

Educator's Guide



Educational extensions for the **April 2011** issue of *Ranger Rick*® magazine

DIFFERENCES DISCUSSED

“Not-So-Freaky Frogs” (pages 6-12) points out that frogs are very different from us, but that they don’t seem so strange after we get to know them and understand the reasons for how they look and what they do. Of course, that’s true of many animals—and people—we encounter. Guide students toward an understanding of this theme in the story. Then divide the class into small groups to discuss how this idea fits into their own experiences.

INSECT “PERSONALITIES”

“The Buzz” (page 15) describes a study that finds personality differences among insects, noting that individuals react differently to new surroundings. Have students design their own experiments to test this hypothesis. Choose subjects from among the common insects outdoors, and invite students to set up small areas for their subjects to explore as they observe and note differences in behavior between individuals.

CAMOUFLAGE HUNT

“Can You BeLeaf It?” (pages 22-23) presents a spectacular example of camouflage. This issue of *Ranger Rick*® includes other examples of both camouflage and warning coloration. Send students on a scavenger hunt through the magazine to locate several examples of each. For instance—Warning coloration: sea slug (back cover), strawberry frog (page 8). Camouflage: leaf mimic toads (page 8), opossum in a tree trunk (pages 20-21).

EARTH DAY PLEDGE

“Ranger Rick’s Adventures” (pages 24-27) focuses on Earth Day. Stage your own Earth Day celebration and have students create personal pledges of environmental commitment. They could use Ranger Rick’s pledge or compose one in their own words, and they could then display it in a decorative way (plaque, poster, door hanger, etc.)

RAIN GAMES AND REFLECTION

When a rainy day comes along, use some of the ideas in “Let It Rain!” (pages 28-29) to get students outside to experience the wet weather. Whether you simply take a rain walk or get more hands-on with the falling raindrops, it’s sure to be memorable. Encourage students to reflect on the experience afterwards by writing a poem, composing a rain song, or choosing another creative format.

HATCHING A PLAN

After reading about the hatching process in “Look Who’s Hatching” (pages 30-35), arrange for students to see it in action. It would be ideal to watch live chicks hatch; alternatively, you could search online for a video. First have students predict what they will see. Then, as they observe the process, have them record what they see and note whether their predictions were correct.

LOOKING AT LEAVES

“Ask Rick” (page 36) explains why leaves are light green when they first emerge in spring and then become darker later in the season. Read the explanation, and then go outside to observe this phenomenon yourselves. If you like, you could then use this month’s **Nature Notebook** to make a more in-depth study of the emerging leaves.



Possum Parts



"Awesome 'Possums!" (pages 16-21 in the April 2011 issue of Ranger Rick®) reveals a few of the nifty tricks that opossums have. For each of the body parts or abilities listed below, describe how an opossum uses it. Then imagine what you'd do with it and explain your ideas.

BELLY POUCH

How an opossum uses it: _____

How you'd use it: _____

PREHENSILE TAIL

How an opossum uses it: _____

How you'd use it: _____

PLAYING DEAD

How an opossum uses it: _____

How you'd use it: _____



Froggy Facts



Read "Not-So-Freaky Frogs" (pages 6-12 in the April 2011 issue of Ranger Rick®). Then read the following sentences. They all sound unbelievable, but a few are true. Mark each one true or false. Then rewrite the false ones to make them true.

T or F Frogs live all around the world. There are almost 6,000 species just in Antarctica!

T or F It takes a frog less than a second to flip out its tongue, nab its prey, and gulp it down.

T or F When a frog swallows, its eyeballs bulge out of its head to make room in its throat for the food.

T or F Frogs don't have lungs because they take in all their oxygen through their skin.

T or F Frogs that swim have sticky toe pads, while webbed feet help tree frogs climb.

T or F A strawberry frog is bright red to tell predators that it's a sweet treat to eat, just like the berry it's named after.

T or F Male frogs inflate their vocal sacs like bubbles to make their singing louder.

T or F Baby Darwin's frogs hop out of their dad's mouth after they hatch!

