



Ranger Rick® Educator's Guide

Educational extensions for the March 2008
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JOURNAL OF A BEAR

Bailey the bear cub describes some happenings in the life of a young brown bear in “A Bear’s Life” (pages 6-11). Have students turn Bailey’s adventures into a series of journal entries written in the bear’s voice, focusing on the events described in the story or imagining new events that happen to the cubs as they grow up.

CRITTER CROSSINGS

When salamanders are on the move (“Salamander Celebration,” pages 12-13), they often run into roads. In some places, people are trying to provide safe passage by installing tunnels under the roads. Check out one of these projects, as well as other wildlife crossings, at fhwa.dot.gov/environment/wildlifecrossings/salamand.htm. Discuss the concept with students. Is this a good idea? What are the pros and cons? Are there alternatives?

OIL: A SLIPPERY SUBJECT

In “Ranger Rick’s Adventures: Orangutan Rescue” (pages 18-20), you read that palm oil production can cause problems for wildlife—and isn’t as healthy for people as some sources suggest. Investigate different types of cooking oils as a class. Have students fill in a chart with information about each oil: what plant it comes from, where and how it is produced, health considerations, environmental impacts, and foods it is used in. Then discuss how to choose healthy oils that minimize environmental impacts.

SIGNS OF SPRING

In “Critter Crackups” (page 30), you see some silly signs that spring is coming. Ask students to name some real spring signs for where you live. Then track spring’s progress! Keep a group list of events and the dates when you observe them. Or have student keep their own journals of spring signs. Visit journeynorth.org for more ideas on tracking spring.

CALLING ALL OWLS

What kinds of owls live in your neighborhood? After reading “On the Prowl for Owls” (pages 32-37), engage students in an owl investigation. Go to enature.com and enter your zipcode to find a list of local species and listen to their calls. Have students practice identifying the owls by photos and calls. Challenge them to try imitating the calls, too. Then take a night walk and see whooo’s calling! If you are lucky enough to hear an owl, ask your most talented owl-callers to try calling back.

GUESSING GAMES

This month’s “Fun on the Run” games (pages 40-43) are all about reptiles and amphibians. Here’s another game that’s fun to play (and builds thinking skills, too). Have students list as many reptiles and amphibians as they can. Write the name of each one on a separate slip of paper. Then play 20 Questions, with each student taking a turn picking a slip from the pile while the rest of the group asks yes-or-no questions to determine the identity of the animal. Extend the fun with a rousing round of charades.



FISH TALE

Read “Fishy Faces” on pages 22-27 in *Ranger Rick*. Then write a story with these fish as characters. First, answer the questions below to help you plan your story. Then, write your tale on another page or type it on a computer.

1. Which fish will be characters in your story? List them below, along with the role they will play (such as main character, side character, or “bad guy”), and a description of the character’s personality. Use the back of this page if you need more space.

Fish’s Name: _____ **Role in story:** _____

Personality: _____

Fish’s Name: _____ **Role in story:** _____

Personality: _____

Fish’s Name: _____ **Role in story:** _____

Personality: _____

2. Where does your story take place? _____

3. What happens in your story? Write a short outline of the action here.



A SALAMANDER'S LIFE

In "Salamander Secrets" on pages 14-17 in *Ranger Rick*, you read about the life cycle of a spotted salamander. In the diagram below, draw the three stages of the life cycle and label them. Then write an interesting fact you learned about that stage from the story.

The diagram consists of three rectangular boxes arranged in a triangle. The top box is connected to the bottom-left box by a curved arrow pointing from the top box to the bottom-left box. The top box is also connected to the bottom-right box by a curved arrow pointing from the top box to the bottom-right box. The bottom-left box is connected to the bottom-right box by a curved arrow pointing from the bottom-left box to the bottom-right box. Each box has a horizontal line near the top for labeling. To the right of the top box are five horizontal lines for writing. Below the bottom-left box are five horizontal lines for writing. Below the bottom-right box are five horizontal lines for writing.



SPRING SIGNS

Now is the time of year when winter begins to turn to spring. Some clues are hard to miss. To spot others, you may have to watch very carefully. But if you go looking, you're sure to find signs of the new season!

1. Keep a list of the spring signs you see. Write the date and place where you spot each one. (Then you can compare this year with years to come.)

Sample Spring Signs:

- ✓ Snow gone
- ✓ Ice gone on lake/pond
- ✓ Frogs calling
- ✓ Birds singing
- ✓ Birds building nests
- ✓ First thunderstorm
- ✓ Flowers blooming
- ✓ Leaves on trees

2. Draw some of your favorite spring signs in the space below.

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for drawing spring signs.