

**LESSON: Critter Building****Grade Level: 1****OBJECTIVES:**

Students will:

- Learn about characteristics, differences, and similarities among living things
- Report the process of critter building, including details of what happened, event order, and explanation for their decisions
- Strategize and develop critical thinking and teamwork skills to build their “critters”

**MATERIALS:**

Junk box with stuff like; rubber bands, paper towel and toilet paper rolls, scrap paper, ribbon, small wood scraps, pins, paperclips, staples, pictures of animals with varied characteristics, tape, scissors, cardboard, string, wire, foil, and construction paper

**PRESENTATION:**

Talk about all the different kinds of critters the children have observed on the playground, in parks and back yards. Be sure to include worms and insects, birds, and mammals, even humans. Explore with the class all the different ways critters get around, catch prey, eat, and defend themselves. Begin by briefly asking what the students know about animals- what animals eat, how do animals get around and are they active in daytime or nighttime hours? Assemble the junk box but don't tell the students exactly why it is being assembled.

**DIRECTIONS:**

1. Begin by asking students what they have observed animals doing- what animals eat, how they catch their food, how they escape predators, how they move, how and where they hide...Remind students that in real life, animals may slither, hop, climb. Some dig holes; others steal a hole from another animal. Some build nests and others use cavities in trees for their homes. Some nest in tall grass. Animals set traps, chase, wait for, and poison their prey.
2. Tell them that today they are going to create a “critter” and they will define the characteristics of the critter.
3. Pass out one DO-IT YOURSELF-CRITTER INSTRUCTION SHEET for each group.
4. Tell them they may use any of the materials in the junk box or around them.
5. Divide the group into small group of 2-3, so that there are 10 groups. If possible, take the groups outdoors to complete the activity.
6. When all have completed their critters, have them write a description of the process, decisions and results.
7. Ask them to state a conclusion for their work.
8. Have groups use this description to explain their critters for the rest of the group. Have each small group ask the class to think of similar animals. This will help them see that while their designs are unique, nature already uses the same principles.

**TIME:** 45-60 minutes

**PROCESSING THROUGH THE SIX PILLARS:**

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**WHAT:**

- What makes the critters different from each other?
- What needs are common to all critters for survival? (food source, clean water, air, safety)

**SO WHAT:**

- What can happen to a critter if their basic needs for shelter, food, clean water and air are destroyed?
- Do we respect a critter less for being different? Please say why or why not.

**NOW WHAT:**

- How can we be a good neighbor to our critters?