



Wetlands Collage

Introduction

In *Near One Cattail: Turtles, Logs and Leaping Frogs* author Anthony Fredericks introduces students to the wetlands and the creatures that inhabit it. In this activity students create a collage from old magazines and discuss what other animals might be found in a wetlands environment.

Materials Needed

- ◆ Large piece of newsprint
- ◆ Scissors
- ◆ Glue or paste
- ◆ Old nature magazines

Procedure

1. Ask students to collect old nature magazines (such as *National Geographic*, *Ranger Rick*, *National Wildlife*) or to locate photos of wetlands creatures on the internet.
2. Invite students to make a class collage of a wetlands environment by pasting pictures of different critters on a large sheet of newsprint.
3. Make sure that there is an abundance of wetlands plants to support the ecosystem.
4. Discuss the following questions with the students:
 - ◆ Does each animal in the collage have enough space?
 - ◆ Is there enough food for each type of animal?
 - ◆ What would happen if you removed one of the plants or animals from the collage?
 - ◆ What would happen if the water source dried up?
 - ◆ What animals and plants should be added to round out the ecosystem collage?

Key Concepts

- ◆ Environments are the space, conditions, and factors that affect an individual's and a population's ability to survive and their quality of life.
- ◆ The environment must supply the needs of organisms.

For standards correlation please see our website.

Nature Connections

- ◆ Invite the students to compare the illustrations in *Near One Cattail* with photographs in non-fiction books about wetlands. What similarities do they notice? What were some of the things the artist had to consider in drawing pictures for this book?
- ◆ Encourage students to write a fictitious letter to the girl in *Near One Cattail*. What would they like to say to her? What would they like to know about her adventures in the wetland ecosystem in this book? What else would they like to know about her?

Additional Resources

Invite students to investigate the differences between the following types of wetlands:

- ◆ Saltwater Marshes
- ◆ Freshwater Marshes
- ◆ Swamps
- ◆ Bogs
- ◆ Estuaries
- ◆ Prairie Potholes





A Day in the Life

Introduction

In the book *Near One Cattail: Turtles, Logs and Leaping Frogs*, author Anthony Fredericks introduces children to a variety of wetlands inhabitants. In this activity, students will get to know a little bit more about each of the animals.

Materials Needed

- ◆ *Near One Cattail: Turtles, Logs and Leaping Frogs* - by Anthony Fredericks

Procedure

1. Invite each student in the class to select one of the animals illustrated in this book.
2. Encourage each child to conduct necessary research (i.e. library, internet) on his or her identified species.
3. Then, invite each student to write a series of diary entries as told from the perspective of their creature. For example, "A Day in the Life of a Frog" or "My life as a Dragonfly."
4. Discuss some of the following questions to help students get started:
 - ◆ Where does your animal sleep?
 - ◆ What does your animal eat and where would it find its food?
 - ◆ How does your animal protect itself from predators?

Key Concepts

- ◆ All organisms have different needs.
- ◆ The environment must supply the needs of the organisms.
- ◆ Environments are the space, conditions, and factors that affect an individual's and a population's ability to survive and their quality of life.

For standards correlation please see our website.

Nature Connections

- ◆ Invite students to create a guidebook to the flora and fauna found in a wetland area nearby. Encourage students to do the appropriate research (contacting experts, books, Internet, etc.) in assembling their data. Ask students to prepare the guidebook for young visitors to the wetlands area.
- ◆ Talk with students about some of the "Fascinating Facts" included in the "Field Notes" section of the book. Which ones did they find most amazing? Invite students to assemble their own collection of "Wetlands Fantastic Facts" based upon outside readings or research.

Additional Resources

Invite students to read the other books in this series. How are the books similar? How are they different?

- ◆ *Around One Cactus: Owls, Bats and Leaping Rats*
- ◆ *In One Tidepool: Crabs, Snails and Salty Tails*
- ◆ *On One Flower: Butterflies, Ticks and a Few More Icks*
- ◆ *Near One Cattail: Turtles, Logs and Leaping Frogs*
- ◆ *Under One Rock: Bugs, Slugs and Other Ughs*





Creature Dominance

Introduction

In *Near One Cattail: Turtles, Logs and Leaping Frogs* author Anthony Fredericks introduces children to a variety of wetlands creatures. In this activity, students will discuss the different categories of animals and figure out which, if any, dominates the habitat.

Materials Needed

- ◆ *Near One Cattail: Turtles, Logs and Leaping Frogs* - by Anthony Fredericks
- ◆ Large roll of paper
- ◆ Markers

Procedure

1. Invite students to create a large wall chart divided into several sections: Mammals, Birds, Fish, Amphibians, Reptiles, and Insects.
2. Ask students to place each of the creatures featured in the book into its appropriate category on the chart.
3. Then ask students to select other animals that might be discovered in a wetlands environment and add them to the chart as well.
4. Plan time to discuss the various species found in a "typical" wetlands ecosystem.
5. Which species of classification seems to predominate?

Key Concepts

- ◆ Systems have levels of organization.
- ◆ Feedback and equilibrium are associated with systems.
- ◆ Equilibrium is a physical state in which forces and changes occur in offsetting directions.

For standards correlation please see our website.

Nature Connections

- ◆ Invite students to develop charts and graphs that record the number of species of each of the animals described in the book. Which species has the greatest number of members around the world? Which has the fewest number of members? Based on the numbers alone, which species has the greatest likelihood of being placed on an "endangered species" list?
- ◆ Discuss with students the similarities and/or differences between the community of animals in a wetlands environment and the community in which they live. Invite students to create an oversize Venn diagram which illustrates those comparisons.

Additional Resources

Create an ecology club at your school! Here are some activity ideas the club could participate in:

- ◆ Start a school vegetable garden
- ◆ Create a nature trail
- ◆ Build birdhouses
- ◆ Begin a compost pile at school
- ◆ Plant trees on campus
- ◆ Build a wildlife habitat





Wetland Metaphors

Introduction

In the book *Near One Cattail: Turtles, Logs and Leaping Frogs*, author Anthony Fredericks describes the wetlands as a “wild and oozy place to live for many critters.” In this activity, students will compare a wetlands habitat with items in their own homes.

Materials Needed

- ◆ *Near One Cattail: Turtles, Logs and Leaping Frogs* - by Anthony Fredericks
- ◆ 3x5 index cards
- ◆ Various household items

Key Concepts

- ◆ Models can be used in explanations.
- ◆ Resources are things we get from the living and nonliving environment to meet the needs and wants of a population.

For standards correlation please see our website.

Procedure

1. Read *Near One Cattail* in the classroom. Discuss with students the wetlands environment and how it supports so many different types of animals.
2. Invite students to collect objects from home that might serve as a metaphor for a wetlands environment.
3. For each object brought in, have students write a description of the metaphor on a 3x5 card.
4. Create a display in the classroom of each of the different objects and their descriptions.
5. Some suggestions for objects include:
 - ◆ Sponge - wetlands absorb the runoff from the streams and rivers.
 - ◆ Coffee filter - wetlands filter impurities out of the water.
 - ◆ Pillow - wetlands provide a resting place for migratory birds.
 - ◆ Photo of a Baby Crib - wetlands provide a sheltering place for many baby animals.

Nature Connections

- ◆ Talk with students about some of the “Fantastic Facts” included in the “Field Notes” section of the book. Which ones did they find most amazing? Invite students to assemble their own collection of “Wetlands Fantastic Facts” based upon outside readings or research.
- ◆ Invite students to create a list of adjectives using animals from the book. Encourage them to research other wetlands creatures and create an over-sized wall chart to be posted in the classroom.

Additional Resources

- ◆ **Ducks Unlimited**
www.ducks.org
- ◆ **Izaak Walton League of America**
www.iwla.org
- ◆ **National Wildlife Federation**
www.nwf.org
- ◆ **Wetlands International**
www.wetlands.org

