate all subject areas across the curriculum based on one theme. Reading, writing, listening and speaking are incorporated in science, social studies and math.

In the past, children had little choice in their education. The majority of the assignments were teacher directed and student completed. According to Bergnoff and Egawa (1991,)

We hold the belief that learners need to have choices that allow them to make connections and develop their own course for learning, that learners in a community should support one another, and that every student brings a unique and equally valuable contribution to the dynamics of the learning community (p.537).

If children have more choices about the curriculum then they will be more involved in their learning. They need to feel like a valued member of the classroom community, who can help course the direction of their education. “Every child needs to be an active participant, negotiating within the class culture” (Bergnoff and Egawa, 1991, p. 537).

Recently in education there has been a push towards children learning together. The thematic teaching approach
encourages children to work collaboratively. Children are learning how to work together and organize their thoughts in such a way that they may share their new knowledge with others. Keegan and Shrake (1991) state, "The social skills the children practice become a natural part of their interaction with each other" (p.544). Students are learning social skills which will help them throughout life.

Children are more enthusiastic about learning when they are invited to plan the thematic unit alongside the teacher. It also ensures the concepts and materials included in the theme are at the levels of the learners. In short, as Smith (1985) points out, "...children can learn to read only through materials and activities that make sense to them, that they can relate to what they already know or want to know" (p.xxi). Teachers should consider the subject matter, the levels of the students, and the interests of the students before introducing a theme. Naturally the literature included in a theme will have a range of readability, to meet the needs of each individual.

**Structures of an Effective Thematic Unit**

There are different approaches to use with thematic units. A teacher should choose an approach that they feel comfortable with. Teachers sometimes begin by asking
themself the major goals for teaching the unit. Routman (1991), in discussing misconceptions and helpful hints says “We need to begin asking ourselves whether such units are worth the enormous teacher preparation and class time that they require and whether they effectively foster the development of important concepts and skills” (p.277). Many units may be exciting and fun for children, but if there is not considerable value for the students, why waste precious time? A teacher and children may get so caught up in the fun activities, the meaningful concepts are lost in the transaction. If the theme is not relevant to the students, it will be of little value to the development of the students. Another misconception according to Routman (1991) is “With integration, the relationship among the discipline or subject areas are meaningful and natural... With correlation, the connections are superficial and forced, and there is no important concept development” (p.277). Careful consideration needs to be used when preparing a thematic unit. Just as in any approach in education not every moment is planned. We need to include the teachable moments. Children can learn from a spontaneous moment of curiosity just as well as from a planned lesson. Zarry (1991) believes “theme teaching and teachable moments are also important aspects of whole language teaching. The teaching of both
content and literacy skills are meshed to provide language across the curriculum" (p.17).

In thematic teaching, the teacher often starts with simple subjects, such as pigs, butterflies, planets, or other subjects of interest. Students' surveys from the beginning of the year may provide possible subjects or themes. The students research, take notes, write about, and share information gained. Not only are they learning the concepts of a theme, they are becoming a community of learners.

Since there are no set rules or guidelines in whole language or thematic teaching, there are a variety of ways to implement a theme to best fit the needs of the students and the style of the teacher. Some teachers begin the unit with charts, listing 'things we know' -- 'things we want to learn' -- 'what we learned'. Some teachers begin a theme by creating a web with all the possible directions the class can go with the subject. A web can be completed independently by the teacher, or collectively with the students. Some teachers create a new theme as a spin off from an ending theme. Children can also be given the opportunities to select the theme they are interested in. Other teachers create a theme around a book or a group of books. Crafton suggests, "In whole language classrooms units are not planned apart from students because learners must be integral contributors to
the decision-making process, not passive sidelines waiting to implement someone else’s best laid plans” (p.59).

Whichever way a teacher decides to begin a unit, he or she should integrate subject matter, visual and performing arts and language arts in a meaningful way. The lessons, activities, and assignments that the students engage in during thematic units from a whole language approach will be purposeful and meaningful. The students will be motivated to do their best because the work expected from them is authentic and interesting to them. The students are provided with choices so they feel they have some control of their education. Children will spend most of the day reading literature about the theme and researching to find out information about the theme. The students will be writing in literature logs, and writing letters to companies or corporations dealing with the theme. Students will write creative stories, poetry, and plays about the theme. They will frequently work in groups where they will need to speak and listen to their peers. The students will share literature activities with the group in which they will be developing and improving verbal skills. Being part of the audience will improve listening skills. The day will be filled with reading, writing, speaking, and listening activities, unlike many of the classrooms today, where much
of the time is spent listening to the teacher and little time spent on language development. (Routman, 1991)

Structures of Literature Study Groups Based Around a Theme

Thematic units can focus on a variety of content areas. Some units build from a social studies or science foundation. Other units are built around literature groups. Keegan and Shrake (1991) "...are convinced that literature study groups offer a framework for allowing children opportunities to discover what they know, to extend their thinking, and to develop strategies that will make them lifelong readers" (p.547). There is significant evidence to support the positive effects on children's learning through the thematic approach and a growing awareness of literature study groups. The two approaches can naturally be used together to strengthen and enhance the child's understanding of various concepts.

Literature groups allow children to choose the literature they will read and then engage in discussion and extension activities with a group of five to seven peers. Literature groups use real books that do not come with a preset guide to follow. Teachers and students are challenged to implement the approach to best fit their style and needs.
Some teachers choose the groups and then allow the group to select the literature. Other teachers allow the students to choose the literature and meet with their peers who chose the same book. (Crafton, 1991).

Before starting literature groups, the class should practice “think-alouds” so the students will develop the strategies of discussing literature with peers. The teacher can model “think-alouds” or the discussions after reading a book which the whole class reads. (Routman, 1991). Through the literature, children continuously construct meaning. Students begin to think about the elements of literature along with the meaning of the text. They naturally begin to compare and contrast books they have read. Keegan and Shrike (1991) believes

Techniques that are important to incorporate into meaningful discussion include attending to topic, participating actively, asking questions for clarification, piggy backing off others’ comments, learning to disagree constructively...supporting opinions with evidence... (p.544).

All of those techniques need to be modeled and practiced before the students are expected to be successful in literature study groups.

A literature group often begins with children selecting their book. Prior to reading, the children meet with their group members to discuss predictions or to write their
predictions in a literature log to be shared later. Children read the book independently first. When the group meets after an independent reading, they are encouraged to read the book together. (Peterson and Eeds, 1990).

In literature study groups students freely discuss the literary elements: plot, tension, characters, settings, and so forth. Peterson and Eeds (1990) remind us that "Dialogue is a process of co-producing meaning" (p.21). The children bring their background experiences to the discussion which produces spontaneity for others. "children practice making meaning as they make personal connections to the text and benefit from the insights of others" (Peterson and Eeds, 1990, p.21). The discussions are lead by the group, not the teacher.

Learning is a social event in which children and adults learn from one another. "Teachers are learners and demonstrators and facilitators, recapturing the excitement of forever being a student as we use our expertise to create optimal learning environments" (Crafton, 1991, p.39). Literature discussions encourages learners to probe deeper into the meaning of a book, a concept, or another’s idea. According to Keegan and Shrake (1991) "There is no comparison between this dining room table give and take and the dry, teacher - directed question - and answer format" (p.546).
The discussion does not have an agenda to follow nor certain questions to be answered.

Learning logs or literature logs are often the next stage in literature groups. Students record their thoughts and feelings about the book they read in a journal or notebook. Children may find this easy after discussing the book with the group. Others may need prompts to get them started writing about literature. "Responding to literature promotes students' ability to connect their prior knowledge and experience with the text and encouraged personal response to literature" (Kelly, 1990, p. 469). The students may share their written response with their groups when they are finished.

"Once the inquiry has been completed, be sure to plan with your students some ways of sharing what has been learned, a culminating project or presentation" (Crafton, L., 1991, p.61). There are a variety of terms used today for these projects; story stretchers, extensions, follow up activities, and/or invitations. For each literature group in the thematic units there will be an invitation. The invitation will provide the group with a list of activities to choose from. After the group completes the invitation they will share it with the class. The activities include; drama, music, visual arts, science experiments, and writing
activities which will challenge the group to reflect upon the literature more closely. Worksheets and workbooks can not begin to develop the creativity, planning and organizing, and collaboration that are involved in invitations. Harste, Short, and Burke (1988) believe "Choice is central in curriculum because students test different hypothesis according to their different needs, interests, and experiences" (p.15). Group projects provide students the opportunities to be partners in planning the curriculum. Through working together on the activities, students are improving social skills in cooperative learning. The activities, when shared with the rest of the class, encourages other students to read the book. Students become eager to read literature and anticipate the invitations.

The books that children select in the literature study groups cover a variety of genre. Some books are fictional and others non-fictional. Graves (1991) states, "Children need to learn to acquire information from books and people" (p.50). Real books can be used to teach concepts just as well as textbooks. Children need to be given the opportunities to read a variety of materials.

The teacher's goal should be to provide the students with the strategies that they will need to be life-long learners. According to Jongsmia (1991) "Instructional
invitations that allow students to use art, mathematics, and written language in concert to construct and share meaning provides opportunities to create new thoughts as well as new ways to think” (p.442).

In conclusion, the thematic teaching approach is a natural way of integrating the subject area to focus on major concepts. “It is much easier to let packaged materials and textbooks do the thinking, to abdicate the responsibility for educating minds and hearts and imaginations” (Peterson and Eeds, 1990, p.74). After all, that is the approach that has been used for many years and the way the majority of teachers were trained to teach. Formerly the publishing companies dictated the educational direction of the classroom to teachers and students. Many districts required the teachers to rely on a teacher's guide to plan the curriculum. The product oriented approach of traditional teaching not only controlled the students but also the teachers. If teachers followed the expected curriculum and used the teacher's guide, there was little time left for the students to have any input into their education.

Literature study groups provide children with choices. The students choose the book and the invitation activity. They are engaged in cooperative learning which provides them
with social skills they will use throughout life. They are in charge of their learning. Focusing on one theme enhances children's learning.
GOALS

The two thematic units in this project are designed to be used in second or third grades. The goals for the project are:

1. Encourage change in the classrooms by allowing children choices about their educational direction.
2. Students will be engaged in meaningful reading and writing activities as a means of learning. The language arts area will be tools for learning and gathering knowledge about the theme.
3. Teachers will integrate other lessons into the already designed themes to meet the needs of the students as well as to add their personal touch and style.
4. Using these thematic units as a model may familiarize teachers with thematic teaching so that they will continue to use this approach.
5. To heighten multicultural awareness by including quality literature reflecting diversity.
6. The subjects will be integrated naturally to focus on key concepts of the themes.
LIMITATIONS

Although the thematic units from this project were well developed and complete, certain limitations may develop when teachers try to implement them:

1. These thematic units require multiple sets of the selected literature. Not all teachers or schools have multiple copies of the literature included in each theme. With budget cuts, it may be difficult to supply the libraries needed.

2. Developing thematic units takes many hours. To collect the resources and materials needed at the beginning of each theme is also time consuming.

3. Adjustments may need to be made to allow for individualization and class differences for each theme.

4. Depending on the class, a teacher may want to expand the length of time for a literature group. Some teachers keep the group on the same book for a week rather than a day.
REFERENCES


APPENDIX A

ANIMALS FROM AROUND THE WORLD

Rationale:

Every animal holds a place in the ecosystem. They have a purpose for living. Many animals help people in personal ways. Others help us in ways we might not be aware of. The earth is home for millions of animals and it's time people start sharing it. Animals can't compete with man's technology and growth. If people can't preserve habitats for animals, soon animals will be extinct.

Concepts:

1. Many animals are helpful.
2. Animals live in different areas of the world.
3. People need to protect animals.
4. Animals live and grow. They have basic needs like people.
5. There are many different kinds of animals.
ANIMALS FROM AROUND THE WORLD

MATH
- Sorting
- Classifying
- Charting
- Surveys

SCIENCE
- Sorting and Classifying
- Researching facts
- Charts
- Discussions of Animal Characteristics

ART
- Painting
- Collages
- Drawing
- Puppets
- Drama
- Paper Mache
- Musical Instruments

SOCIAL STUDIES
- Animal’s homes
- Areas of the World
- Behavior and Needs of Animals
- Discussions of how we depend on animals.

LANGUAGE ARTS
- Reading Stories
- Writing Stories
- Literature logs
- Literature discussions
- Poetry
- Reader’s Theatre
WEEK ONE

Animal’s Homes

Concept:

There are many different kinds of animals. They live in different areas of the world.

DAY ONE

INTO:

Read poems from Eric Carle’s Animals Animals. Look at the variety of animals illustrated in the book.

Together, list (on chart paper) as many animals the class can think of.

THROUGH:

Demonstrate how to cluster ideas and groups on another piece of chart paper. Print: “Animals” in the center of paper and draw lines going out to clusters. Print possible homes for these animals on the chart paper. Example: forest, zoo, jungle, farm, desert, antarctica, ocean....

Ask student to work independently or with a partner to print at least five animals from the list to go under each “home”.

29
Example:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Farm</th>
<th>Ocean</th>
<th>Forest</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ANIMALS</td>
<td>Desert</td>
<td>Zoo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jungle</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Share papers with other groups when finished.

Complete class cluster chart. Brainstorm reasons why certain animals live in a particular area opposed to a different area and climate. Discuss why the habitat an animal lives in usually meets the animal’s characteristics.

BEYOND:

Read more poems from Animals Animals by Eric Carle.

Try to write a short poem about one of your favorite animals. Illustrate poem using paint on tissue paper. Share poetry written by students, hang up around room, office, or cafeteria.

On chart paper (to be saved throughout unit) list all the things about animals the class knows on “We Know”. On a second chart, “We Want to Learn”, list all the questions the class wants to research. A third chart, “We Learned...”, will contain interesting facts the students learned during the unit. Each chart can be added to as needed.
DAYS TWO - FIVE AM

INTO:

Introduce literature Study Groups. Children will choose four out of six books to read this week; one book each day. Each child will be responsible for reading non-fiction books one day out of each week, to conduct research. The students will record any interesting facts they read about and share it with the class in the afternoon. Information found may be added to the “We Learned” chart. Students are encouraged to bring books from home or the library to share.

THROUGH:

Literature Groups

Each child will choose four out of six books to read; one each day.
BIG RED BARN
by Margaret Wise Brown

Summary: The story follows animals, who live on a farm, for a day.
(Written in verse)
- Read story independently.
- Read story with group.
- Literature study / discussion
- Written response in journal or literature log.

INVITATION
Big Red Barn

1. Paint a big red barn on poster paper, to hang on bulletin board. Add farm animals and plants cut from scrap paper.
2. Read Old Macdonald Had a Farm, illustrated by Pam Adams. Create a book similar to this or write a group big book about farm animals.
3. Record group reading of the Big Red Barn using musical instruments and voices for sound effects.
Summary: Annie’s cat wandered off to have kittens. Annie thought her cat ran away so everyday she would put corn cakes out by the edge of the forest. Wild animals came to eat the corn cakes. At the end, Annie’s cat returns home with her kittens.

- Read the book independently.
- Read the book with the group.
- Literature study / discussion.
- Written response.

INVITATION
Annie and the Wild Animals

1. Create a diorama with stand-up paper animals and pine trees.
2. Illustrate story using frames similar to Jan Brett's.
   Retell story to group.
3. Make corn cake for class (with parent or aide supervision).
THE WHALE’S SONG
by Dyan Sheldon

Summary: Lily listens to her grandmother’s stories about whales. After dreaming about whales, Lily takes a gift to the whales.

- Read book independently.
- Read book together.
- Literature study / discussion.
- Written response.

INVITATION
The Whale’s Song

1. Write a whale story on whale shape book.
2. Sponge paint ocean scenery. Cover with plastic to give water affect.
ALASKA’S THREE BEARS
by Shelley Gill

Summary: The book contains two stories. One about three bears: one polar, one grizzly, and one black bear, who wake up in the spring. Each must find their way home. The other story written at the bottom of each page, is non-fiction about the different species of bears and their characteristics.

- Read the fiction story independently.
- Read the non-fiction story together.
- Literature study / discussion.
- Written response.

INVITATION

Alaska’s Three Bears

1. Draw three posters, one of each kind of bear in the story. Write a description below the poster.
2. Create bear sculptures out of clay. Write short description of the bear on an index card.
3. As a group, create three dioramas, one for each bear.
WHO IS THE BEAST?
by Keith Baker

Summary: The animals of the jungle fear the tiger. They consider him the beast until the tiger shows the other animals how they are similar. He has a long tail as a monkey, green eyes as a snake...We fear differences in others.

- Read the story independently.
- Read the story together.
- Literature study / discussion.
- Written response.

INVITATION
Who is the Beast?

1. Write a readers' theatre. Make character headbands and background scenery. Act out story for class.
2. Paint a jungle scenery for bulletin board.
3. Create a collage from old magazine pictures of jungle animals.

36
BEYOND:
Complete and share invitation activities.

Animal Homes
Concept: Animals live in different areas of the world.

INTO:
Look at pre-cut pictures of a variety of animals. Discuss where each animal lives and why they think so.

THROUGH:
Glue animal pictures to poster, labeled with region of animal’s home. Example: Antarctica, Zoo, Farm, Forest, Jungle,...

Variation: Cooperative groups could make a collage of a specific area.

BEYOND:
Share the poster, naming each animal and the reason they live in that particular area.
DAYS THREE - FIVE PM

Where Does the Brown Bear Go?

Concept: Animals live in different areas of the world.

INTO:

Read Where Does the Brown Bear Go? by Nicki Weiss. (Available in Big Book form.) Discuss the animals in the story and where they live.

THROUGH:

Independently or with a partner write a rough draft story about animals from around the world. Include five different areas: forest, jungle, desert, ocean, zoo, farm,...

Revise story with peers, parent helper or teacher.


BEYOND:

Share books with class and other classes.
DAYS TWO - FIVE PM

Popular Pets

*Concepts:* Many animals are helpful.

*INTO:*

List all the different kinds of animals people have for pets on a piece of chart paper. Ask students to discuss ways these pets are helpful: protection, companionship, farm or ranch help...

*THROUGH:* Make a chart to survey friends around the school about which pet they have. How many?

**POPULAR PETS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How many?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DOG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FISH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BIRD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SNAKE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HAMSTER</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Make predictions before starting. During recess, survey 25 people. Discuss results.

BEYOND:

Chart class pets on butcher paper. Which is the most popular pet?
WEEK TWO
Animals Live and Grow

Concepts: Animals have basic needs similar to people to live and grow.

INTO:
Introduce Literature Groups for the week. Each child will choose four out of six books to read and complete an invitation on. One day must be spent conducting research by reading of variety of non-fiction materials. The students will record interesting facts to share with the class.

THROUGH:
Literature Groups

Each child will choose four out of six books to read.
ANIMALS BORN ALIVE AND WELL

by Ruth Heller

Summary: Written in rhyme, the story discusses scientific concepts about a variety of animals.
- Read story with a friend.
- Read story with group.
- Literature study / discussion
- Written response in literature log.

INVITATION

Animals Born Alive and Well

1. Collect magazine pictures of animals and their young.
2. Create an animal bulletin board from scrap paper.
3. Make sculptures of animals and their babies out of clay.
IS YOUR MAMA A LLAMA?

by Deborah Guarino

Summary: Written in rhyme about a young llama asking other animals about their mothers. (Big Book)
- Read story independently.
- Read story together.
- Literature study / discussion.
- Written response.

INVITATION
Is Your Mama a Llama?

2. Make headbands for characters to act out story.
BABY ANIMALS
by Margaret Wise Brown

Summary: A little girl watches many different kinds of farm animals and their babies from morning to evening.
- Read story independently.
- Read story together.
- Literature study / discussion.
- Written response.

INVITATION
Baby Animals

1. Pen drawings with watercolor washes about farm animals.
2. Stick puppets of farm animals. Act out animal behaviors on a farm.
3. Write a short story or a poem about farm animals. Print on barn shaped paper - inside doors.
OVER IN THE MEADOW
Original by Olive Wadsworth
illustrated by Ezra Jack Keats

Summary: A variety of mother animals show their young how to do certain things.
- Read story to a partner.
- Read story together.
- Literature study / discussion.
- Written response.

INVITATION
Over In The Meadow

1. Write new version together and illustrate in big book form.
3. Read story with sound affects and musical instruments to the class.
4. Create a rap for the story.
BABY ANIMALS
by Elizabeth Elias Kaufman

Summary: An animal information book about young animals.
- Read story independently.
- Read story together.
- Literature study / discussion.
- Written response.

INVITATION
Baby Animals

1. Write and illustrate a young animal pop-up book.
2. Make a card game using index cards. Match baby animal to mother by picture or name. Examples: fawns-deer, foals-horses, pups-coyote, calves-cows...
3. Paint or draw a mural of animals and their young for bulletin board.
WEEK 2 PM
Aska's Animals

Concepts: Animals live in different areas of the world. There are many different kinds of animals.

INTO:
Read Aska's Animals by David Day. Look at and discuss the beautiful illustrations by Warabe Aska.

THROUGH:
Try to paint or draw pictures like in the book, where animals blend into their background.
Write a descriptive story or poem about the animal drawn and their habitat.
Discuss the reasons animals use camouflage.

BEYOND:
Read Who's Hiding Here? by Yoshi and try to find the hidden animals.
Concept: Animals have basic needs.

INTO:

List all the things people have to have for survival.

Why?

THROUGH:

With a partner, discuss things animals need.

(Most science books will include a chapter on animal’s needs.)

Read and Discuss.

After discussing that animals need a home, food, water, and air, have a contest. Which partners can list the most: names of animal, their home, and what they eat? Allow students 20 minutes. Count who has the most recorded. Share list with friends.
Concept: Animals are helpful. We need to protect animals.

INTO:

Read *Animals on the Job* by Nancy Krulik.

THROUGH:

In cooperative groups, make information posters to explain how animals help us.

Or create an advertisement of how animals help us.

BEYOND:

Share posters or advertisements with the class.
WEEK THREE

Concept: There are many different kinds of animals.

INTO:

With a small group, list as many animals as you can in ten minutes. Share each list.

THROUGH:

Read Chickens Aren’t the Only Ones, by Ruth Heller (Big Book). The story describes characteristics of reptiles, amphibians, mammals, fish, birds and insects.

Discuss the differences. On a long piece of paper – computer or butcher – make columns. Label at the top: Fish – Mammals – Birds – Reptiles – Amphibians.

Sort and classify pre-cut pictures of animals; glue pictures in columns where they belong.

BEYOND:

Small groups classify their list written earlier. Print names of animals in columns or draw pictures of animals in columns under the correct label.
Concept: There are different kinds of animals. Each is unique in their own way.

INTO:

Read *Pretend You’re A Cat*, by Jean Marzollo and discuss story.

THROUGH:

Write riddles about animals. Share with groups or whole class. Try to guess each others riddles.

Play charades: each student takes a turn pretending they are a certain animal. Others try to guess which animal.

Discuss how animals are different. Each animal has unique characteristics.

Stand in a large circle. One student starts by stepping into the circle, imitating an animal. Example: a monkey swinging arms. That person steps back while others copy that movement. Continue around circle so each child takes a turn. Try to be original and not repeat any animals.

BEYOND:

Parade around school campus - playing follow the leader (who’s imitating an animal).
Concept: Animals are different and come from different areas of the world.

INTO:

Divide the class into three groups. Each group will read one of the following books by Jerry Pallota: The Bird Alphabet Book, The Yucky Reptile Alphabet Book, or The Ocean Alphabet Book.

THROUGH:

In the group write a new ABC book and illustrate it, in big book form. (Keep the same title your group read.) Write rough draft together first. Revise and edit with parent helper or teacher. Designate who will complete each page; print text and illustrate on construction paper. As a group, put book in order, make cover page, and proofread.

BEYOND:

Share book with the rest of class. Groups may also want to share their animal alphabet big book with a young grade.
Conclusion of Animal Unit

If possible, visit a local zoo or farm.

Variation of Unit:

Complete the first week as an overview of animals in general; their habitat, needs and characteristics. Then focus on a specific animal from a few days to a week. Allow the students to choose which animals to study in more detail. Encourage students to plan the week, being responsible for bringing in library books or magazines about the specific animal of study.
ANIMAL BIBLIOGRAPHY


APPENDIX B

GOOD PLANETS ARE HARD TO FIND
RATIONALE

In the last few years the Earth Day celebrations have received popular public attention. Our earth has serious problems that need to be attended to not only on Earth Day, April 22nd, but everyday. This thematic unit will heighten the awareness of the problems of pollution, the destruction of the rain forest, the dangers animals face, and ways we all can help. These examples are only a few of many endangering the earth; however, if the students start to understand the seriousness of this problem then they will be able to build upon the knowledge this unit provides. The first step is for students to realize their responsibilities to nature and for the protection of the planet.

CONCEPTS:

1. Humans have the ability and the power to save or to destroy the earth.
2. The earth is our home.
3. Together we can protect the earth and make it a better place for everyone.
4. Anyone can recycle.
5. Our lives depend on elements of nature and nature depends on our care.
EARTH AWARENESS

Social Studies
- discussions during literature groups which deal with recycling, the future, social responsibilities...
- class discussion dealing with protecting the environment
- research

Math
- reading charts
- estimating and comparing
- multiply trash experiment
- problem solving
- story problems

Science
- sorting, graphing and charting
- plant terrarium
- observation walk
- discussions during literature groups
- experiments
- research

Art
- painting
- collages
- making puppets
- creating posters
- dioramas
- paper mache'

Drama
- reader's theatre
- write a skit
- puppet shows

Music
- "Earth Day Rap"
- "Kids Care" tape
- "One Light, One Sun" by Raffie

Language Arts
- Literature groups; reading, writing, speaking, and listening
- Research - reading and writing
- Weekly Readers
- Journals, Literature Logs...
- Letters to organizations
- Presenting and sharing information
- Poetry
- Readers' Theatre
DAY ONE

Concepts:
All the concepts will be covered in the first lesson. The children will understand that humans have the ability to save or destroy the earth. The earth is our home. Together we can protect the earth and make it a better place to live. Anyone can recycle. We need nature to survive and nature needs our care.

INTO:
• Read Just A Dream by Chris Van Allsburg to the whole room. Make predictions before starting the story and then confirm predictions after story is read.
• Model: Literature Study Groups style of discussion; discuss the stories meaning and the author's message and reason for writing the book. Other areas to discuss: How can we protect the earth? Should we? Why? How did the story make you feel?
• Literature journal logs. Respond to the literature in writing.
• Chart "What We Know" about the earth and about Earth Day and how to help the earth.
• Chart "What We Want to Learn" about the earth and how
to protect it.

- Label another chart "What We Learned". The three charts will remain up in the room so that information can be added as needed.

**THROUGH:**

- Allow the students to work independently, with a friend, or with a small group to conduct research; to answer some of the questions listed earlier. There will be a variety of non-fiction books available around the room to choose from as they do their research. The students record interesting facts in a learning log to be shared later.

**BEYOND:**

- Share interesting concepts with others and add them to the charts if relevant to any of the statements on the chart or if the class decides they want to add the information.
LITERATURE GROUPS

Concepts:

Each concept will be covered in at least one of the books. After reading and discussing with peers the issue of the literature, the children will understand: Humans have the ability and the power to save or destroy the earth. The earth is our home. Together we can protect the earth and make it a better place for everyone. Anyone can recycle. We need nature and nature needs us.

Literature Groups - The students will choose one piece of literature to read, discuss, write about, and complete an invitation on for one morning. The students will have a chance to choose a different book each day. They will rotate through four out of six groups in the four days.
Summary: Written in lyrical rhyme about the strength of a mountain which endures centuries of nature's way but could, after all this time be destroyed by man and his careless ways. It explains how it is home for many animals that rely on the Sierra Mountains.

- Read the book independently.
- Read the book with a group of 5-6 peers.
- Literature study / discussion. Group talks about the story and its meaning.
- Write written response in literature log. This can include insights they learned during a group discussion or their own interpretation of Sierra.

INVITATION FOR SIERRA

1. Use water colors to paint a mountain scenery.
2. Collect pictures from magazines to create a mountain collage or a collage of mountains from around the world.
3. Write a lyrical rhyme-commercial to save the mountains and earth.
4. Create a stand up diorama of the Sierra Mountains and the animals who live there. Use large piece of construction paper, folded to have two stand up walls for the background. Use scraps and miniatures to create the scenery.
The Great Kapok Tree

By Lynn Cherry

Summary: A man was sent into the rain forest to chop down a kapok tree. The man soon grew very sleepy and needed to lie down to rest. As he slept, the animals who lived in the tree pleaded with the man to leave the rain forest as it is. When the man woke up he walked out of the rain forest.

- Meet with the group first to predict what the story is about.
- Read the story independently.
- Read the book together with the group of 5-6 peers.
- Literature study / discussion.
- Written response in journal or literature log.
- Share response with group.

Invitation

The Great Kapok Tree

1. Create a rain forest bulletin board using a variety of materials - brown paper bags, construction paper, paint, sticks, real leaves, plastic leaves and flowers...

2. Make a terrarium from a plastic soda bottle. Cut off top, pull off bottom plastic bowl. Poor soil in bottom bowl and plant small vine plant; water, and place lid on
top.

3. Write a reader's theatre for the story, create stick puppets for each character, act out story for class.
Summary: A young boy dreams of a train ride where he is joined by endangered animals.

- Read the story independently.
- Read the story together with the group.
- Literature study/discussion
- Write response in literature log. List as many endangered animals as you can.

INVITATION

Hey! Get Off Our Train

2. Write an advertisement to save the animals.
3. Use boxes and animal models to create a train with endangered animals aboard.
4. Paper mache' endangered animals.
ONE LIGHT, ONE SUN

By Raffi

Summary: A songbook with the message we have one earth, one home so we need to care for it.

- Read the book independently.
- Read the book with a partner.
- Read the book together in group.
- Literature study/discussion.
- Write response in literature logs, share with group.

INVITATION

One Light, One Sun

1. Create a circle picture poster of the word on butcher paper.
2. Sing the song “One Light, One Sun” with the tape.
3. Write a new song with the same melody. Tape the song.
Summary: The Oncelers were creatures who would take from the environment without any consideration of the effects. The Lorax tried to warn the Oncelers, but they wouldn't listen. Soon the Oncelers destroyed the area around them and had to leave in search for a new place to start over.

- Read the book independently.
- Read the book together with the group.
- Literature study/discussion
- Write a response in journal or literature log.

INVITATION

The Lorax

1. Make dioramas to show stages from the story: the world before, during, and after the Oncelers.

2. List all the ways humans are similar to the Oncelers. What is happening today because of our neglect and abuse.

3. Use a long sheet of butcher paper to paint the story - before - during - after the Oncelers. Retell the story through the painting.
RESEARCH

Use non-fiction books to conduct research. Try to answer some of the questions listed on the charts or an area you are interested in. Record the information in a journal to share with group later.

** (This area is required at least once a week.) **
DAYS 2 - 5  P.M.

Complete and share invitation activity with the whole room.

How Much Trash?

Concept: Anyone can recycle.

**INTO:**

Bring in one large trash bag filled with a variety of trash (most of which can be reused or recycled). Ask the children to estimate how long it takes their family to fill a bag the same size. Record the answers. Estimate how long it would take to fill the classroom with trash if every child filled one bag a week. Estimate how much the school throws away in one day, one week, one month. Include the office, classroom, and cafeteria waste. Discuss where all this trash goes. Include students questions at this time, to estimate or discuss.

**THROUGH:**

Read about the overflowing landfill problems. (Weekly Reader; Feb. 1991) Charts are available on the time it takes for different materials to decay. Discuss charts. Example below:
How Long to Decay

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Decompose Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Piece of paper</td>
<td>1 month</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rag</td>
<td>6 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sock</td>
<td>1 year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tin can</td>
<td>100 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aluminum</td>
<td>350 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glass</td>
<td>500 years</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

BEYOND:

Open the trash bag and take out one item at a time. Using the chart, discuss how long it would take the item to decompose. Discuss which items could be reused or recycled. Examples of trash: old shoe, shirt, doll, sock, soda can, plastic bottles, newspaper, glass jar, school papers, cereal box, etc.
Nature Walk

Concept: Our lives depend on elements of nature and nature depends on our care. Together we can protect the earth and make it a better place for everyone.

INTO:

Read Sarah Cynthia Sylvia Stout Would Not Take the Garbage Out by Shel Silverstein.

THROUGH:

Collect small objects (piece of paper, apple peel, can, button, grass...) Bury these objects in a container of soil. Write class or individual hypothesis of what will happen. Check at the end of the week or month to see if the hypothesis' were correct.

Take a walk around the school campus to observe what different kinds of trash around around. Record the observations to discuss back in class. Use chart to estimate how long the trash would stay there.

BEYOND:

Decorate a box to save paper scraps from the classroom.
Start a newspaper drive for the school. Check with nearby businesses for support in recycling. Some stores have incentive programs for schools to recycle certain items.
WEEK TWO

INTO:
Review charts "What We Know", "What We Want to Learn", and "What We Have Learned". Add to any of the charts as needed.
Introduce the six literature study groups for the week. Each student will have the opportunity to choose four of the six during the week.

BEYOND:

LITERATURE GROUPS

THE BERENSTAIN BEARS
DON'T POLLUTE ANYMORE
By Stan & Jan Berenstain

Summary: Brother and Sister bear study an Earth Awareness unit at school which encourages them to make changes at home. At the end of the story the Bear community starts an Earth Savers Club and has a parade.
- Read the book independently.
- Read the book with a partner from the group.
- Literature study/discussion
- Written response in journal or literature log.
INVITATION

The Berenstain Bears Don't Pollute Anymore

1. Write a newspaper with stories about people helping or hurting the Earth.

2. Make banners like the Bears did. Go on a parade around the school.

3. Write a group story on chart paper, shaped as a bear, about how the Bears helped the Earth.
THE SUN, THE WIND AND THE RAIN
By Lisa Westly Peters

Summary: The story explains geological concepts of how the mountains are formed as Elizabeth builds a sand mountain at the beach. Available in Big Book form through Scholastic.

- Read the book independently.
- Read big book together with group.
- Literature study/discussion.
- Written response.

INVITATION
The Sun, The Wind and The Rain

1. Note the layers of the Earth. Pour colored sand, gravel, soil... in a jar to represent the layers of the Earth.

2. Build a miniature mountain outside, using sand, gravel, soil. Observe what happens if you pour water over it, or if the wind blows around the miniature mountain.
THE WUMP WORLD

By Bill Peet

Summary: The Wumps lived very peacefluilly with nature until one day their home was invaded by Pollutians. The Pollutians abused the air, water, and land until they could no longer survive. The Pollutians packed up their belongings and flew away on their spaceships in search for a new home. The Wumps came out of hiding. Eventually the air cleared, the trees and plants grew again, and the water improved.

- Have the group predict what the story might be about.
- Read the book together.
- Literature study / discussion
- Written response.
INVITATION

The Wump World

2. Use computer paper (fold to store - unfold to retell story). Illustrate story sequence.
3. Use charcoal sticks to illustrate what Earth will look like in a 100 years if we continue to neglect it.
Summary: Penguins lived peacefully in the Antarctica until man arrived. The people destroyed the land endangering the habitat of the animals with six pack rings, oil, litter, glass.

- Read the story independently.
- Read the story with the group.
- Literature study / discussion.
- Written response.

INVITATION
A Tale of Antarctica

1. Locate the Antarctica on a globe or map. Paint a picture of the story.
2. Use black and white construction paper to make penguins. Write a plea to protect the environment, on the stomach of the penguin.
3. Read and compare Antarctica by Helen Cowcher (very similar plot).
ON THE DAY YOU WERE BORN

By Debra Frasier

Summary: As the population of many species grow each day we need to learn to get along.

- Read the story independently.
- Read the story together in the group.
- Literature study/discussion.
- Written response.

INVITATION

On the Day You Were Born

1. On poster paper, draw your favorite pages. Copy text on the back, to read to the class later. (Use magic markers, colored pencils, or paint.)

2. Read More About the World Around You from the back of the book and discuss with group.

3. Write a short story or poem about the day you were born.

RESEARCH

Each student will be responsible to spend at least one day reading non-fiction books and recording information to be used on the charts or interesting facts about the
environment. Research can be completed independently or with a partner.
DAYS 6 - 10 P.M.

Complete and share invitation activity with class.

It's Their World Too

INTO:

Look at pictures of animals and their habitat from pre-cut magazine pictures. Discuss what kind of animals they are, where do they live, and do they help humans...

THROUGH:

Read A New True Book: Endangered Animals by Lynn Stone. Read the story together. Then discuss what endangered means and how does it affect us.

Discuss some of the organizations that help animals in danger such as Green Peace, P.O. Box 3720, Washington D.C., 20007, or National Wildlife Federation, 1400 16th St., N.W., Washington D.C., 20036.

In groups of three to four, write a letter to one of the organizations. Suggestions for writing the letter: to thank the group for their work, to ask any questions they may have, or to request more information about the organization. The writing process will be demonstrated here; rough draft -
revise - publish. Address an envelope and send letters.

BEYOND:

Create group collages of animals from magazine pictures.
Share with the rest of the class.
Changes

INTO:

Read *A True Book: Global Change* by Snow. Discuss the photos in the book... What happened? Why? Could we have prevented it?

THROUGH:

Ask student to select one of the precut magazine pictures. Write what is wrong in the picture and what might have caused it. Explain how it could have been prevented. Each child will share their picture and paper with a small group.

BEYOND:

Read the poem *I Can Make A Difference* (Copycat) from chart paper. Discuss the meaning of the poem. Volunteers who would like to practice reading the poem could share it with another class or with the office staff. Other students could continue conducting research.
I CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE

The Earth is my home and it's special to me,
I want to protect it and care for its needs.
The earth sure could use my two helping hands,
To safeguard the water, the air, and the land.

By putting my trash where it should be,
I'll keep the earth pretty for others to see.
By keeping pollution out of the water,
I can save animals like the sea otter.

By collecting newspapers, bottles, and cans,
I can recycle instead of filling the land.
Conserving water is another good deed,
I'll carefully use just the water I need.

To show the earth how much I care,
I can plant a tree where the land is bare.
By walking and car pooling when I move about,
I will save energy, which also helps out.

By trying each day to show that I care,
I will clean up the land, water, and air.
With helping hands and good common sense,
I truly can make a great difference!

AARDVARKS DISEMBARK

INTO:

Read Aardvarks, Disembark by Ann Jonas and discuss the story.

THROUGH:

Whole class create a paper Ark which stands up. Each child chooses one animal from the story. Draw two of the
same animal on construction paper. If drawn on a fold, the paper animal will stand after being cut out... Write a short description of each animal. Place all the animals around the ark.

BEYOND:

In pairs, make up story problems about the ark and animals. On a 5 x 7 index card print the problem on one side and illustrate the other side. Try to solve others' story problems. (Can create a game board of story problems to be left out as a center.)
WEEK THREE

INTO:

Review charts: "What We Know", "What We Want to Learn", and "What We Have Learned". Add to any charts as needed.

Introduce six Literature study groups for the last week of the theme. The students will choose four of the six.

THROUGH:

LITERATURE GROUPS

HERON STREET

By Ann Turner

Summary: People move near the marsh where the herons live. Eventually the herons must find a new home because they can't compete with humans.

- Read the story independently.
- Read the story with the group.
- Literature study/discussion.
- Written response in journal or literature log.
- Share response with group.
INVITATION

Heron Street

1. Use chalk to illustrate pictures about the story.
2. Make stick puppets for characters in the story. Use file folders for background scenery. Write short script to act out story for the class.
3. Reread the story to the class using musical instruments to create the mood and to produce sound effects from the story.
WHERE THE FOREST MEETS THE SEA

By Jeannie Baker

Summary: A young child walks through the forest of Australia imagining what it was like millions of years ago and what it will be like in the future.

- Read the story independently.
- Read the story with the group.
- Literature study/discussion.
- Written response.

INVITATION

Where The Forest Meets The Sea

1. On poster board or a bulletin board, create a forest with a variety of materials.
2. Glue twisted old nylon to poster board with starch, to create a tree. Sponge paint the leaves.
3. Use old magazines, collage a forest.
4. Write a short poem or story, predicting the future.
RAIN FOREST

By Helen Cowcher

Summary: Animals of the rain forest warn each other of the danger when people come to chop down trees. A flood becomes very dangerous, because the trees and plants are not there to hold the soil in place.

- Read the story with a partner.
- Read the story with the group.
- Literature study/discussion.
- Written response.

INVITATION

Rain Forest

1. Use water color paint to create a rain forest poster, including the animals of the forest.
2. Use tissue paper to create a mosaic of the rain forest.
THE WORLD THAT JACK BUILT

By Ruth Brown

Summary: Repetitious like The House That Jack Built. The world was beautiful in the beginning but as man continues to build, the earth slowly deteriorates.
- Read the story independently.
- Read the story with the group.
- Literature study/discussion.
- Written response.

INVITATION

The World That Jack Built

1. Illustrate a big book describing the story. Share it with the class.
2. Create a wall mural to tell about the story.
3. Write a newspaper or magazine advertisement to help prevent this.
A RIVER RAN WILD
By Lynn Cherry

Summary: A true story about the Nashua River and the Indians who depended on the river. Eventually the Indian people had to move because of the white peoples neglect of the river. In 1965 the U.S. Congress passed the Clear Water Act.

- Read the story together with the group.
- Read the story with a partner.
- Literature study/discussion.
- Written response.

INVITATION
A River Ran Wild

1. Create a time line on computer paper. Use the information from the cover of the book.
2. Discuss the responsibilities we have to keep the environment clean. List ways we all must help.
3. Sponge paint scenery pictures of the trees surrounding the river.
RESEARCH

Each student will be responsible to read non-fiction books one day of the week. Record interesting facts in journal or literature log to be shared later. The research can be completed independently or with a partner.

DAYS 10 - 15 P.M.

Complete and share invitation activity with the rest of the class.

INTO:

Read *Just A Dream* by Chris Van Allsburg. Choose one area covered in the past two weeks that concerns you the most. Create a poster using markers, paints, pencils... Share poster with the rest of the class. Video tape message from each child about their poster. Hang posters around the room, the school, or businesses in the neighborhood.
EARTH DAY RAP

Chorus: Turn up the volume
       The time is now
       To save our earth
       Make a difference somehow.

1 It was twenty years ago
   Mom and Dad were young and free
   They had the first Earth Day
   For all the world to see.

2 It was really something special
   Millions came to share
   Their concerns about our planet
   And their hopes for clean air.

3 At last the time had come
   For us to take responsibility
   For our actions that affect
   The earth's land and air and sea.

Chorus: Let's turn up the volume
       The time is now
       To save our earth
       Make a difference somehow.

4 It's twenty years later
   And our problems still exist
   We've got to change our habits
   If our earth is to subsist.

5 Clean water is a must
   For every living thing
   Dumping garbage in our ocean
   Is a very harmful thing.

6 Clean air becomes polluted
   By cars and factories
   So walk instead of drive
   And help conserve energy.

Chorus: So turn up the volume
       The time is now
       To save our earth
       Make a difference somehow.
The forests once filled the lands
From sea to shining sea
Now our cities and highways
Take the place of all these trees.

We must look to the future
When our children will live
But it all depends on the actions
That you and I now give.

The earth is counting on us
So let’s join hands today
To work toward protecting the world
And making everyday Earth Day.

Chorus: Really turn up the volume
The time is now
To save our earth
Make a difference somehow.

THROUGH:

Learn the Earth Day Rap (Copycat). Tape the class
singing the rap, sing for other classes or parents.

BEYOND:

Watch the video Yakety Yak Take It Back.

Have a Earth Day party, with treats from containers that
are either recycled or can be recycled.

Throughout the unit when time permits, listen to the
tape Kids Care: Sounds for a Better World by Discovery
Toys.
Good Planets Are Hard to Find

BIBLIOGRAPHY


