

## Focus on: Characteristics of Animals

This lesson is meant to support the unit, Structures and Functions of Living Organisms. It can be done to generate background knowledge prior to teaching the unit, during the unit to reinforce lessons, or as a follow up to the unit to increase the retention of information. How you guide your students will depend on the information you have already taught and the information you want to introduce. Please remember that many gardens run on a yearly cycle and it will be easier to find animals during the peak of the growing season.

### Clarifying Objectives:

K.L.1.2 Compare characteristics of living and nonliving things in terms of their:

- Structure
- Growth
- Changes
- Movement
- Basic needs

### Key Vocabulary:

Definitions can be found at <http://learnersdictionary.com>

- Compare
- Characteristics
- Living Things
- Nonliving Things
- Structure
- Growth
- Changes
- Movement
- Basic Needs

### Focus Question(s):

How are animals the same? How are animals different?

### Materials:

School Garden  
Garden Gloves to wear while exploring the garden especially if touching plants, soil, lifting pots, etc.  
Science Notebooks  
Camera, iPad or some other means to photograph animals.

### Activities:

1. Show children the garden from the following website:  
<http://www.sheppardsoftware.com/content/animals/kidscorner/seekandfind/seekandfindgarden.htm>
2. Have students find as many garden animals as they can.
3. Tell the children they are going to get to play that game for real in our very own school garden.
4. Ask: Do you think we will see the same animals as we found in the game or different ones? What animals do you think we will find? What are some tips for

### Guiding Questions:

- How does the animal look?
- Describe how the animal looks.
- Is it big or small?
- Does it have eyes? Legs? Head? Antennae? Tail? Mouth? Feathers? Scales? Etc.

<p>helping us to find the most animals? (Move slowly, speak quietly, be patient, look closely, etc.)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. Head to the garden to search for animals. Tell students we are going to “capture” the animals with our camera and by drawing them in our student notebooks. We will NOT be capturing them with our hands. Look, but don’t touch! The garden animals are VERY busy doing their jobs in our school garden so let’s let them be!</li> <li>6. Remind students of the searching tips mentioned in number 4. Also remind them of how they had to look VERY closely while doing the search in the game and that they will have to look VERY closely in the garden too. Encourage students to look on leaves, dig a LITTLE in the soil, look at the base of plants, everywhere!</li> <li>7. When students find a living thing, they should sketch it in their student notebooks and label it if they are able. They can also photograph it or have the teacher photograph it.</li> <li>8. When one animal is found, there will be a rush of other students who want to see the animal too. Remind them to walk and take turns looking at the animal without pushing. We don’t want to harm the people, the animals or the plants in the garden.</li> <li>9. When students are looking at the animal ask them Guiding Questions.</li> <li>10. Find as many animals as possible in the time permitted.</li> <li>11. When you return to the room or during the next lesson, display the photographs of the animals that were found in the garden. Again, ask the Guiding Questions, but this time have them compare the animals to find similarities and differences.</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- How many eyes? Legs? Antennae? Etc.</li> <li>- What other characteristics does the animal have that describes how it looks?</li> <li>- Which animals are most similar? Why?</li> <li>- How are the animals the same?</li> <li>- How are the animals different?</li> </ul>
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