

LESSON PLAN: SQUIRREL STUDY - NESTS

Date:	Class:	Unit:
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LESSON TOPIC:	Squirrel Study with <i>Smack Dab in the Middle of Maybe</i>
AIM:	In <i>Smack Dab in the Middle of Maybe</i> , the main character Cricket discovers squirrels in a nest above the treehouse. Students can use the novel as a starting point for learning more about squirrels.
OBJECTIVES:	Students will be able to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify grey squirrels. 2. Provide information about a squirrel's nesting behavior. 3. Recognize the behavior of grey squirrels in <i>Smack Dab in the Middle of Maybe</i>.
GET STARTED/ DO-NOW:	In the novel, Cricket notices a squirrel nest above her treehouse. The nest was made by eastern grey squirrels. Have the students read the article by National Geographic about grey squirrels. Instruct them to write down five facts. https://kids.nationalgeographic.com/animals/eastern-gray-squirrel/#eastern-gray-squirrel-tree.jpg If personal computers are not available, read the article aloud. After you have finished, instruct the students to write down facts they remember. Have the students share the facts with the class.
MINI-LESSON:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. There are several species of squirrels found in North America. Eastern grey squirrels are one of them. Other species include American red squirrels and fox squirrels. Introduce these other two species by showing the class images like the ones found on these webpages: Fox Squirrel: https://www.arkive.org/eastern-fox-squirrel/sciurus-niger/ American Red Squirrel: http://www.arkive.org/american-red-squirrel/tamiasciurus-hudsonicus/ 2. Provide each student with a blank map of the United States. Together as a class, color in the areas where grey squirrels are commonly found. Repeat the process for red squirrels and fox squirrels, using a different color for each species. Fox Squirrel Range: https://naturalhistory.si.edu/mna/image_info.cfm?species_id=299

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	<p>Red Squirrel Range: https://naturalhistory.si.edu/mna/image_info.cfm?species_id=400</p> <p>Eastern Gray Squirrel Range: https://naturalhistory.si.edu/mna/image_info.cfm?species_id=298</p> <p>3. Note the states in which only one species is commonly found, as well as the states where they overlap. Ask the students what types of squirrels are found in their area.</p>
<p>MAIN ACTIVITY:</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>In Smack Dab in the Middle of Maybe</i>, Cricket sees a squirrel’s nest above the treehouse. She describes it more the morning after a storm at the end of Chapter 19. Instruct the students to read that scene again, found on pages 89-90. 2. Using a computer or dictionary, instruct the students to define the following words: habitat, woodlands, drey, interwoven, scarce, litter, cavity, platform. 3. Instruct the students to read the article entitled “Spotting Squirrel Nests in the Fall.” http://outdoorosity.org/spotting-squirrel-nests/ If individual computers aren’t available, you may print a copy of the article for each student. 4. Instruct students to locate the defined words in the paragraph and re-read those sentences. 5. Have the students answer the questions on the Squirrel Nests worksheet. 6. Discuss the answers as a class. 7. Watch this video featuring the inside of a squirrel nest by Animal Advocates (Los Angeles): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M5dduAX8iuI 8. Instruct students to create their own squirrel nests. Provide them with supplies squirrels would use, such as twigs, moss, grass, etc. Low-temp hot glue guns may be used to secure the items. 9. Display the squirrel nests.
<p>CLOSING ACTIVITY:</p>	<p>Take the class outside to search for squirrel nests. The nests will be easier to spot in the fall when there are fewer leaves on the trees.</p>

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EXTENSIONS:	<p>Research and write a short report about a type of squirrel commonly found in your area. Be sure to include information about its appearance, diet, behavior, and lifecycle.</p> <p>The article “Spotting Squirrel Nests in the Fall” mentions several types of trees squirrels often use, including oaks, beeches, and red maples. Research to find out what these trees and their leaves look like. Then go outside to see if you can find any around your school or in your yard.</p>
CHECK FOR UNDERSTANDING:	Students answer the questions on the Squirrel Nests worksheet.
MATERIALS:	<p><i>Smack Dab in the Middle of Maybe</i> by Jo Hackl</p> <p>Computer and projector for squirrel images and video</p> <p>Computers for personal use</p> <p>Dictionaries</p> <p>Squirrel Nests worksheet</p> <p>Blank map of the United States (You can download and print one for free here: https://www.waterproofpaper.com/printable-maps/usa/usa-printable-map-of-the-united-states-labeled.pdf)</p> <p>Article: Spotting Squirrel Nests in the Fall http://outdoorosity.org/spotting-squirrel-nests/</p> <p>Organic materials for squirrel’s nests: twigs, dried leaves, grass, moss, etc.</p> <p>Low-temp hot glue guns</p>
TECHNOLOGY:	Internet as a resource for squirrel information websites and video
COMMON CORE STANDARDS:	<p>CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.6-8.1</p> <p>CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.6-8.4</p> <p>CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.6-8.5</p> <p>CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.6-8.2</p> <p>CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RST.6-8.1</p> <p>CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RST.6-8.2</p> <p>CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RST.6-8.4</p> <p>CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RST.6-8.9</p> <p>CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.6-8.1</p> <p>CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.6-8.4</p>