



Ranger Rick ACTIVITIES

This collection of activities can be used with any issue of *Ranger Rick*. The activities will challenge students to focus on reading comprehension and to think critically and creatively about what they read. Activity titles with the “*” have a corresponding Student Page in the resource list.

QUESTION EVERYTHING*

Ask students to generate two lists of questions as they read a story in *Ranger Rick*. On the left side of a piece of paper, have them list “who, what, when, where, why” questions with straightforward answers that can be found in the text. On the right side, have them list open-ended “I wonder . . .” questions inspired by what they read. Use these questions to spark discussion or to lead students deeper into a topic of interest as they search for answers to their questions in other sources.

READ AND UNDERSTAND

To build students’ comprehension skills, try the following exercises:

- As you read aloud from *Ranger Rick*, stop frequently. At each pause, ask students to turn to a partner and say one thing about what they have heard. Over time, encourage them to move from recall (restating a fact) to reflection (expressing an opinion, posing a question).
- Have students read a story carefully and generate questions from the text as they go. Then put yourself in the hot seat as they quiz you with their questions. Can they stump you? You can be sure they’ll try!
- Cut sticky notes into narrow strips and use them to cover some words in a reading selection. Ask students to use context clues to fill in the missing words.
- Photocopy a story and cut it apart by paragraphs. Then ask students to put the pieces back into a logical order using context clues to help them.

ANIMAL ALPHABET

Keep an alphabetical list of animals named in *Ranger Rick*. Divide a large piece of paper into a chart with 26 boxes. Label each box with one letter of the alphabet. As students read each issue, invite them to add the animal names they find to the appropriate boxes.

COMPARE AND CONTRAST*

Have students make a Venn diagram and use it to record similarities and differences between two animals featured in *Ranger Rick* or a featured animal and another species. The diagram consists of two overlapping ovals. Label each oval with one animal’s name. Then list traits the two have in common in the overlapping area and differences outside it.

CONCEPT MAP*

Have students create a concept map to help them organize the information they learn in a *Ranger Rick* story. Start with a bubble in the center of a piece of paper and write the topic inside. Then link additional bubbles to the central one and fill in supporting details.

TRUE OR FALSE?

Create a list of true and false statements based on the information in a *Ranger Rick* story and have students mark each statement with a “T” or an “F” after they finish reading. Alternatively, make all the statements on your list false or mixed-up in some way, and then ask students to rewrite them to reflect the true story.

A DAY IN THE LIFE*

Have students choose an animal featured in *Ranger Rick* and write about one day in its life. They could write the tale from the perspective of a scientific observer watching its behavior, or they could write in the voice of the animal itself in the style of a diary entry.

POST SCRIPT*

Ask students to imagine that they could write to an animal or character featured in *Ranger Rick*—and get a response. What questions would they ask? What details about themselves would they include? What do they imagine the response might be? Have them compose a set of postcards or letters reflecting this exchange: one from the student to the animal, and one with the imagined response.

TOUR MY WORLD

One *Ranger Rick* story format employs a fictional animal character who takes readers on a tour through that species’ world, sharing a variety of interesting facts along the way. After students read such a story, ask them to imagine a role reversal in which they show the character around *their* world. Have them write a story or skit about taking the animal on a tour of their school and neighborhood, introducing it to their friends and family, and explaining how humans move around, get food, take care of young, learn, and have fun.

WHOSE VIEW?

Explain point-of-view and how first person differs from third person. Have students identify the narrator in several *Ranger Rick* stories. Then ask them to retell part of a story from a different perspective. How does the story change with a new narrator? What new information does the reader gain? What details are lost? Discuss the advantages of each option and what makes a given perspective well suited to a particular story.

GENRE SWAP

Using a variety of sources as examples, introduce students to different kinds of writing, such as news stories, scientific reports, fiction stories, journal or diary entries, letters, how-to guides, plays, and poems. Ask students to see which of these they can find in *Ranger Rick*. Then have them use information from a *Ranger Rick* story to create a written piece in a different style. For instance, they might take a nonfiction story about the life cycle of a frog and use it to write a poem about the frog’s transformation.

PLACE POEMS

In many *Ranger Rick* stories, the setting plays an important role. Immerse yourselves in a place by looking carefully at the photos and searching the text for clues about the setting. Then brainstorm sensory words and phrases to describe it, using the prompts *I see* _____, *I hear* _____, *I smell* _____, *I feel* _____, *I taste* _____. Have students use these words to write poems.

MAP IT

Look at an atlas or map to find a place featured in *Ranger Rick*. In what part of the world is it? What are its significant geographical features? How far is it from where you live?

ON LOCATION

Congratulations! You've won a free trip via Imagination Airlines to any location featured in *Ranger Rick*. Challenge students to find the necessary information to plan your "journey." What are the climate and landscape like? What plants and animals might you see? What is special about the local culture? What clothing and gear would you need? How would you get there? Have students create an itinerary and a packing list and then write a series of journal entries about their imagined experience.

SCIENTIST FOR A DAY

Some *Ranger Rick* stories focus on a scientist who studies a particular species. After reading such a story, ask students to imagine stepping into the scientist's shoes and to create a journal entry or skit about the experience. What would they enjoy? What would be difficult? What would they hope to learn? How would they use the information?

LEARN BY ART

Drawing is a powerful way to look closer at both familiar and unfamiliar things, and to see them in new ways. Here are a few activities to try.

- Create a birds-eye view of a scene or event described in the text.
- Make a sketch of an animal, plant, or other object and label its important features.
- Draw in pairs. One partner describes a photo from the magazine, taking care to use detailed, clarifying terms, while the other draws exactly what is described.

HABITAT MURAL

As a group, create a mural of a habitat featured in *Ranger Rick*. Have students research the physical features and species that live there. Each student can then draw or paint the shape of a plant, animal, or object to add to the mural. Have them cut out their shapes and then write some interesting facts about them on the back. Tape the elements to the mural in such a way that viewers can flip up each shape and read more about it.

VOICE OF EXPERIENCE

Does someone from your community have a job or an interest that relates to a topic students are reading about in *Ranger Rick*? Invite that person to visit your class and discuss his or her experiences. Encourage students to prepare questions for the guest. After the visit, follow up with a discussion about what you learned, or have students write a summary.

READER RESPONSE

Many magazines include a page of letters from readers written in response to articles in previous issues. Show students examples from a variety of magazines, including "Dear Ranger Rick." Point out that some responses express appreciation or agreement while others present a counter opinion. Then have students compose their own responses to a story they felt strongly about in *Ranger Rick*.

CLASS MAGAZINE

Use *Ranger Rick* as inspiration for creating your own class magazine. Students can collaborate to decide on a topic or theme, write stories, take photos or draw pictures, organize the content into a magazine format, and then "publish" and distribute it.