

Kindergarteners Learn as Animals Grow!

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I teach kindergarten at a title 1 school and my classroom consists of a variety of students, including PEC, EIP, and gifted students. Many of my kindergarten students have a short attention span and I work hard to make learning fun. My students are very active, and they love to be involved in their own learning.

My students have big hearts, open minds, and are willing to experiment as they learn and grow. They love animals! This year my students had the opportunity to watch and record as animals grow and change daily. Our classroom pets allowed them to become focused on their learning.

In January we received a guinea pig and in March we received tadpoles, caterpillars, ladybug larvae, ants, and worms. My students loved to observe, care for, and learn about these animals this year! This unit created so much excitement in my classroom! Science class is much more fun with real animals and hands on learning.

Kindergarten Life Science Standards:

SKL1. Obtain, evaluate, and communicate information about how organisms (alive and not alive) and non-living objects are grouped.

SKL2. Obtain, evaluate, and communicate information to compare the similarities and differences in groups of organisms.

Kindergarten Spring Life Science Unit:

Objective: Observe and learn about animals (life cycles, movements, body covering, and habitats) and create an animal habitat.

Evaluation: Teacher will observe and record participation in animal observations, writing and drawing about animals, class discussions, worksheets, and final habitat project.

This Unit took my students one month to observe and record changes, and one week to create and present projects, but could be adjusted to fit the allowed time span.

Week 1:

Students observed the young animals and wrote in their writing journals and drew pictures of the animals. Students used the class iPad to take pictures of the animals. We compared living and nonliving this week as well.

Week 2:

Students observed and discussed any changes and continued to write, draw, and take pictures. We also compared plants and animals and completed sorting activities this week. The caterpillars grew quickly! The worms could also be used with a soil unit. My students loved to dig in the soil and hold the worms!

Week 3:

Students continued to observe, write, record and discuss changes. There were less changes with the worms, ants (they loved to watch them make tunnels), and guinea pigs. We also discussed differences in parents and babies. We discussed animal coverings, movements, and habitats.

Week 4:

By week 4 they had observed the full change into butterflies and ladybugs. We kept the butterflies for one week and released them and the ladybugs on the playground. They all gathered around and hoped for one to land on them! This week we focused our discussions on animal habitats and began to discuss their project. They would be making their own habits to present to the class the following week.

Week 5:

Students were split in to small groups and allowed to use a variety of materials (plastic, cardboard, tape, netting, and clay) to create an animal habitat of their choice. They were given three days to create their projects. The fourth day they presented the project to the class and received feedback. The fifth day they revised their habitat, if they decided they needed to make adjustments after collaborating with their classmates.

Afterwards we released the worms into the school garden and the frogs near a pond. Real animals allow students to understand the changes in life cycle, differences in parent and baby, types of movement, and habitats. Although its extra work to care for animals in a classroom, I am grateful I received these animals and will continue to use this lesson each year.

Animals also work well in teaching social studies standards of rules and responsibilities. My students have loved feeding and caring for these animals and I have loved seeing the animals make them so happy and excited to come to school each day!

Songs:

Living and Non-Living https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z_aAkuK_8nQ

Animal Habitats:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=5&v=DTp_YFZcvoU

Animal Movements: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fYxcZQaQIJM>

What an animal wears:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=3&v=nw7Gv8FRBt0





